FRIENDS OF BATTERSEA PARK REVIEW

Issue 132
Autumn/Winter 2025



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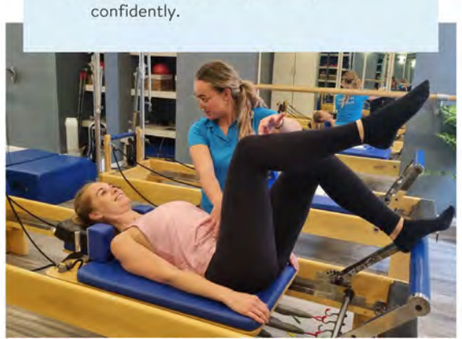



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Review

Autumn/Winter 2025

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The autumn colour in the Park has been wonderful this year, perhaps a result of the exceptionally dry spring and summer. Newspaper columnists strongly recommend walking through crisp fallen leaves as a fail-safe way to enhance your physical and mental health. Many of those who visit the Park can testify to the truth of this. Don't be embarrassed! You need to kick up some of the leaves as you walk on.

The stand out achievement for the Friends since the last issue of *Review* is recorded on pages 10 and 11: at last, Eric Kennington's *War Memorial* and Henry Moore's *Three Standing Figures* have been cleaned. This is a triumph for the Friends and one of our contributions to Wandsworth's year as London Borough of Culture. The change in the appearance of the *War Memorial* in particular is astonishing. Congratulations to Trustee Martin Graham who initiated this project. The cleaning was carried out by Rupert Harris Conservation at a cost to the Friends of £5,232, funds undoubtedly well spent.

This issue includes an interview with Councillor Paul White who is now Wandsworth Council's Cabinet Member for Environment (pages 16 and 17). It also includes the slides prepared by Enable for our AGM which show how responsibilities with the Park have changed since 1 April 2025. The Council has taken over many of what were Enable's responsibilities. The Council is now directly responsible for managing the grounds maintenance and horticulture contact and the Trees Team and arboriculture contact. If you spot a problem or want to make a complaint, you should now ring 020 8871 6000 or email *https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/the-council/have-your-say/make-a-complaint/* or *hello@wandsworth.gov.uk* It would be helpful if you would copy *hello@friendsofbatterseapark.org* so that the Friends can back you up as necessary and are also aware of problems in the Park. We will inform Councillor White if there are difficulties reporting issues or getting a response.

Battersea Park Ward Councillor Tony Belton has suggested using Community Infrastructure Levy funds to finance additional lavatories in the Park. This seems an excellent idea which would be strongly supported by the Friends.

The next Friends' event is the Spring Lunchtime Lecture by Mike Bates on 16 March on the lesser-known memorials in Battersea. See the enclosed flyer.

Finally, please don't forget that the Friends' History of the Park makes a wonderful Christmas present as do bone china mugs (£10 each), and now our new green caps (£15 – modelled on page 6 and 7) and gilets (£45). All available online at *friendsofbatterseapark.org/ourshop*.

Enjoy the Park!

Cover Image: Autumn colour in the Subtropical Garden on 9 October 2025

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Wandsworth Borough Council:
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Parkwatch

Green Flag

On 15 July, the Park was again awarded a Green Flag, the benchmark international standard for publicly accessible parks and green spaces in the United Kingdom and around the world. This is a real accolade. Congratulations to all who contributed to this significant achievement!

Cascades Project

There has been no visible activity but things are happening behind the scenes. A further bid for funding for this major restoration project must be made to the Heritage Lottery Fund in April. The Pulhamite 'stone' is extremely fragile. Work on restoring it cannot begin soon enough.

Old English Garden Fountain

The Council's Facilities Management Team have inspected and twice closed down the job of repairing or replacing the pump. Why? It is important to the Friends, the public and especially Thrive clients who work in this garden that the fountain is repaired. The Friends would be happy to pay for this work. We will continue to chase.

Festival Garden Benches

Good news! The benches have been repainted and are transformed. It was behind these benches below the Vista Steps that the richest litter pickings were to be had. There is an urgent need now to repair the steps and to do something radical to rejuvenate the disgraceful flower beds which could more accurately be described as pernicious weed beds.

Albert Gate Repairs

On 18 August, a large lorry knocked down the north side of the Albert Gate. All four main gates are Grade 2 listed. English Heritage describes them as 'more obviously redolent of the progressive work that emerged from the LCC Architect's Department around 1900. Each of the four principal entrances was redefined with wrought-iron gates hung from elegant stone piers touched with a dash of Art Nouveau. They were designed by A H Verstage and erected in 1902'. The damage was dramatic, but quickly cleared away. Repairs are in hand under a Council-led project and will be covered by insurance.





It is well worth standing back and looking properly at these gates with their stone pillars and cherub heads above the smaller pedestrian entrances.

Topiary Yews

At the beginning of October, Grant Orchard from Sussex Topiary and Hedges spent two days trimming the ten topiary yews in the Russell Page Garden at a cost of £825 funded by the Friends. These yews are now thoroughly back under control after a period of neglect until the Friends stepped in about six years ago. Note that some of the peacocks now have clearly defined crowns although they remain rather strange shapes! Their tails are up and their wings are held wide and low as they should be, but a bit of imagination is needed to work out what you are looking at.

Winter Garden

Dan Pearson's annual visit took place on 21 October. He was pleased with the way in which the structure of the garden has developed. There have been minimal losses during the dry spring and summer thanks to assiduous watering by Thrive and the Friends' Wednesday morning volunteer gardeners. Dan suggested strengthening the Garden in various ways with new plants to provide focal points and fill gaps in ground cover.

A new simple two strand rope and post fence will soon be installed along the edges of the borders to try to prevent them being worn away, especially along the narrow entrance and exit paths.

Bob Marley Plaque

On 25 October, a Wandsworth Council green plaque to commemorate Bob Marley who played football in Battersea Park was unveiled by Marsha de Cordova MP. It is on the south side of the newly painted Cricket Pavilion next to Maple Walk. A copy of the 2014 plaque commemorating the first game of football played under Football Association rules which took place in the Park in 1864 is next to it (the original 2014 plaque on the front of the pavilion could not be moved to this better site for fear of damaging the wooden cladding). There was an enthusiastic crowd, several speeches and of course music.







Bob Marley touched the hearts of many with his brilliant songs and his messages of resistance and love. Once heard, who can forget his rich voice singing 'One love' and 'Emancipate yourself from mental slavery', a quotation from the great Pan-Africanist Marcus Garvey. The photograph shows Marsha de Cordova with Jak Beula from the Nubian Jak Community Trust.

Pagoda Repairs

The Friends and Rev Nagase, the monk, are despondent. It is now six months since the problem of slipping roof tiles on the Pagoda was reported to the Council. Surveys have been carried out, including using drones. We understand that repairs are likely to be extensive and that this will be a Council-led and Council-funded project, but this needs to be formally confirmed. The timescale also needs clarifying as a matter of urgency. The Friends have asked for notices to be put up on the fencing to explain what is happening. The Pagoda will remain a sad sight until the work is done and the fencing can be removed.



Barbara Kleiner - *Three Men and Three Dogs*

World Clean Up Day 20 September 2025

Alexandra Costello

Thanks to my 7-year-old daughter Olimpia, I found myself overseeing World Clean Up Day in Battersea Park, in conjunction with the Friends, with Annabel Stein organising the practicalities. Olimpia and I were keen to take on the project because we both felt frustrated about the staggering level of litter in the Park, particularly in the summer, and specifically in the bushes. It was game over when I bought her a litter picker and a new hobby was born!

World Clean Up Day is dedicated to tackling the pervasive global waste issue and this year we wanted to use the moment to teach our children to not only support their local communities, take an active role in society but also realise that if you see a problem, YOU have the power to start fixing it.



Kate Bock (Chair); Annabel Stein (Membership Sec); Olimpia and Alexandra Costello; and Hallam Murray.



The Friends Team setting off.



Olimpia and friends celebrating.

Twenty of Olimpia's friends gathered in the morning for an incredibly positive and uplifting session of litter picking. Together with about fifteen adults we collected approximately 26 bags of rubbish, and we barely touched the surface. Most of the litter collected by Olimpia's team was tissues, water bottles and food packaging. For some reason Snickers was a reoccurring favourite amongst users of Battersea Park! We also found a lot of concert tickets which proves my concern about the increasing number of events having a detrimental impact on the Park. I have been assured that there is a plan in place to deal with the rubbish from these events but I remain unconvinced.

All participants were passionate about supporting and protecting the Park, but there was also a sense of frustration that more cannot be done to keep it in better shape. A common thread was the remarks about how many people seem to consider the outskirts of the Park a bin!

In my opinion, if those who spend time in and those who profit from Battersea Park do not take more of a vested interest in caring for it then the situation won't change, no matter what the Council or those responsible for managing it do. The attitude of 'it is someone else's problem' has not served us well and I would like to think of this as the start of many more local initiatives to come. I would also love to see a larger communications campaign encouraging people to take home their litter and consequences for those who do not.

A special thank you to The Pear Tree Café who generously offered much appreciated post clean up drinks and snacks to all involved. I hope this will lay positive foundations for the next World Clean Up Day but equally I am very keen to start a quarterly Young Persons Clean Up initiative to ensure we are consistently protecting the Park which gives us so much joy.

Sandy Copeland writes from a Friends' perspective

Litter is defined in my Thesaurus as 'bits and pieces, clutter, debris, fragments, garbage, jumble, junk, mess, odds and ends, refuse, rubbish, trash, waste'. The merry band of volunteers who met in the Park on a litter-picking expedition on 20 September would certainly vouch for all of those – and probably more as well.

Some 15 or so stout-hearted Friends (Olimpia's team arrived later) gathered near Putt in the Park for briefing, green caps and a group photo (I was late on parade and just missed the photo) before setting off to scour the Park as clean as possible.

Using a plastic litter-picking tool (bought from Amazon for about £9) proved to be a very effective and satisfying experience which became almost an addiction. It will reach deep into the undergrowth to extract items that have lain there for months and then drop them into the black bags which soon began to fill. However, my device baulked at the task of lifting an old car battery which had been left under the bushes so I dragged it out to a more prominent place for Krinkels to take away.

We had not been assigned to any particular areas of the Park so it was important to find 'pastures new' that had not already been scoured by those ahead of us.

I found it satisfying to be able to pull plastic bags out of the Mirror Pools near the Fountains Pool but the most 'profitable' areas were behind the newly painted white benches below the Vista Steps. The undergrowth here yielded literally dozens of glass bottles, beer cans, coke bottles etc which had been thrown over the shoulder by those who had enjoyed them in that lovely setting. It is difficult to understand the attitude of the people who do these things.

My third black bag was nearly full so I joined up with a couple of others and headed for some well-earned refreshment at the Pear Tree Café where an area had been thoughtfully reserved for us. The Friends must have collected at least 15 bags which were mostly emptied into the Park's large bins of left well tied up next to the smaller bins.

It is sad that an exercise of this kind should be necessary but it was very satisfying to take part and I hope to be able to do so again on a future occasion.

Editor's Note: Niko Mardushaj, Operations Director of Krinkels who manage litter collection in the Park, will be invited to reply in the next issue of Review.

Holly trees in Battersea Park

Brian Livingstone and Clive Freedman

Most people thinking of a holly leaf have in their mind a glossy, dark green, wavy leaf with spines on the margin, accompanied by red berries. But the leaves on many of the hollies in Battersea Park don't look like that at all. They may be a mixture of light green, dark green or cream, they may have no spines at all, they may have yellow berries (even when the red berries on other trees are ripe) and they may have no berries at all. Some of the leaf colours are shown in the illustrations accompanying this article. Hollies are known to most people as the tree whose leaves and berries can be used to make Christmas decorations and which is commonly pictured on Christmas cards.

Hollies (*Ilex aquifolium* is the common species) are evergreen, and leaves may last five years before they fall. In the wild, nearly all hollies are either male or female, and they can only be pollinated and produce berries if a male and a female are sufficiently close to each other. However, some cultivars are bisexual, that is to say each flower contains both male (stamens) and female (pistils) reproductive organs. Bisexual trees can self-pollinate and produce berries without needing a separate male plant nearby. Apart from bisexual cultivars, all hollies with berries must be female. If the tree does not have berries, it is only possible to tell whether it is male or female when it is in flower (figs. 1 and 7), generally towards the end of April and in May.

The leaves are always alternate, meaning that you don't see leaves attached opposite to each other on a stem. Variegated cultivars are sometimes identified by smartphone apps as Holly Olive, *Osmanthus heterophyllus*, but that species does have opposite leaves. Often it is only the leaves near the bottom of the tree which have spines, to deter animals which graze on leaves. The spines make Holly suitable for hedging. Some leaves have blotches on the leaf blade caused by a fly whose larvae burrow into the leaves - the European Holly Leafminer, *Phytomyza ilicis* (one can be seen in fig. 2A).

Ripe berries (from September) are typically red, although there is also a yellow-berried form which can be seen in the Park, for example close to Albert Gate (fig. 2A). The berries can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, and sometimes drowsiness, especially in children who might be tempted by the bright red colour. However, birds and rodents eat them, and they help to disperse the seeds.

The wood can be stained and polished for making furniture, and is used to make walking-sticks. It burns well, and small twigs are useful for lighting fires.

Most of the Hollies in the Park are *Ilex aquifolium*. There are a number of Hedgehog Hollies (*I. aquifolium 'Ferox'*) with spines across the surface of the leaf, not just on the margins - one south of the Lake, near the shelter, has only a slightly smaller girth than the Greater London Girth Champion in Cannizaro Park. Some of the 'Ferox' have white margins ('Ferox Argentea', for example near the Millennium Arena ice cream kiosk - fig. 3). 'Crispa' has unusually contorted dull green leaves, mostly without spines (examples on the east corner of the top of the Vista Steps, in the Memorial Garden, and east of the running track). Some of the hollies have weeping (or pendulous) branches. Many of the trees in Battersea Park are Common Holly, but a great many cultivars have been developed, some of which are described and pictured in the *Collins Tree Guide*. We probably have examples of these cultivars in Battersea Park:

- plain dark green: 'Pyramidalis' (numerous berries), 'Latispina' (large leaves, few spines)
- variegated silver: 'Silver Queen' (male, really), 'Argentea Marginata', 'J.C. van Tol', 'Handsworth New Silver'
- variegated gold: 'Golden Queen' (male, really), 'Aurea Marginata', Madame Briot', 'Golden Milkmaid', 'Golden van Tol',
- distinctive: 'Ferox' and 'Ferox Argentea', 'Crispa', 'Pendula' (weeping), 'Amber' (amber berries), *f. bacciflava* (yellow berries).

Quite a few of the Park hollies are the hybrid Ilex x altaclarensis. This hybrid, known as Highclere Holly, was developed at Highclere Castle in Hampshire, England, around 1835, and resulted from crossing the native English holly with the less hardy Madeiran holly (Ilex perado) which was cultivated in a greenhouse on the estate. The name altaclarensis refers to Highclere Castle ("alta" meaning "high," and "Clere"). The leaves on most cultivars are broader than those of Common Holly, and the cultivars in Battersea Park may include these:

- plain dark green: 'Hodginsii', 'Hendersonii', 'Camelliifolia', 'Wilsonii'
- variegated gold: 'Golden King' (female, really), 'Belgica Aurea'.

Two species distinct from Ilex aquifolium can also be seen in the Park. Beside the diagonal path east of the all-weather pitches are small Perny's Holly (*Ilex pernyi* fig. 6). The leaves are squarish at the base, with a long triangular apex and two large spines, and often a smaller spine. A low hedge of Japanese Holly 'Golden Gem' (*Ilex crenata*, also called Box-leaved Holly) was planted in the Promontory Garden in 2018, but much of this has not survived our hot summers.

At https://www.treesofbatterseapark.org you can access an interactive map which shows the locations in Battersea Park of trees and shrubs of interest in particular months of the year. To discuss these trees or other trees and shrubs in Battersea Park, contact batterseaparktreewatchers@btinternet.com.

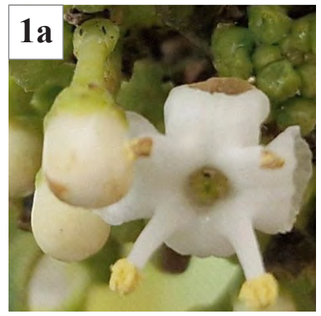



Fig. 1 Holly Flowers **a.** Male flowers - the 4 large stamens are loaded with pollen **b.** Female flowers with berries forming. There are also 4 stamens, as in males, but they are sterile.





Fig 2 a. Yellow-berried form, f, bacciflava. **b.** Red berries on a Common Holly cultivar with leaves with a silver margin.

Fig 3 Silver Hedgehog Holly, "Ferox Argentea". The extra spines are only on the upper face of the leaf, and the stem is purple.

Fig. 4 Entirely cream leaves on Common Holly 'Golden Queen'.

Fig. 5 Purple young leaves on a Common Holly cultivar, possibly 'Madame Briot'.

Fig 6 Leaves of Perny's Holly (*Ilex pernyi*).

Fig 7 Male flowers on a Common Holly cultivar.











Conservation of Stone Sculptures in Battersea Park

Martin Graham

In 2024, the Trustees of Friends of Battersea Park agreed to engage with Wandsworth Council regarding the cleaning and, if necessary, restoration of two of the Park's most iconic stone sculptures: Three Standing Figures by Henry Moore and the 24th Division War Memorial by Eric Kennington.

Overview of the Sculptures

• Henry Moore

Three Standing Figures, 1947

Darnley Dale Stone (Sandstone)

Grade II Listed (1988)

• Eric Kennington

24th Division War Memorial, 1924

Portland Stone (Limestone)

Grade II* Listed (2005)

Neither sculpture had undergone cleaning for at least a decade, and both had accumulated significant surface pollution, including airborne particulates, lichen, moss, leaf debris, and black spot mould. Additionally, there was light graffiti on the Moore sculpture.

Given that Wandsworth was selected as London's Borough of Culture for 2025, the Trustees felt that supporting this conservation effort would be a meaningful contribution to the Borough's cultural showcase.

Following expert advice from James Copper, Head Conservator at the Henry Moore Foundation, the Friends appointed Rupert Harris Conservation Limited (RHC) to carry out the work, with prior approval from Wandsworth Council.

Conservation Approach

Following an initial assessment, RHC proposed a 'stealth' conservation approach - emphasizing minimal intervention and maximum respect for the integrity of the original stone. RHC recommended avoiding abrasive methods and harsh chemicals unless absolutely necessary.

Work began on 7 August and was completed on 12 August 2025.

Both sculptures were cleaned using DOFF steam cleaning technology, which operates at a high temperature of 150°C but with low pressure. This method effectively removed moss, lichen, graffiti, and other surface pollutants without damaging the stone. Care was taken to avoid leaving cleaning streaks or marks, and the sculptures were left to air dry naturally.

Outcomes

The results are striking. Regular visitors to the Park will have noticed immediately the significant visual improvements. The different stone types - sandstone (Moore) and limestone (Kennington) - responded differently to the cleaning process, but in each case, the sculpture's details and surface were greatly enhanced while preserving its natural patina.

No chemical sealants or finishes were applied during or post-cleaning. This decision reflects best practice in conservation, allowing the stone to 'breathe' and maintain its original texture and colour. The porous nature of both sandstone and limestone means they will inevitably become re-populated by organic growth over time, depending on environmental conditions.

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Current Condition

• *Three Standing Figures* (Moore): shows some signs of wear consistent with age, including minor surface abrasions, small cracks, and localised stone loss. None of these issues currently require restoration.

• *24th Division War Memorial* (Kennington): exhibits erosion, particularly on the edges of soldiers' helmets and the sculpted emblems on the main plinth. Some definition has been lost due to natural weathering, but again, not to a degree warranting restoration.

RHC advised that both sculptures remain structurally sound and in acceptable condition. They recommended annual condition monitoring, with future cleaning to be scheduled every 3–5 years, as needed. Over-cleaning should be avoided to preserve the longevity and character of the works.

Cultural Significance

These two important stone works, alongside Barbara Hepworth's bronze *Single Form* (Memorial) and other sculptures, represent the artistic heritage of Battersea Park - a tradition dating back to its opening in the mid-19th century. The Park has long served as a vital cultural venue, notably through its association with the Festival of Britain (1951) and numerous public art initiatives since.

By supporting this conservation work, the Trustees of the Friends hope to ensure that future generations continue to experience the artistic, historical, and environmental richness that Battersea Park uniquely offers.









AGM and Open Forum Discussion 2025



Catie Ferguson and Neil Blackley (Enable); Kate Bock (Chair); Juliet Lyon-Smith (Sec); Sergeant Sunnee Arhagba and Inspector Steve Biggs (Parks Police)

On 14 October, about 45 Friends met at All Saints Church, Prince of Wales Drive for our AGM chaired by Kate Bock. The AGM was followed by an Open Forum discussion. Enable was represented by Neil Blackley, Head of Parks; Catie Ferguson, Parks Stakeholder and Community Development Lead; and Inspector Steve Biggs and Sergeant Sunnee Arhagba from the Parks Police Service. Niko Mardushaj and Steve Morris from Krinkels UK were also present.

The Friends approved the minutes of the last AGM, the Trustees' Report and Accounts for 2024/25, and the reappointment of George Coe as independent examiner for the 2025/26 accounts. The Chairman confirmed the retirement as trustees of Karen Buckle, Inge Darling, Peta May Law and Sally Orman and thanked them for all that they had done for the Friends and the Park. Tim Donovan and Kayt Little were both elected as trustees.

After a break for refreshments, Kate chaired the Open Forum which began with a slide presentation (see opposite) from Neil summarising the changes in place under Wandsworth Council's new contracts with Enable and Krinkels UK (previously known as Continental Landscapes). The key changes are that the Council has taken the Tree Team and biodiversity strategy in-house and Enable no longer manages the ground maintenance and arboriculture contracts. Neil emphasised that knowing who does what is essential for resolving problems speedily. The slides were shown on screens behind the Panel and on a side wall: a great technological leap forward for the Friends.

Neil confirmed that Wandsworth Council should be contacted via its online form for issues relating to trees and infrastructure, Krinkels deal with litter and cleansing and Enable deal with volunteering, events and future developments. He thought that the Council was meeting its 7-day response commitment but this was a matter for the Council.

In response to questions, Neil said that no formal proposal had been received to convert the Fountains area into a lido. Significant costs and heritage restrictions made such a development unlikely. He confirmed that Enable used anonymous mobile phone data to identify hotspots in the Park but that this data could not be used to calculate visitor numbers. Increased litter collections would require increased resources and funding.

Catie outlined some future developments including restoration plans for the Subtropical Garden beds and the Russell Page Garden; volunteer-supported habitat projects; Cascades restoration and new signage. She hoped that Park users would provide feedback via a QR code.

Several Friends expressed concerns about the significant increase in use of e-bikes combined with speeding, poor behaviour and insufficient signage to make it clear that no cycling is permitted except on the four Carriage Drives. Neil said that the location of signs had recently been reviewed but people ignored the signs. He did not think that banning bikes altogether from the Park was an option.

In response to strong views that noise levels for events were too high, Neil confirmed that limits were set for all events and were monitored randomly. Enable had commissioned an environmental audit in 2023 on the impact of the fireworks on wildlife which had concluded that no clear adverse effects could be established. Drone displays were not viable because of the proximity of the Park to Battersea heliport.

Neil confirmed that funds from the fireworks and other ticketed events go into the Council's general revenue. There is no direct link between events income and Battersea Park's maintenance costs which are not separately identified but are included within costs for all open spaces within the Borough. A Friend suggested investigating events income versus Park maintenance costs under a Freedom of Information request to the Council.

The Police were thanked for dealing with parking problems at Chelsea Gate and car park. They confirmed that 9 full time officers and 2 reserves carry out regular patrols in the Park. During working hours, they can be contacted on 07500 959442 (also available via WhatsApp).

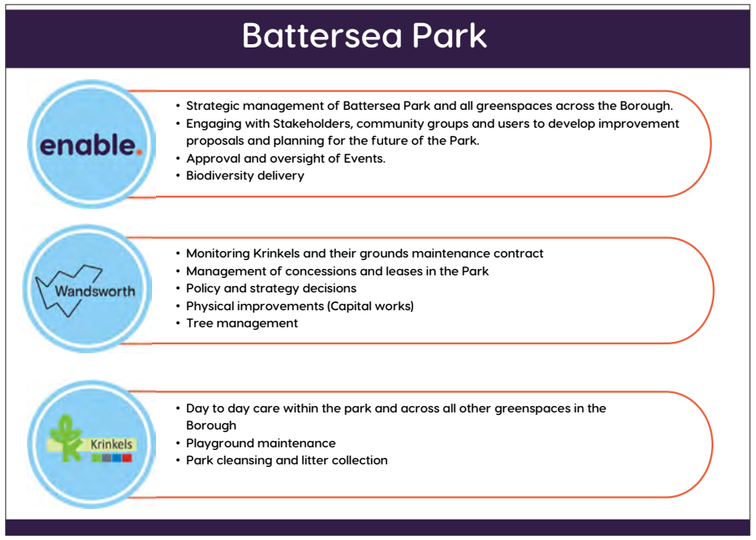
A Friend suggested using Friends' funds to digitise and make available early copies of Review.

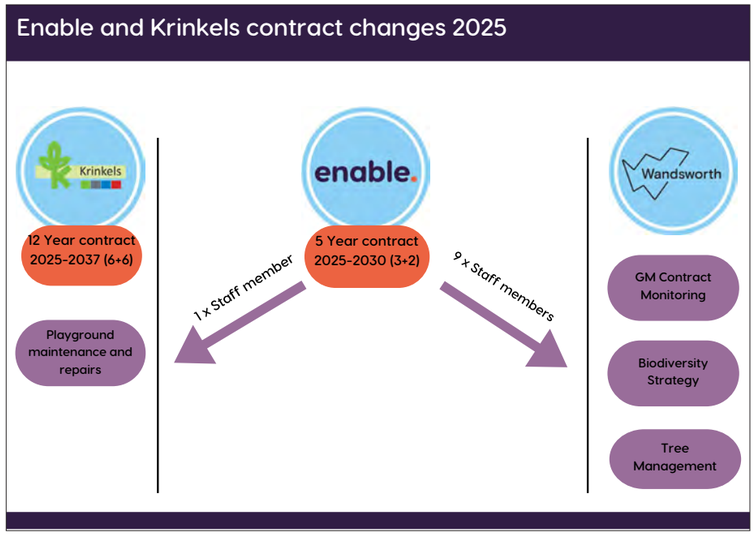
Supported by others, a Friend asked about the serious lack of lavatories in the Park. Neil confirmed that the Pear Tree Café had installed temporary portaloos for the summer (now removed) and added capacity within the café. However, the proposal significantly to expand capacity at the café had not progressed due to cost. The issue remained pending with the Council.

Finally, Neil confirmed that the Albert Gate is being repaired under a Council-managed project. No on-site work will take place until after the fireworks.

Kate closed the meeting with thanks to Enable, the Parks Police, Krinkels and all Friends present.

As trustees and helpers cleared up and stacked the tables and chairs, our host and Friend Rev David Walsh took to the floor with Henry the hoover.







Wildlife in the park

Valerie Selby, *Enable's Parks Improvement Manager*





How to tell the difference: Moorhen (above); Coot (below)

If you google 'biodiversity in Battersea Park' AI will tell you 'Battersea Park is a green oasis and vital habitat for wildlife in the heart of London'. As people familiar with the Park, we all know it's a green oasis, but where's the wildlife?

Really the wildlife is everywhere, from the soil organisms beneath us to the species using the airspace above us. But if you want to spot the diversity that the Park supports, where should you actually begin to look?

As we go from autumn into winter, I would always advise you to start at the Lake. It hosts a significant number of overwintering waterfowl: shovelers, most often seen going round and around in circles by the aerators, tufted ducks, pochard, gadwall, pintail, teal and the much-maligned mallard. Many gulls spend time on the Lake: the herring gull, the black headed gull and occasionally lesser and greater black backed gulls. Geese are present all year round, with Canadian and greylag geese and the more colourful Egyptian geese.

Alongside the geese throughout most of the year, you see moorhen (red beaks and frontal shield with a yellow tip, more secretive), coot (white beaks and frontal shield, often in large and obvious flotillas) and great crested grebe. There are also species that are harder to spot including the kingfisher, when often all you will see is a flash of metallic blue whizzing by, or the reed buntings, who you are more likely to hear than see around the areas of emergent vegetation.

Next stop would be the areas that make up the Battersea Park Local Nature Reserve. These Reserves are a statutory designation identifying sites that have wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally and which offer opportunities to study or learn about nature or simply to enjoy it. In Battersea Park the sites that were declared are the woodland area that runs along the eastern edge of the Park known as The Wilderness along with the meadow and scrub area known as The Meadow that sits to the north of the Millenium Arena. These spots are favoured by bats including common and soprano pipistrelle, serotines, noctules and Daubenton's bats and particularly the Leisler's bat which has an established colony in Battersea Park. You will almost certainly be able to spot them flying round at dusk between these wooded and scrubby areas and the Lake, foraging for their diet of moths, flies and beetles.

These places are also crucial for many of the invertebrates in the Park including the white letter hairstreak butterfly that lays its eggs on the elm regeneration around the edge of The Meadow. This butterfly is listed as vulnerable on the 2022 GB Red List and is a high conservation priority. You will also spot greater and lesser stag beetles around The Meadow whilst in The Wilderness listen out for the many small birds that call this area home, including treecreeper, nuthatch, and great spotted woodpecker, all of whom make use of holes in trees for nesting. Throughout the year you can also see and hear goldcrest, gangs of long tailed tits as well as house sparrows, blue and great tits, wrens and blackbirds.

Next time we shall consider all the less likely areas that are worth visiting to spot our wild neighbours.

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Beef Please!

Jessica Bailey

Nothing says Sunday to me more than a roast, and roast beef is my absolute favourite. It was a lovely surprise to discover the extremely pretty **No. Fifty Cheyne** in Chelsea, a stone's throw from Battersea Bridge and Battersea Park. It even serves roast beef on Saturday as well as traditionally on Sunday. Not alone in my love of a Sunday roast on a Saturday too, and at a snip of the usual price, I roped in my thirteen-year-old daughter and her godmother to join me in my carnivorous foray.

From Chelsea Embankment you can't miss the conspicuous baby-blue facade making it an Instagram dream. It is charming, covered in gorgeous faux vines and flowers, quite rightly starring as the backdrop to many a romantic photograph. Inside it's chic yet warm and hearty with an open kitchen complete with attentive staff so the experience from the offset is one of delight.

Once seated, all three of us opted to dive in directly to the star of the show: the Hereford roast beef, of course. This comes piled high with a large, fluffy Yorkshire puddings, roast potatoes, seasonal vegetables and gravy. We couldn't resist a side of cauliflower cheese, which was absolutely not needed with the included generous portions but truly scrumptious all the same.

Our roast came under the title of 'Sharing Roast', which includes a dessert of your choice. This goes for a very reasonable £45pp. You could also have chosen Herdwick lamb (leg and shoulder) with herb pesto or roast chicken. If you'd have preferred not to go for the Sharing Roast, a solitary version is available for £25pp. The signature roast trimmings are so popular that, you can add them to any dish for £9.50. You can even take the roasts home.

Afterwards, we all had the Sticky Toffee Pudding, made to perfection, luscious and syrupy. The petit fours with our coffee were a final treat.

The whole experience was divine, a real pleasure. No. 50 Cheyne lends itself to a special occasion yet could easily become your favourite weekend haunt. Dogs are welcome if kept on leads.

***No. 50 Cheyne**, 50 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, London SW3 5LR, 020 7376 8787. Open for Lunch Wed - Fri, midday - 2.30pm; 3.30pm on Sat; 9pm on Sunday. Dinner Mon – Sat 6pm to last booking 10pm.*



Being a burger veteran, on my American side, I've been longing to try **Manna** in Battersea Power Station, the brainchild of the Bake Street chef and food writer, Feroz Gaija and I was so pleased that I did.



I ordered the Classic Smash Burger (£10) consisting of a smashed patty, American cheese, mustard, ketchup, mayo, decent-sized pickles and diced onions. You can opt for a Double Manna (£13), a Hot Smash (£10) or a Vegan Burger (£10). There are kids' meal deals that include Nashville Chicken Tenders & Fries (£10) and value platters for one or two that come with Burgers, Tenders and Jalapeno Cream (£15/£30) and their generously seasoned, piping-hot Waffle Fries. The Manna seasoning and special sauce are outstanding though a little on the spicy side but this adds just the right amount of pizazz, which makes the food all the more moreish. There are desserts and shakes. The Apple Pie with Cinnamon Sugar (£3.50) is to die for, but the star of the show is the perfect Classic Smash Burger.

Manna, *Level 1, Turbine Hall B, Battersea Power Station, London SW11 8AL. Open Mon – Sat 11am – 9pm, Sunday 11am – 8pm.*

Interview with Councillor Paul White



Councillor White has been Wandsworth Council's Cabinet Member for Environment since 23 May this year. He is responsible for recycling, waste collection, street cleaning, the management and maintenance of the Borough's parks and open spaces, and climate change.

Can you tell us a little about yourself, your political journey.

My family was political, especially my Dad who was brought up in Ireland when the new 'Free State' was forming. He was a Trade Unionist and Labour Party member and our dinner table was a place of debate and argument.

I stood for the Council first in 1994, having been asked to and thought why not?! I lost, but when my two boys went to university in the USA, I returned to local Labour Party politics and, after another two defeats, was elected in the then Tooting Ward in a by-election in 2016.

My two big passions are Housing and Environment. As Cabinet Member for Environment, I am enjoying every minute!

What is your experience of Battersea Park and what is your favourite part of it?

I remember the old Fun Fair when I was very young and we used to go there on Sundays in the summer with my family. I remember the Big Dipper and candy floss. I loved the Park then and now, the very different areas which gives it such great character: the Festival Heritage, Lake and of course the River Walk.

The Labour Party manifesto said that Labour would welcome a free Battersea Parkrun. Could you update the Friends on your review of Parkrun and what measures might be taken to safeguard the Park and other Park users?

I came to the first year anniversary run and what a great celebration that was! I have a football injury, so couldn't take part, but almost 1,000 others did. Parkrun has been a great success, with over 25,000 participants in a year. It lasts for only an hour on Saturday mornings. Social running has become really important in peoples' lives and Parkrun has captured that spirit.

It's important that we recognise that different people want to use the Park in different ways. That could be finding some peace and quiet, enjoying nature, or taking part in physical or sporting activity that may require facilities. We must all respect that the ways we enjoy are not always the ways others do.

There were also plans to 'plant more trees and flowers, protect biodiversity and promote a plastic free Wandsworth'. How is this being demonstrated in Battersea Park?

We want to ensure that trees, flowers and our biodiversity flourish and that biodiversity increases. We are compiling a new Biodiversity Strategy and this will reflect a new updated approach, containing the experiences and knowledge of groups and residents in Wandsworth, which are much greater than they were, even five years ago.

We are also forming a Tree Planting and Maintenance Strategy. Advances in knowledge inform our policies. We want to see trees planted that are complementary, robust and are kept disease free.

We are lucky to have a very experienced Tree and Biodiversity team, which now operates 'in house' as Borough employees.

We are all worried about climate change. In relation to Parks and open spaces, the green lungs of Wandsworth. What changes would you like to see?

I got interested in climate change many years ago and gave up a car more than ten years ago. I cycle everywhere now (including in the Park!) and try to limit my impact on the planet. As well as encouraging cycling, we aim to deliver ten pocket parks (the first one in Earlsfield) and have a major project in Tooting Broadway to make the main street greener. We are looking in particular at 'grey', low income areas to see if we could improve them in these ways, which can have positive impacts on behaviour as well as helping to absorb climate change gases.

How have you found your first five months as Cabinet member for Environment? Have you been surprised by any of the issues that you have had to address?

I've been blessed with a good Council team, and they've made it easy for me, as well as our Council Committee team and my Cabinet colleagues. I cover a big area and it can be difficult to read everything and to decide where we should be going, but I'm getting there!

I've not been surprised by too much, but the big plus is the positivity people have, in general, and how engaged Wandsworth people are. We have a very disparate population and extremes in means and networks and I'd really like to see more cross-demographic networking, real understanding and empathy.

In Battersea Park, there are some perpetual problems such as dealing with litter, dogs and unauthorised cycling. Any new ideas as to how to tackle them?

If I knew the answer to this question, I'd be a rich man! This is a UK-wide problem. We have an individualistic society that doesn't take easily to a stricture or a disapproving look, unlike in countries like Austria, Switzerland and Sweden.

That doesn't mean we should throw in the towel. We were recently contacted by a Battersea Park local, who was very disappointed by litter, but then came up with some useful ideas, including helping young children with their parents to clean up their play spaces and impressing upon businesses that they should take more responsibility for what happens to the wrapping from their products. Less wrapping would help our environment generally, but that's another question!

I believe we should have days when our Parks Police, who do a good job, could be supported to look out for littering and issue fines to show we are serious. We should also keep the bins from overflowing as a good visual reminder of pride in our parks. We are working with the Police to do speed tests on bikes, to issue fines and warnings and to spread awareness of maximum speeds. Bikes would be inspected to see whether they have been 'souped up' and are therefore unsuitable for a park where the speed limit is 12 mph.

We have just renewed our dog walking Public Spaces Protection Order, which restricts individuals to walking no more than four dogs which must be on a lead in some areas. Professional dog walkers must have a licence and no more than six dogs. Our consultation revealed high support for this action, with fines for dogs out of control in our parks.

As someone who has been a football coach, what is your view on sport and the facilities in the Park? Do you think that there is a danger of the Park being overwhelmed by organised runs (excluding Parkrun) especially at weekends?

Again, we must recognise the importance of our parks having different uses and our respect for those different users. There are many running groups who use the Park. These are socialising opportunities for people, especially those who are new to the area. The good air quality, reduced danger and beautiful surroundings must surely be better than running on the grey streets!

We are upgrading many of our facilities, including our All Weather Pitches, tennis courts and athletic enclosure. We have also added padel and pickleball. Our parks must always have a good balance between different recreations.

We are concerned that the changes made to the Enable contract effective from 1 April this year have undermined Enable and made it much more difficult to report problems in the Park and to secure updates and feedback. What can be done about this?

I'm not aware of difficulties contacting the people responsible for problems in the Park and if you forward me details, I will look into it.

We are drawing up our Biodiversity Plan and really wanted that team to be in the Council to ensure we have the expertise to do this. Our relationship with Enable is good and we are confident they can be a positive influence on Battersea Park.

How do you see the role of Friends groups?

They play an important role in assisting the Council maintain parks and commons to high standard, adding volunteering hours, local expertise and important 'eyes and ears' on the ground, for example reporting problems with trees so that we can react quickly. They are important voices for the formulation of Council's policy.

We are keen to see a wide community being involved in the Friends Groups, so all voices can be heard and can influence Friends Groups. We have All Group meetings twice a year. Enable meet individual groups more regularly.

In the future, when you step down, what would you want your legacy to be?

As regards parks and leisure, that we would be providing better sports facilities and would have addressed our playing pitch shortfalls. More people would be involved in sport and the ten percent gap between male and female participation would have narrowed.

Our new biodiversity, tree procurement and maintenance plans would see continuing biodiversity gains with Wandsworth looking greener and more of our 'grey', especially lower income, areas benefiting from more greening, with wild meadows and mini forests being more of a feature.

I would hope that our Access for All Scheme remains central to our attempts to even out participation in all that Wandsworth has to offer, resulting in more mixing of ages, backgrounds and demographics, such that this Borough is more united and purposeful.

The Battersea Society Photography Award 2025





Many of the photographs submitted this year, as in previous years, were taken in the Park. The theme for 2025 was 'community'.

The winning photograph was *Together, We Can* by Malavika Patankar who described it as: 'A picnic in the Park during a brief respite from Lockdown. Daycare friends teamed up in Battersea Park to move something bigger than all of them put together!'

One of the five highly commended runners up was *Symmetry at the Water's Edge* by Tim Bush. One of the judges commented: 'A very simple and well observed photograph which has the feel of street photography in that it is spontaneous and humorous. The two dominant shapes in the picture are a play on each other and the gaps created by the man's arms can be seen as a play on the hole in the Hepworth sculpture'.

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Events

NOV	**Thursday 20 to Wednesday 24 Dec** Chelsea Bridge Car Park	**Pines and Needles** Christmas trees for sale
	Saturday 22 Battersea Evolution	**Battersea Ball** in aid of the Battersea Crime Prevention Panel raising funds for Battersea Summer Scheme. Ticket information on *batterseaball.org.uk* or *ball@bcpp.co.uk*
DEC	**Wednesday 3** 11am to 2.30pm Thrive Main Garden	**Thrive Christmas Open Day** Sale of Christmas cards, wreaths, calendars, cakes, jams and chutney
	6, 12, 13, 20, 21 5.30-8.30pm Children's Zoo	**Winter Nights at the Zoo** Special openings after dark with Christmas performances, exclusive mini feeding experiences and talks, seasonal treats. Tickets from *batterseaparkzoo.co.uk/whats-on/events/winter-nights-at-the-zoo/*
	Thursday 25 Battersea Evolution	**Rotary Club Christmas Luncheon** *rotarychristmasday.org* for guest tickets or to volunteer
	Wednesday 31 19:30pm to 2am Battersea Evolution	**New Year's Eve Ball.** Tickets from £249 *londonnewyearseveball.co.uk*
2026		
JAN	**Tuesday 20 to Sunday 25** 11am to 8pm; 7pm on Sat, 6pm Sun Battersea Evolution	**The Decorative Fair** Free entry after 4pm
MAR	**Wednesday 4 to Sunday 8** 11am to 8pm Battersea Evolution	**The Affordable Art Fair**
	Monday 16 **St Saviours Church 116 Battersea Park Road. Lunch from 12.30; Lecture from 1.15**	**Friends' Spring Lunchtime Lecture** Mike Bates on the lesser-known memorials in Battersea Park. Full details in the enclosed flier, or from *info@friendsofbatterseapark.org* or 020 7031 8067. Tickets from *friendsofbatterseapark.org/events*
REGULAR EVENTS	**Wednesdays** 10.30 – 11.15am	**Free Walk** open to all. Meet at Albert Bridge Gate Info: *activelifestyles@enable.com*
	Wednesdays from 10am	**Volunteer Gardening in the Winter Garden** Contact *fhradcliffe@gmail.com* to check it's happening
	Saturdays 9am	**Parkrun** Updates and cancellations on *www.parkrun.org.uk/battersea/*
	Sundays 9am	**Junior Parkrun** from hut at All Weather Pitches

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