

SEEDS OF CHANGE PROJECT NEWSLETTER

No. 9 Summer 2021

Welcome to the ninth newsletter for the project which highlights the work of the Friendly Parks for All project in parks in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. Work on the project has continued over the last year, despite the trials that we have all faced. Eliminating the barriers to accessing parks for vulnerable people is as important as it has always been and the project continues to work towards making parks in Richmond accessible to everyone.

Friendly Parks for all project aims

- Understand the barriers to spending time in parks.
- Improve opportunities to engage with parks for residents to enjoy by improving access for people that face barriers to spending time in parks.
- Promote the benefits of engaging with the natural environment for health and wellbeing especially for groups who have identified inequalities and face barriers to accessing these spaces.
- Provide tailored interventions that address these identified inequalities in order to address barriers to access and inequalities

There is more information on the parks pages of the council website parks pages :

www.richmond.gov.uk/services/parks_and_open_spaces/explore_richmonds_parks_and_open_spaces

Friendly Parks for All update Kneller Gardens

The model of “Friendly Parks for All” continues to include new parks in the borough. Plans are being developed for Kneller Gardens, Twickenham and Carlisle Park, Hampton. At Kneller Gardens the project is working with a group of blind and visually impaired residents to understand barriers to access for this group.

A sensory trail and a tree trail have been prepared and we are currently considering how to make these available to people with reduced or no sight. We would love to hear about other examples of work with this group.

Last year we held a successful competition to design a sculpture for the park. The winning entry included tactile text and sensory planting making it suitable for the group of park users that we are working with. We are seeking a sculptor to work on the piece.

Friendly Parks for All update Carlisle Park

The Friendly Park at Carlisle Park will include markers at each entrance / exit will feature a marker designed by schools local to the park. We look forward to progressing the projects over the next few months.

As part of the project new trees were planted, a sensory tree trail has been prepared, additional benches and an outdoor gym have been added to the park.

ACCESS GUIDES FOR FRIENDLY PARKS

New access guides for all friendly parks ([Barnes Green](#), [Ham Village Green](#), [Heathfield Recreation Ground](#), [Carlisle Park](#) and [Kneller Gardens](#)) have been drafted and included on the project website pages. These guides aim to highlight accessibility issues that people with disabilities or limited mobility may face using parks so that they can plan their visits in advance.

https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/parks_and_open_spaces/explore_richmonds_parks_and_open_spaces/friendly_parks_for_all

Walk with Ralph

“Walk with Ralph” is a monthly local walk in Kneller Gardens with a behaviourally assessed dog. Pets can help improve people’s mood, encourage social interaction, have a calming effect and help improve challenging behaviours.

This free guided walk will encourage increased physical activity, along with the opportunity to meet new people and spend time enjoying nature.

The walk includes an opportunity to touch and stroke a PAT dog and is suitable for people in wheelchairs and with limited mobility. For further information or to register contact Parks@Richmond.gov.uk



Reimagining Richmond

As part of the response to Richmond Council Climate Change emergency the Friendly Parks for All project is working with young people on a project called Reimagining Richmond. The young people are envisioning a more biodiverse borough. Groups of young people are currently looking at a site in Twickenham with the aim of understanding what is currently on the site and how it might look if it was improved for wildlife and people. They recently made clay models to illustrate what the space might look like.

An outcome of the project will be resources for schools to use to improve their green spaces in response to the climate change emergency. It is hoped that these will be launched in Spring 2022.

Challenges faced by blind or visually impaired park users. ‘

Key findings of a consultation March 2020

A total of 13 people responded to this consultation, including some carers. All respondents said that they visited local parks and most respondents visit parks and open spaces accompanied by a blind or visually impaired person or with a sighted person. 61.5% of respondents visit a park at least once a week but 8% visit less than once a month. The full consultation can be [found here](#).

Barriers and hazards in parks that were mentioned included:

- *Problems with parks infrastructure (e.g. paths, steps) was mentioned by 38% of respondents*

Other things that were identified as hazards for blind and visually impaired park users were:

- *badly maintained slippery and dangerous paths that are not swept.*
- *potholes and foxholes*
- *badly maintained slippery and dangerous paths that are not swept.*
- *Uncleared dangerous rubbish*
- *Broken glass and cans.*
- *Getting to the park (31%)*
- *Lack of parking near the park (23%).*
- *Nothing to do (23%) and*
- *Inappropriate equipment (23%).*
- *Safety*
- *Lack of disabled toilets in parks*

Possible improvements to parks that were mentioned included:

- *Quieter areas specifically for those who are blind and visually impaired or have other neurological diseases*
- *Improved parks maintenance – filling in potholes, clearing paths and picking up rubbish*
- *Additional outdoor gyms and shared cycling schemes*
- *Signs and maps modified to benefit VI park users.*
- *Accessible equipment and facilities*
- *Level footpaths that are firm or slip resistant, tactile paving.*
- *Tactile labelling, and appropriate maps and signs but few respondents thought that braille signs were important.*
- *Information about the parks and facilities*
- *Additional seating*

Access to Kneller Gardens for people who are blind or visually impaired is currently being tested by a small group of visually impaired park users. The findings of this group will be included in the proposals for Kneller Gardens Friendly Park and incorporated into the plans for future work in this park and other parks that the project works in. We would be pleased to include others in this group. Contact parks@richmond.gov.uk for details.



Friendly Parks for All Activities in parks restarting in Summer 2021

After more than a year, we have to restarted all the Friendly Parks for All activities. These include monthly Wellbeing Walks in partnership with Ruils and Richmond MIND, a monthly Accessible Walk in partnership with Ruils and Walking for Health and monthly Walk with Ralph, in partnership with Pets as Therapy.

Full details are given below. To take part contact parks@richmond.gov.uk or phone Frances 020 8401 6837. Registration in advance is required part. Guidelines for project participants are available at registration.

The Seeds of Change project is managed through the London Borough of Richmond Parks Department. It aims to encourage more use of parks and open spaces by local people.

To contact us please email parks@richmond.gov.uk

Developing a “Friendly Park for All”

Each “Friendly Park” is audited to understand how suitable it is using pre-defined criteria that gives a programme of work to bring the park to an acceptable level for use by target audiences.

Priorities for them include:

- level paths,
- access to toilets,
- adequate benches and resting places,
- aids to orientation

The audit considers a variety of existing factors including transport links, park infrastructure and facilities and the needs of the local population. More factors are added to the audit each time that we work with a new audience, for example we are currently working with blind and VI so sensory impairment will be added to the initial audit.

Parks in the project currently include Barnes Green, Ham Village Green, Carlisle Park and Kneller Gardens.

For more information about the Seeds of Change Project see Richmond Council web site: [www.richmond.gov.uk/services/parks and open spaces/explore richmonds parks and open spaces](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/parks_and_open_spaces/explore_richmonds_parks_and_open_spaces)

Friendly Parks for All

Programme of Activities 2021



Date	Time	Meeting place	Type of Walk
June			
7 th June	10.15am-12.00pm	Fountains at The Exchange, London Road, Twickenham TW1 1BE	Accessible Walk
17 th June	10-30am-12.30pm	River Crane Walk , Crane Park, Mill Road, Twickenham TW2 5HA	Wellbeing Walk
25 th June	Meet 10.15am	The Pavilion, Kneller Gardens, Twickenham Meadway Twickenham TW2 6PH	Walk with Ralph a PAT dog
July			
5 th July	10.15am - 12.00pm	Fountains at The Exchange, London Road, Twickenham TW1 1BE	Accessible Walk
15 th July	10-30am-12.30pm	Richmond Green to Kew Green Richmond Little Green, The Green, Richmond, TW9 1LX	Wellbeing Walk
30 th July	Meet 10.15am	The Pavilion, Kneller Gardens, Twickenham Meadway Twickenham TW2 6PH	Walk with Ralph a PAT dog
August			
2 nd August	10.15am - 12.00pm	Fountains at The Exchange, London Road, Twickenham TW1 1BE	Accessible Walk
19 th August	10-30am-12.30pm	Ham Parks Meet Teddington Lock Ham bank Footbridge	Wellbeing Walk
27 th August	Meet 10.15am	The Pavilion, Kneller Gardens, Twickenham Meadway Twickenham TW2 6PH	Walk with Ralph a PAT dog
September			
6 th September	10.15am - 12.00pm	Fountains at The Exchange, London Road, Twickenham TW1 1BE	Accessible Walk
16 th September	10-30am-12.30pm	Terrace Gardens and Petersham , Green House Terrace Gardens, Richmond Hill, Richmond, TW10 6RH	Wellbeing Walk
October			
4 th October	10.15am - 12.00pm	Fountains at The Exchange, London Road, Twickenham TW1 1BE	Accessible Walk
21 st October	10-30am-12.30pm	Duke of Northumberland's River Walk Meet Kneller Gardens, Meadway, Twickenham TW2 6PH	Wellbeing Walk
November			
1 st November	10.15am - 12.00pm	Fountains at The Exchange, London Road, Twickenham TW1 1BE	Accessible Walk
18 th November	10-30am-12.30pm	A Thames to Thames walk through parks in Teddington, Manor Road Recreation Ground, Manor Road, Teddington, TW11 8BF	Wellbeing Walk
December			
16 th December	10-30am-12.30pm	Thames Towpath Walk Kingsfield Field, Entrance on Hampton Court Road, KT1 4AE	Wellbeing Walk

To take part contact parks@richmond.gov.uk or phone Frances 020 8401 6837.

Registration in advance is required part. Guidelines for project participants are available at registration.