



WILD FLOWER BEDS IN SUMMER

# Holland Garden News

for local residents

## Making a difference to our local community

### Join us at our AGM to help shape the future of this local park

See back page for more details

### Changes to the maintenance of Holland Garden

Idverde, the largest landscaping and grounds maintenance provider in the UK, took over the provision of ground maintenance services across all of Merton's parks and cemeteries, earlier this year. (See update from idverde later in the newsletter)

In February we were fortunate in getting idverde's Contract Manager and team to walkaround Holland Garden with the Committee and agree a plan of

action for 2017. We had quite a long list of things that needed to be done and not everything could be fixed at once.

As a result the Friends have taken on work that the Council wouldn't do due to budget and resource constraints, rather than let Holland Garden deteriorate.

### How we are making a difference

The Friends have completed a number of projects in 2017 to improve Holland Garden for everyone who uses it.

#### 1. Moss free tennis courts

We funded the spraying of the tennis court surfaces with weed killer in early Spring. This was ahead of the main tennis season



and will help the courts to remain moss free so that the

surface doesn't get slippery

#### 2. Somewhere comfy to sit & contemplate

We refurbished all of the benches



and re-sited several of them around the Garden.

Several had been vandalised and pulled up from their foundations whilst others just needed some TLC and re-varnishing after several years of service to us all.



*Over 20 benches were renovated*

With over 20 benches to repair the project took several months but was completed in time for the summer for people to enjoy when the weather was nice.

### 3. Wildflower meadows

What started in 2014 as the Friends idea for a bed of wildflowers and poppies to commemorate The Great War (1914-1918), our wildflower area is now in its fourth year.



And it just keeps getting better.

Like all things it does require careful maintenance every Spring

as new seed has to be cast whilst temperatures are low enough for frosts, so we will ask idverde to ensure that the meadow is prepared and re-sown as a priority for 2018.

### 4. The Pavilion gets a facelift

The Pavilion needed rather more than just a lick of paint. The walls had been sprayed with graffiti and the roof had been damaged.



*Before the renovation*

Local vandals had somehow managed to rip the benches from their foundations and then lift them onto the roof. Quite a feat!!

During the summer when the Garden was locked at night groups of teenagers also used to



climb up onto the roof, which is not weight bearing. The resultant cracks in the roof led to several leaks. These are now fixed. **Be aware** we have applied anti climb paint to the roof so anyone climbing on it will get covered in black paint. There are warning signs!

The Friends have paid for and



*The re-painted Pavilion October 2017*

organised the renovation of the Pavilion so it doesn't have a derelict feel about it any more.

## Other news

### Thank you to our gate openers

A BIG thank you to the 20 local residents who open the three gates around Holland Garden each morning from April to the end of October.

We always need volunteers. Each person takes responsibility to open the gates for a week – by 8am weekdays and gam at week-ends. If you can spare the time please contact [alan@friendsofhollandgarden.org.uk](mailto:alan@friendsofhollandgarden.org.uk) and he will add you to the rota.

### Garden tidy-up & replanting - volunteers needed

We would like to try to restore Holland Garden to its former glory, when it had dedicated gardeners. Alas with budget cuts the Council have done less and less over the years and the Friends have tried to look after the rockery and some flower beds rather than let them fall into disrepair. This means we need

your money and/or your time. Currently the Council fund bedding plants twice a year in the top half of Holland Garden but there is more work to do. We will revive the weekly gardening club so please come and help out.

**Local kids do their bit: “Look after our Garden”**

It’s always tricky finding a balance between people enjoying the garden and that enjoyment actually harming the garden we all love.

Several of the trees and hedges had been used as climbing frames by children after school and were



being badly damaged as a result. The tennis court hedge was badly damaged where several branches had been snapped off. Whilst it has started to recover, the conifer



nearby is now dying on one side as a result of climbing. Several branches have been snapped off leaving a gaping hole at the

bottom

Enter Hollymount School. The Head Teacher tries to play her part encouraging the children to protect and care



for Holland Garden. They designed some fabulous posters for the Garden, encouraging everyone to help look after it.



**Watch out for the foxes- take your rubbish home**

We aren’t the only local residents who love our Garden. There are several fox dens around Holland Garden. And they love whatever rubbish we leave behind. Please take all your rubbish with you if it won’t fit in the big solar bin by Cambridge Road.



Anything left overnight results in trash strewn around, so please do your bit.

**Enjoy our tennis courts and keep fit**

We have two all weather hard courts and three table tennis tables by the courts so you can keep fit and give your brain a good workout by testing your reaction times. See tennis membership fees on page 5

**Dog owners spare a thought for others**

We have received a number of complaints from people about unruly dogs and dog mess that has not been cleared up.



Some owners let their dogs off their leashes and let them roam the Garden at will. Please remember

that not everyone likes dogs especially when they jump up unexpectedly, so please consider others when you are exercising your dog. Holland Garden is used by parents and children after school as a safe play area so please make sure that you pick up after your dog.

**Members welcome - we need your money**

We need your subscriptions and donations to fund projects around Holland Garden. If you are not already a member then please help us preserve and look after the garden by joining and giving us your support. You’ll find a

membership form and contact details on the last page.



## A warm welcome from idverde.

*We are delighted to be maintaining your park and you probably already know that we have been awarded a 24 year contract, (issued in sets of eight years and subject to approvals) covering both Merton and Sutton Boroughs through the South London Waste Partnership.*

*We began in February and almost straight into the beginning of the grass cutting season – quite a task bearing in mind we had to not only successfully transfer members of the former Council's ground staff, but also several administrative officers too. On top of that, we also had to resource the contract with all new plant and vehicles and take over the former depots.*

*Currently the contract is delivered out of Cheam Depot in Sutton and Hillcross Depot in Morden. We have therefore not only invested strongly, (having completely refurbished Cheam Depot) but will continue to do so throughout our tenure.*

*Our aim is to leave the Boroughs in a better condition than when*

## Thank you to those who already support us.

*we took over – 24 years is a long time for a great partnership; and hopefully we may even be here long after that too – subject to tendering!*

*This season over the last eight months has been problematic insofar as several members of staff immediately sought early retirement/redundancy immediately prior to transfer; which meant finding replacements before the contract even started. Equally we have been beleaguered by a loss of staff not suitable for more senior roles and an unexpected hospitalisation of our Contract Director.*

*However, we are now in a position with stable staff and all of the key managerial positions filled appropriately. 2018 will be a better year!*

*Our contract is maintenance based, predominantly for grass, shrubs, litter, sports provision and floral attributes. We also manage the hard landscapes such as paths, fencing gates and playgrounds too.*

*In addition we manage sports lettings, allotments and the cemetery and burial service Merton Council's vestigial parks team still set overall policy and administer tree maintenance themselves.*

*We feel very privileged to be looking after a number of high-profile parks including in*

*particular **Holland Garden** – with its wealth of varied and undulating landscapes and full facilities; and most importantly a thriving and enthusiastic Friends Group.*

*We have met your committee initially and as a result have provided at their request several new commemorative seat bays. We are meeting them again shortly and aim to further strengthen our relationship and to consider what 'winter works' we can undertake; including clearing up a few often overlooked areas!*

Patrick Phillips  
Director of Parks Management Strategy

## Notice of AGM

The 2017 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Friends of Holland Garden, open to all members of the Friends, will take place on 14<sup>th</sup> December at 7:30pm at Christ Church Hall, Cottenham Park Road, SW20.

Please note that under AOB we will be taking the opportunity to review the constitution which was written when the Friends was established in 2003 and amend it as appropriate.

### Agenda

1. Welcome & introductions
  2. Approval of the Minutes of the AGM of 4 July 2016
  3. Annual Report of the Committee
  4. Election of the Committee for 2017/18
  5. Finances
    - a. Acceptance of the annual accounts for the year to 31 May 2016 and 2017
    - b. Endorsement of the subscription amounts for the year to May 2018
  6. Discussion of progress during 2016/17 and priorities for 2017/18
  7. AOB\* notified to the Hon Secretary. Email [cherry@friendsofhollandgarden.org.uk](mailto:cherry@friendsofhollandgarden.org.uk)
- \*AOB or resolutions should be submitted by 23rd November 2017

The present members of the Committee have all indicated their willingness to continue to serve. Any other Member wishing to nominate themselves to join the Committee must notify the Hon Secretary by 23rd November 2017.

## 2017/18 Membership renewal form

I/we would like to renew/join the Friends of Holland Garden. I wish to pay by annual standing order/I enclose my/our annual subscription (delete as appropriate) for the year ending 31 May 2018. Subscriptions are £5 per single person or £10 for a family (concessionary rates of £3 and £6 respectively. There is an additional £50 for tennis membership.

You may find payment by standing order a convenient alternative to cheque or cash and it is easier for FOHG to administer. Please ask you bank to set an order in favour of: **The Friends of Holland Garden, Barclays Bank plc, sort code 20-96-89 account no. 60743585**. If you wish to subscribe by cheque please make it payable to "The Friends of Holland Garden."

Name:	Standing order reference: Cash/Cheque (please delete as appropriate)
Address:	
Post code:	Contact tel number (optional):
Email:	

For cash and cheque subscriptions, please complete this form and return with your remittance to: Iain Carmichael, Hon Treasurer of the Friends, 6 Cambridge Road, London SW20 0SH. If paying by standing order please notify the Hon Treasurer by e-mail, quoting the standing order reference, to [iain@friendsofhollandgarden.org.uk](mailto:iain@friendsofhollandgarden.org.uk)