

FRIENDS of LONG LANE PASTURE NEWSLETTER

No.6 May 2007

*Annual Meeting
for Friends of the Pasture
Saturday, 12th May at 2.30p.m.*

This year we have decided to hold our annual meeting on the Pasture (some seating will be available). All our Friends are invited to join us for an hour or so on a late spring afternoon to discover what we have been getting up to and see for themselves the results of our hard work through the autumn/winter. We will start with a report on our activities and progress over the past year, proceed to look at our plans for this year, then take questions and any discussion points. This will be followed by a guided tour.

We very much look forward to seeing you all there.

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The good news is that the **lease negotiations** with the London Borough of Barnet have been progressing very positively over the past few months. We have almost reached agreement on the heads of terms – but we still don't have a lease! Despite the funereal proceedings so far it now seems quite likely that we will have everything settled some time in May; if so, we should be able to arrange limited public opening of the Pasture this summer.

Following our **appeal for funds** to meet unavoidable legal costs and Council fees we were delighted to receive **£1,350** in donations from Friends. We are enormously grateful to everyone who sent us a donation – thank you all very much indeed for your generosity. We now expect to be able to pay necessary costs as soon as they arise: a huge relief after such a long period of uncertainty in our consultations with the Council.

As you will know from the last Newsletter, the Trust was awarded a **Neighbourhood Renewal Grant** of £9,600 (via London Borough of Barnet). We now have a truly splendid new and very secure gate at the pedestrian entrance and an impressive stretch of new fencing part way along the public footpath boundary. This is the beginning of a major

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project to renew the fencing along the entire length of the footpath. Volunteers who answered our appeal in January and helped clear the fence line for contractors and 'landscape' the area after the fence was installed can take their heartfelt vote of thanks now, as can our neighbours who allowed us to use their water supply. Already the wild hops are starting to grow back up the fence posts.

The flats being built on the **old garage site in Long Lane** are now proceeding rapidly and have reached second floor level. This is good for us, of course, as they permanently block the only easy vehicular access and ensure that the Pasture is unlikely to be considered suitable for 'development' in the foreseeable future.

Wildlife: we continue to expand our records. Many flowers are now in bloom (daffodils, bluebells, forget-me-nots and celandines among them); so far we have recorded 86 different plants on the Pasture, including 13 different species of grass. In February the green woodpecker was seen on several occasions and two long-tailed tits were feeding on the insects in the brambles in April. Although the ivy on the old wall suffered somewhat in the winter gales, it is now home to a pair of nesting blackbirds. This is also where several holly blue butterflies have been spotted recently. The moth trap was set up for the first time in mid-April and although the number attracted was a bit disappointing, there was one new species to add to our records: the Oak Beauty.

Bees have also been enjoying the fine weather and there are newts in the new small pond, but sadly no frogspawn this year. Two foxes – a pair? – have been spotted on the Pasture, but as yet there is no evidence of a family with young. A pair of bank voles has taken refuge beneath one of the pieces of corrugate sheeting we have put down to provide protection for small mammals and reptiles. No slow worms yet!

Work Report: Over autumn and winter we have cleared more bramble, begun work on a new shallow pond, planted new trees and shrubs, and picked litter regularly. Clearance work has stopped because of the bird nesting season, but there is still plenty to be done: making the site safe for its public opening, mowing paths and recently cleared areas, monitoring wildlife and continuing to clear accumulated rubbish and litter.

[Working parties are held every other Saturday 10 a.m. to noon. Dates: 5th 19th May; 2nd 16th 30th June; 14th July. Everyone is very welcome to come along and help. Tools, protective gloves and coffee all supplied!]