

SEEDS OF CHANGE PROJECT NEWSLETTER

No. 14 Spring/Summer 2024

Welcome to the 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

Friendly Parks for All: project aims

The Friendly Parks for All project aims to get more people visiting parks in Richmond and to understand the barriers to spending time in parks. Other aims include:

- Improving opportunities to engage with parks for residents to enjoy by improving access for people that face barriers to spending time in parks.
- Promoting 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.
- Providing tailored interventions that address these identified inequalities 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/explore_richmonds_parks_and_open_spaces

All Ability Cycling in Kneller Gardens

The project has been developing the offer of free All Ability Cycling again this year. There have been sessions for adults every 2 weeks since March working in partnership with RISE disability sports and inclusive activities (part of the council Sports Development team) and Bikeworks CIC. The project has also delivered a series of family activities during the school holidays for those families who want to cycle together or have a child with a disability who needs an adapted cycle.

The project, funded by the Crane Fund, has bought adapted bikes for use, some of these are pictured here. This means that the initiative can be carried on beyond the life of the funding. The team is recruiting volunteers to support the project in the long term, who will receive training and support.

BOOK A CYCLING SESSION

Register using our online booking:

<https://bookwhen.com>

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Improving access to parks for blind and visually impaired park users in Kneller Gardens

The consultation in 2020 into the use of parks in the borough with people who are blind or visually impaired and ongoing work with disabled groups has allowed the project team to make several amendments to Kneller Gardens to ensure that it was suitable for their use. The most recent improvement was the installation of a tree trail in the park developed with RNIB and in consultation with blind/visually impaired park users. The trails comprises:

- 12 posts with an interpretation panel that includes a description of the trees, facts about the species, and related facts about the biodiversity, history and culture related to the tree species or individual tree.
- Each post has a plate with an image of the leaf and fruit for each of the species that can be used to take rubbings using a crayon but can also be used by people who are blind or have visual impairments.
- The name of the tree in raised text and in braille.
- There is a related map and leaflet which shows the location of each of the trees and the text of the information panels. The font size of this leaflet is larger than the font size on the panel. The leaflet is available on the council website to be downloaded.

Feedback has been positive from both park users and those who work with people who are blind or visually impaired. A blind / deaf park user said that she had never seen anything similar and was very excited to revisit and do the full trail with her carer and her friends in the future. She was easily able to read the braille and enjoyed feeling the raised image of the leaves and fruit. She also enjoyed feeling the texture of the tree leaves in comparison to the outline of the leaf on the image.

A park user commented *"I was so very delighted and impressed. I particularly like the braille which allows blind people to interact too - I had a blind sister which made me very aware of what blind people miss out on."* The Middlesex Association for the Blind commented *"I love these new developments and I am sure our service users would be delighted to learn more."*

There has also been very positive feedback from park users

- I love them, I've read them all, brightened up my evening walks!
- Great idea, I often wonder what the more unusual trees are and now I know.

Improving access to parks for blind and visually impaired park users in Kneller Gardens - continued

Other features in the park designed for people who are blind or visually impaired include a sculpture and sensory garden installed and planted by the Richmond Green Gym in 2024. There is now an information board in place which explains more about the sculpture, it contains a plaque in braille.

Many of the learnings from this project will be used when designing future Friendly Parks for All projects – the development of access guides, contrasting colour for park equipment, the need for benches in quiet spaces, benches of different height and the use of different media to guide people around the parks will all be used in future projects.



FULL OF LIFE FAIR 2024

The parks team will be attending the Full of Life Fair again in 2024. It is an opportunity to learn more about the Friendly Parks for All project and other work of the team in parks across the borough, including a new initiative to encourage residents to care for street trees and information about Friends of Parks.

The annual Full of Life Fair provides residents aged 55 and over, as well as carers, with the local information and resources they need to live physically active, healthy, happy and independent lives. This year's fair will be held at Twickenham Stadium on Friday 27 September 2024.

River Crane restoration

This summer 137 water voles were successfully reintroduced to Crane Park.

The two-year long project began with wetland habitat restoration and culminated in the release of captive-bred water voles along a 1km stretch of river and riparian habitat. More information:

https://www.richmond.gov.uk/news/news_august_2024/help_protect_crane_park_water_voles



MEADWAY ORCHARD PROJECT, TWICKENHAM

The project at Meadway Orchard in Twickenham is still open for referrals from social care and health organisations, although TCV no longer support the Richmond Green Gym.

Let's Go Outside and Learn CIC took on the support of the group in March 2024 with funding from Richmond Council. There are plans to develop the group further by teaching conservation and food growing skills, developing intergenerational projects and rewarding participants for participation so that they can evidence engagement with the project and new skills.

The group continues to meet every Wednesday at 10.45-2.00pm, with a social break at 12.30. Referrals or signposting can be made through frances.bennett@lgoal.org.uk. Let's Go Outside and Learn have a similar project in Ham which meets on Thursday 1.00-3.00pm. For more details <https://www.lgoal.org/calendar>



Cambridge Gardens - Developing a Friendly Park with Mencap Richmond.



The parks team are working with Mencap in Cambridge Gardens, East Twickenham to create a new Friendly Park for All. A new outdoor gym will be installed following consultation with the Working Together Group and the group has worked with us to design a food growing area and sensory garden with seating for a section of the park adjacent to the tennis courts which overlooks the river Thames. It is hoped that this can be installed over the autumn /winter for use next year.

An access guide for the park has been completed for the park and is available on the parks website.



Richmond health bus visits parks Autumn 2024

The Richmond Health Bus will be visiting parks this autumn. They started with Kneller Gardens on 13th September from 10am-4pm. It is an opportunity for park users to have a chat with a local health expert for tips on staying healthy and active, and support to stop smoking. The visit coincided with the monthly lunches and bingo for older people organised by the Friends of Kneller Gardens and Youth Enterprises who run the park



Get in touch

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. You can find out more about the Friendly Parks for All project on the website:

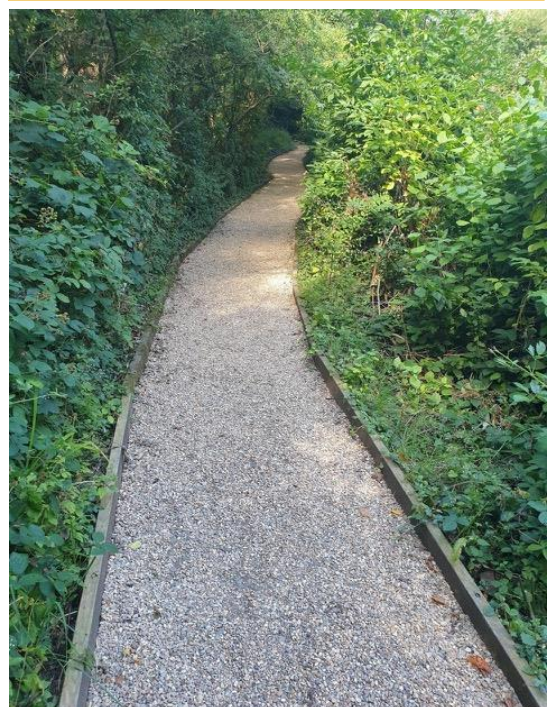
https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/parks_and_open_spaces/explore_richmonds_parks_and_open_spaces/friendly_parks_for_all

A new accessible path for Crane Park Island

The main hard path on London Wildlife Trust's Crane Park Island in Whitton, leading from the entrance by the Tower in Crane Park to the concrete platform at the north end of the island with a lovely view of the river, has been improved this year with the replacement of tapping rails and a thin layer of shingle to stabilize parts that were getting very muddy in winter after rain. All the work was done by volunteers, and we hope that it will make an better path for those who don't walk as easily as they used to or use a wheelchair or buggy. The work was funded by the Crane Valley Partnership Community Fund. Do come to Crane Park and try it and let us know what you think.

For more information contact Eleanor at eleanor.lawrence5@virginmedia.com

To contact us please email: parks@richmond.gov.uk or outdoor.learning@outlook.com





Friendly Parks for All Programme of Activities Autumn 2024/5

Date	Time	Meeting place	Type of walk
September 2024			
5 th September	1-00am-3.00pm	Twickenham Junction Rough to Kneller Gardens and return Fountains The Exchange, London Road, Twickenham TW1 1BE	Accessible Walk
Thursday 19 th September	10.30am-11.30pm	Kneller Gardens Meadway, Twickenham, TW2 6PH Near pavilion	Inclusive Litterpick
Wednesday 11 th & 25 th September	10.30am-12.30pm	Kneller Gardens Meadway, Twickenham, TW2 6PH Near pavilion	All ability cycling
Friday 20 th September	10.30am-12.30pm	River Crane Walk Meet Mill Road entrance to Crane Park TW2 5HA	Wellbeing Walk
October 2024			
Thursday 3 rd October	1-00am-3.00pm	Twickenham Junction Rough to Kneller Gardens & back Fountains The Exchange, London Road, Twickenham TW1 1BE	Accessible Walk
Thursday 10 th October	10.30am-11.30pm	Kneller Gardens Meadway, Twickenham, TW2 6PH Near pavilion	Inclusive Litterpick
Wednesday 2 nd & 16 th October	10.30am-12.30pm	Kneller Gardens Meadway, Twickenham, TW2 6PH Near pavilion	All ability cycling
Friday 18 th October	10.30am-12.30pm	Green spaces in Ham Meet Teddington Lock Footbridge Teddington side	Wellbeing Walk
November 2024			
Thursday 7 th November	1-00am-3.00pm	Twickenham Junction Rough to Kneller Gardens & back Fountains The Exchange, London Road, Twickenham TW1 1BE	Accessible Walk
Thursday 14 th November	10.30am-11.30pm	Kneller Gardens Meadway, Twickenham, TW2 6PH Near pavilion	Inclusive Litterpick
Friday 15 th November	10.30am-12.30pm	Thames path Mortlake Green to Kew Green Meet Mortlake Green, Mortlake High Street SW14 8HY	Wellbeing Walk
December 2024			
Thursday 5 th December	1-00am-3.00pm	Twickenham Junction Rough to Kneller Gardens & back Fountains The Exchange, London Road, Twickenham TW1 1BE	Accessible Walk
Thursday 12 th December	10.30am-11.30pm	Kneller Gardens Meadway, Twickenham, TW2 6PH Near pavilion	Inclusive Litterpick
Friday 13 th December	10.30am-12.30pm	Barnes Common Meet Barnes Station, Station Road, Barnes SW13 0HT	Wellbeing Walk
January 2025			
No walk			Accessible Walk
Thursday 9 th January 2025	10.30am-11.30pm	Kneller Gardens Meadway, Twickenham, TW2 6PH Near pavilion	Inclusive Litterpick
Friday 17 th January 2025	10.30am-12.30pm	Barge Walk Meet Hampton Court Lion Gate, Hampton Court Road KT8 9BS	Wellbeing Walk
Contact parks@richmond.gov.uk or phone Frances 020 8401 6837.			