

CLAPHAM RECREATION GROUND TRUST

NEWSLETTER 2 – OCTOBER 2017

Dear Clapham residents

Here's an update on where we've got to on a number of issues dear to the hearts of all villagers.

On the community shop/café, we are pleased to say that progress is now being made on removing the legal obstacles which had prevented us issuing a lease to CPCSCP Ltd. We are therefore about to have a lease drawn up, which will enable CPCSCP Ltd in turn to offer a sub-lease to Neil for his continuing use of the existing building, and then a new one for operations in the new building. The removal of this obstacle will also make it possible for the Land Registry to update their records to show the current Trustees as the owners of the Rec.

On the playground, we'd like to be absolutely clear: the Trustees want there to be a new playground on the Rec, and have already agreed to make a plot available for this. We are more than willing to cooperate with all those who want to play a part in raising the funds for the new playground – not just buying and installing new equipment, but also the ongoing costs of insurance, regular inspection and maintenance, and replacement as and when necessary (as well as provision for putting the land back to grass if, for any reason, the playground should ever come to an end – though we hope it won't). But we do need people to talk to us about their ideas and needs; we already have good communications with one interested group, and have just started discussions with the Parish Council (see below), but have yet to hear from anyone else. Please talk to us – we can't help you otherwise!

We are discussing the best site for the new play area – somewhere along the southern boundary seems a possible solution. Wherever it is, we are legally required (as well as believing it is right) to make it as disabled-accessible as possible, not just for people living in the village now, but for years to come. This will include installing a wheelchair-friendly path from The Street to the play area.

The Parish Council has twice tried to set up a meeting where the various groups with an interest in replacing the play area can find a way of working together for the benefit of all; unfortunately on both occasions the meeting had to be cancelled. The Trustees have now taken over responsibility for organising the meeting. West Sussex County Councillor Deborah Urquhart has agreed to act as an impartial Chair, and we are waiting to hear what dates she has available.

We have had a meeting with several of the Parish Councillors to discuss the possibility that the Council might take up a lease (at a peppercorn rent) for the play area. This would mean that the area was covered by the Council's existing insurance without the need for additional expense; the Council would also take over responsibility for regular inspection, maintenance, and if necessary replacement of equipment. The meeting was encouraging, and we await a formal response; if the Council decides not to accept our offer, we have other options to investigate.

Clearing of the nettles, brambles and other small scrub along the southern boundary will start very shortly; this will give space to the native trees that have already been planted there, and enable us to add some more which we have been given. Quite a bit of additional recreation space will be freed up, too. The clearance will also enable us to install a post and rail fence along the southern

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boundary (like the one along the boundary with The Street), with a gate where the existing entry gap is. In fact, the owner of part of the footpath has already cleared the undergrowth from his side of the boundary, and has planted a hawthorn hedge which will look great when it matures.

Our next job will be to trim back the hedge and trees along the eastern boundary. These have become very overgrown and encroached quite a lot on the area available for residents' use; we are discussing this at the moment with the neighbours who are affected by the hedge, to make sure they are happy with our plans. We will of course also apply for SDNPA's permission if necessary.

On the subject of trees, you may know that the Memorial Chestnut Tree in front of The Junction has been declared diseased. The South Downs tree expert thinks it might last no more than another 10 years, and he recommends that one or more replacements are planted in good time. We wondered if the children (perhaps at the Saturday Kids' Club, or at the School) might like to collect some of the conkers from the tree, plant them in pots, and look after them at home. This would mean that the tree's own 'children' can be planted when they are big enough.

The Parish Council are in the process of signing a contract with Arun District Council for the continuing maintenance and regular emptying of the litter and dog bins on the Rec – they have also succeeded in persuading ADC to replace the dog bin, which is in poor repair. Please do use the dog bin – it is not pleasant for anyone when there is dog poo lying around, and organisms in the dog poo can pose a very real danger to the health of children playing on the Rec.

Our new web page at <https://www.claphamandpatching-westsussex.org.uk/recreation-ground-trust> contains information about the Trust and the Trustees, including a summary of the dates of appointment and retirement of all the Trustees, from the very beginning up to now. You will also find transcripts of two key legal documents:

- the original 1930 Conveyance by which the land was granted by Mr FitzRoy Somerset's grandmother
- the most recent Deed of Retirement and Appointment by which the three new Trustees were appointed in May.

Don't forget, the Rec is there for the enjoyment and recreation of everyone who lives in Clapham. If you'd like to use it for any special community events, just drop us a line – so long as other residents of the village are not excluded from the ground, no reasonable request will be refused!

As always, we are happy to hear from anyone with ideas or comments they would like to share with the Trustees. Our email is crgrtrustees@gmail.com.

The Trustees

October 2017

(P.S. Things are now beginning to move really fast, so apologies if any of the above is out of date by the time you read it!)