

Briefing Note

To: Waterlow Park Trust Advisory Group

From: Oliver Jones, Head of Green Spaces
Fiona Murphy, Chair of Friends of Waterlow Park

Date: 05 April 2022

Title: Friends of Waterlow Park Nature Area proposal and consultation

Proposal

As set out in the consultation document, in summary:

“The change in use for the area is suggested to provide a place for individuals or groups to explore nature. The proposed new woodland for nature study is outlined in red on the Waterlow Park map below. This enclosure has holly hedges and shrubs on three sides. A low wooden fence would be added along its Northern path, with access through a gate”



Timeline

A public consultation was carried out between 1 and 25 February 2022, to invite comments on a proposed temporary nature study area in the park. The public engagement was carried out on behalf of Camden Green Spaces by the Friends of Waterlow Park and publicised through notices in the park, mailings to members of the Friends, the Friends' website and its social media.

In parallel to this, a member of the public launched a petition on Change.org citing 'Save Waterlow Park from Privatisation'. This received over 900 signatures and 76 comments during the consultation period.

Efforts of the Green Spaces' Service, Friends of Waterlow Park and the Trust Advisory Group to correct the proposition and comments set out in the petition made no impact. The petition focussed on the themes that part of the park was to be enclosed for commercial use and the park needed to be saved from "privatisation". It therefore attracted a large number of signatures.

Responses

The public was invited to respond using a link to the Friends of Waterlow website or via an email address.

The petition provided a link to the Friends consultation, but it is clear the rhetoric of the petition influenced responses regardless of the actual proposal.

Responses to the consultation

104 individuals responded to the consultation with the headline of:

- 48 responses stating they were for the proposal
- 36 responses stating they were against the proposal
- 20 responses neither stated they were for nor against (these generally responded to the erroneous statements of the petition)

A copy of the responses are appended to this Briefing Note.

We would like to thank those that responded to the consultation for their time in providing their opinion on this proposal.

The Friends of Waterlow Park and the Trust Advisory Group sought to correct misunderstanding about the proposals and allay fears of privatisation through statements on their websites.

Next steps

It is clear that in an atmosphere of mixed messages there is no overwhelming approval or understanding of the proposal. We therefore recommend that this proposal, as consulted upon, is not taken forward.

TAG is requested to consider and support those elements which did receive support, namely:

- Improvements to the area's biodiversity, including planting and wildlife habitats
- Informal log-seating

Enclosure of the area with fencing is not to be taken forward, nor are formal restrictions on dogs within this area, though Camden expects dog walkers to keep their dogs under control and be considerate to other park users.

Camden will continue to welcome schools and nurseries to use the park for outdoor learning. We will not be allocating a specific area of the park for these sessions, nor offering exclusive use. We expect childcare providers to be considerate to other park users and follow our code of conduct. If schools wish to bring larger groups of children to the park (more than 25 people) they would need to contact our events service to arrange these activities.

TAG is recommended to agree that:

- This Briefing Note is published as part of meeting paper with a clear outcome that this proposal is not to be taken forward.
- Code of conduct of outdoor learning use to be updated specifically for Waterlow Park.

END

Appendix : Responses to the Consultation

1 08 February 2022 17:56

im presuming this is the page for the consultation on a wild life area
i was just reading it; GOOD IDEA.

would it get overrun though by school children and parents?

More like it in waterlow, kitchen garden and surrounds? keep dogs out they should be kept
out of certain areas

fence? what about all round; bird boxes good idea, will they be of any use? put some in the
area round the pond, thats the pond rough area towards the tennis courts

also regents park has a wild life, rough pasture area near the tennis court, and a walk
through, with water, and also a rockery shrubbery garden with winding path. i think hyde
park is developing one among many and allowing grass to grow and flowers including
wildlife. what though, birds, not even sparrows, bees, wasps, not, bats, there used to be
bats in hyde park near the water, not, highgate wood, what else, a constituent change in
wild life and vegetation, flowers and so on.

to further the lungs of london so on thank you good bye

—
2 08 February 2022 17:55

I think it's a good plan. Log seats wold be a nice addiction and a nice "secret place" for the
kids.

—
3 08 February 2022 21:49

I am strongly against the proposal to turn this area into another nature education area for
children. its one of the few fairly enclosed spaces left in the park and I think we should
keep it exactly as it is

4 08 February 2022 20:20

I support the idea, Thank you.

—
5 09 February 2022 11:12

New area seems good idea. Details would be
useful

6 09 February 2022 11:49

Dear Friends of Waterlow Park,

I absolutely support your woodland education area in Waterlow Park.

A great idea and will help all I can. In Dartmouth Park we are trying to keep the Mortimer
Terrace Nature Reserve for the Community, education and biodiversity as many families
and children do not have gardens of their own. All the very best with your endeavours,

7 09 February 2022 12:36

I fully support this project , more and more schools are offering FOREST SCHOOL and we need more designated spaces .

—
8 09 February 2022 12:38

Hi,
Many thanks for the opportunity to comment on the wilding proposals.
In general I am in favour of this for a wide range of environmental and educational reasons.
One caveat though: WP is one of London's great ornamental parks - beautifully laid out, themed and well loved. The current proposals fit well into this remit but i would be reluctant to see the overall ethos of the park changed much beyond the current proposals. Good Luck!

—
9 09 February 2022 13:48

As a former primary school teacher and headteacher, I think the proposed creation of a nature education area is an excellent idea.

—
10 09 February 2022 18:18

The new nature area seems a good idea, though it seems rather small and perhaps could be extended to cover a bit more ground.

—
11 09 February 2022 20:06

Re your proposal "Waterlow Park Proposed Nature Education Area" - this sounds like a good idea which I would happily support. Regards,

12
08 February 2022 18:15

I don't think I have been a member to comment properly.... And live in Muswell Hill.... But to me it sounds like a very positive improvement. I wish you all the very good luck with your plan, Best wishes,

13
Sent: 08 February 2022 19:41
More power to your efforts. Is there anything I can do to help?

14
Sent: 08 February 2022 23:05 and 19 February
Subject: Re: Fw: Proposed Nature Education Area
Thank you. I will look at the website. Sounds like a good idea.

I am in favour of the new proposals as long as they will be properly managed and looked after in the future. So many projects start off with good intentions and then interest and manpower dwindles and the areas become a mess.

15
8 Feb and Fri, 18 Feb 2022 at 13:06

Subject: Re: Fw: Proposed Nature Education Area (email followed up by response through website)

It would seem a nice idea, and good to have a dog free area. I support the plan, provided the proposed area is meant to be freely open to the public.

16

12.02.2022 at 16:41

I think this is a great idea as we are really missing using the upper pond area . It is a good choice as there is dense tree cover so users will feel more enclosed in a woodland area than in the open parkland.If it is to be used for small school groups, there would be plenty of scope for hanging hammocks , and den building without having any negative impact on the environment .

17 12 February 2022 14:56

Dear Freinds of Waterlow Park,

Waterlow Park has many happy memories for me as a child, for my family and as an outdoor facilitator. I'm in favour of the purposed area and feel the site would hugely benefit as a nature education area for local school children and adults alike. The introduction of this new site would not only boost the biodiversity, but it would also provide a safe= and secure area for local education settings, nurseries, groups, childminders and others alike to explore the wonders of what the area has to offer. Children especially will be given the opportunity to explore freely and safely within the natural boundaries and ~~without risk of dogs entering the site. It is a wonderful opportunity. All the best.~~

18 11 February 2022 16:26

Great idea to make the shrub bed near the High Street entrance more of a nature area by banning dogs and planting up more native shrubs and trees

19 11 February 2022 14:36

The nature area proposal looks great - wonderful to have a space set aside for children's education.

20 11 February 2022 10:03

The new plan looks like a good idea.

Some dog owners will not be happy, as they like their dogs to have access to all areas of the park, including both children's areas.

I am a part dog owner myself but I respect the fact they shouldn't have access to all the park.

Good luck with the project

21

13 February AND Sat, 19 Feb 2022 at 10:48

Hello all, I walked around the little pond and rough area with its natural over flow down to the grass area and always think this is the wild area. Can you not extend this area which has all the makings of a wild area and plenty of interests for children.

I often brought my grandson and happy to see the walk round and steps.

You could hide the compost area by woodland trees and not have far to go for your leaf mound?

I have sent a comment I think under general. The area you speak of is not far from the little pond and as one, adding more bat and bird boxes would be great learning area. Also I think children should see the compost heap and if they have no garden or a compost heap what's stopping them bringing mum and dad's veggie left over to the park heap.. and if they are lucky one might see slow worm. Can we have stones near pond where newts and lizards hide. find a sunny spot for the lizards. I remember as a child lifting stones to find creatures.

22

14 Feb 2022 at 18:51 and Wed, 23 Feb 2022, 23:00

I am against this proposal for several reasons:

I do not approve of further areas of WP being fenced off in any way, nor do I accept the need to provide a fenced off area to well off children for commercial gain by [name removed] - or indeed any other private for profit enterprise. Those of us with years of experience counselled strongly against the overuse of the so called natured area around the upper pond knowing full well that it would soon get over used and misused and- worst of all be closed off at key times to the general public. Now a similar proposal would see a further area closed off for significant periods of time . I am particularly concerned that- once again this will impact on families and children with no private gardens or space of their own living in dense Camden housing estates.

I am shocked that the information you have provided on this website does not make clear the situation.

some queries after reading the rather brief consultation background information:
My questions mainly for CC but also FOWP and TAG - in case any relevant info has been shared with them

1) Does CC currently have an agreement with any commercial groups in relation to regular paid use of the Pond Nature area and /or the new proposed area ? By regular I mean at least one session per week for several hours for abgroup of ten or more. Yes or No- (if Yes which CC officer/ department is responsible for negotiating this, receiving the payment and passing the funds onto the Waterlow Park Trust and how is this info shared with TAG.)

2) All the info to date in consultation and background refers to children, families and small groups using the proposed space on an ad hoc basis with no booking- therefore presumably no payment or sole use. For any regular or group use, what does CC consider to be a small group? (please note the [name removed] Website was offering this space for 18 people over a 4 hour period twice a week(15 children and 3 adults) 3) Please clarify how [name removed] would have had access to all the information about this space - well ahead of the consultation- in order to provide a page with a map and their offer, in the hope of taking bookings ahead of a spring start to sessions.

3) Given that the proposal will make a significant difference in terms of open and always accessible space close to the northern High St entrance to WP- especially for families with children, please explain why there is such an urgent need to push through such a material change to these open spaces.

4) What evidence does CC have that enclosing this area to prevent dogs but encouraging significant use by commercial groups, other groups and the general public will help to increase biodiversity? All the evidence thus far from the H&HS and the C of L Heath Management indicates that footfall, overuse of a space and specifically Forest School use leads to serious degradation.

5) Please explain why FOWP and CC are not willing to trial a system whereby signage, bird boxes logs and other items to educate users about nature cannot be installed as a first stage in this area, ahead of expensive fencing and other initiatives which could wait until the space can be monitored in terms of increase or loss of biodiversity.

6) Please explain why CC and FOWP will not consider natural enclosure materials to discourage dogs from exploring this area- rather that fencing and gates- unless the real reason is to ensure that children who are there as part of a commercial enterprise with the need for H&S and insurance cannot get out.

7) As a biodiversity survey is just begining in Waterlow Park, please clarify why this project can not be be taken forward in tandem with that survey, to ensure that all decisions most beneficial to both park users and biodiversity across all the publics paces in this park are considered in the round at the same time to ensure the best possible outcomes taking all considerations into account.

8) please clarify whether the use of this new site will be tempoary or permanent as this is not clear from current websites and information provided. Please clarify whether the

23

Tue, 15 Feb 2022 at 10:09

Please do not privatise Waterlow Park. It is super important to our local community of humans and dogs.

24

Tue, 15 Feb 2022 at 10:22

Please sign me up as objecting to the enclosure of part of Waterlow Park! We are lucky to have open spaces in this area, and once one park starts shutting off parts of it, what happens then.....??

25

15 Feb 2022 at 11:00

Do not make private, or with privileged access only, any part of Waterlow park. It is against the spirit of the garden for the gardenless, and could lead to further restrictions of access.

26

Tue, 15 Feb 2022 at 11:49

Both my husband and I are TOTALLY opposed to PRIVATISING an area of the park. The park was designated as use for all users to be able to use all areas of the park for people who do not have gardens. It is totally wrong to think that part of the park can be fenced off for certain groups. FOWP are not telling the public the whole story, how disgraceful. You do not need to fence off areas for encouraging bio-diversity. We have bat boxes, bird boxes and fox who outnumber any amount of dogs during the day, who are in the park at night (statistics available but we are sure you know that but choose to ignore it). Yet another example of small pressure groups trying to get their way and ignoring the wishes of the majority. NO NO NO

27

15 Feb 2022 at 16:16

I object to this proposal. Why does the park need a specific area for this. Fenced off areas look uninviting and the park already has the pond area. Children and adults should see nature as it is intended, not a sanitised version of it. I also understand that some sort of contract has been entered into with childrens groups to allow them to use this area almost exclusively. If this is the case then it's disingenuous not to state this in your consultation.

28

Wed, 16 Feb 2022, 14:06

I object to a part of the park being taken over for private use under the pretext of biodiversity. Please leave the facilities of the park open to all, particularly children who are less privileged.

29

Wed, 16 Feb 2022, 14:09

Hello,

I have two issues.

Firstly, the proposed fencing off the woodland area near the Highgate High Street entrance to the park. I can't see any justification to fencing off yet another piece of the park for specific use. The park should be for everyone and the bit in question is particularly popular with young school children after school. And I would like to remind the Friends of Waterlow Park that without dogs, the park would be almost empty on all but fair weather days.

Secondly, I would like to make a case for banning the controversial bbq. On sunny days with literally scores of groups cooking, the particulate particle pollution level in the park is more than 10 times recommended safe levels. Going to the park for a breath of fresh air becomes a joke. Please reconsider before the season kicks off. Thank you.

30

Wed, 16 Feb 2022 at 14:49

I am very concerned with what seems to be the withholding of crucial and important information in relation to your proposal to create a proposed "nature education area".

There are reports that an agreement has been entered into with a private group to hire the proposed space for after school club use.

If this is true or the intention behind the change of use, then dressing this consultation up as a proposal to increase biodiversity is both disingenuous and dishonest and those responsible should have no place or role in the administration of Waterlow Park.

If this turns out to be true then those responsible should be publically named and shamed.

31

Wed, 16 Feb 2022 at 15:48

I object to this proposal that will enclose an area of the park. It should remain an open 'garden for the gardenless

32

Thu, 10 Feb 2022 at 15:27

Hello, These changes all sound positive and I would support them.

A couple of thoughts: I haven't visited this part of the park recently but wonder if the tree canopy in this area is rather dense, so it may prevent any new plantings from thriving because there is too little light. Is there a case for some limited pruning of tree branches to create dappled shade so that plants at ground level can grow well?

Can you find a way of labelling trees which is vandal proof? It's great for children (and adults) to be able to identify tree species with and without leaves, by looking at the tree shape, bark and so on.

In addition to permanent information boards, please consider a blackboard which can be updated daily or whenever a visitor spots an interesting bird, plant, insect and so on. As seen in many nature reserves.

Thanks, look forward to seeing these plans move forwards.

33

Wed, 16 Feb 2022 at 16:38

Hello, I think this idea sounds very sensible and a great way to increase biodiversity in the park. I've lived in the area for over 15 years and visit Waterlow Park regularly. Like many other green spaces in the area, it's suffered a bit from increased use during the pandemic - this is of course also a positive thing, as it's meant more people have enjoyed and appreciated local nature. But there's also been an increase in dog walkers, and that does bring its own issues. Your plan sounds like a great way to live and let live!
Best wishes

34

16 Feb 2022 at 18:09

Proposed enclosure a complete waste of time and money. The proposal will not aid biodiversity in any way and is more likely to destroy animal and insects habitats. It is likely to become no more than a picnic area with all the resultant rubbish. If it is to be only temporary whilst the Upper Pond area is renovated why bother !!

35

Thu, 17 Feb 2022, 06:11

Biodiversity project consultation.

I think Friends of Waterloo park are in danger of over thinking the purpose and use of the park. It is a large garden for public use. I see no need for causing disruption or blocking areas off for this or that use, or for people with or without dogs. This assumption that dogs in some way reduce biodiversity in a tiny area is also a bit weird when there are some many active foxes. I don't think the plan is in anyway necessary. I don't think that Waterlow park needs more biodiversity. I think focus should be on the general upkeep of the park for the use of all of the public.

36

Thu, 17 Feb 2022, 08:27

I have read the proposals for the proposed Nature Education Area in Waterlow Park and offer my enthusiastic support.

Education about, and access to, nature is so important for children if we have any hope that they will grow into adults who take a responsible view concerning the planet.

I should add that I welcome the fact that dogs will be excluded from this area. The dog population in London has grown alarmingly since Covid arrived and this creates many problems (hygiene, degradation of natural environment, especially ponds etc) in parks and open spaces. It is very noticeable on nearby Hampstead Heath.

37

Thu, 17 Feb 2022 at 09:12

Leave Waterlow Park as a public space.

38

Thu, 17 Feb 2022 at 14:17

Waterlow Park was donated as a gift "A Garden for the gardenless". Now, more than at any previous time, people need free spaces to walk and enjoy wildlife and outdoor space. It should not be privatised for any reason, it should remain open to all.

39

Thu, 17 Feb 2022, 11:58 and Mon, 21 Feb 2022, 13:40

I have seen some confusing information about this project in Waterlow Park. Can you please clarify who is behind the plan? Will the Council be managing this proposed designated area, or a private party? And if a private party will have control, or a say, in managing this, then please say who it is. It's very hard for residents to understand what is actually proposed when you don't make clear who is going to manage this cordoned off area. PS if it is a private entity, then naturally I and many others will be strongly opposing such a change.

Thanks.

Hi, following on from a previous query about this project, I'd just like to add for the consultation, that: - It would be helpful for Camden Council, and WFP, to set out more clearly what is planned and who will be responsible for it. (It seems that much of the anxiety caused by this has stemmed from a lack of certainty about the potential for 'privatisation' of this part of the Park, and what kind of precedent that then sets for the end of this public space.)- The idea of fencing off part of the park 'to protect nature' does seem like overkill, given how small a space is targeted and the fact that wildlife traverses the entire park (and nearby Highgate Cemetery, the Heath, and back gardens.) After all, this isn't like trying to protect a rain forest, it's fencing off a section of the park that is not that different to other corners of the space. - Having some improved guardrails by the pond, and to reduce traffic through the more densely wooded area, does make some sense, but putting a barrier all around it does Not seem to be in keeping with the spirit of a public place. - TL/DR - 1) pls clarify who is behind this plan and who would manage it, and assure all that there is no private party involved who is seeking to control access or benefit from that reduced access, 2) some small amount of additional fencing seems sensible, but not to keep out the public, nor prevent access if people want to access that area. Hope that helps.

40

Thu, 17 Feb 2022 at 11:17

Waterlow Park was gifted to the local community by Sir Sydney Waterlow, as "a garden for the gardenless" in 1889. Privatising any part of the park goes against it's original intent completely. It means locals who use the park will not have access, neither will their children have access to the services unless paid for. I'm completely against blocking off any part of the park to the public. Waterlow Park is for the people, not private companies.

41

Thu, 17 Feb 2022 at 16:27

I support the proposed Nature Education Area in Upper Woods. Waterlow Park is very important to me in many different ways: - as a local Camden resident (without a garden): The park has given me and my children space to learn about and grow to love nature. The previous nature area was a favourite spot. It is magical for children to have a destination, with log stumps to sit on and undergrowth to explore, that they can get to know intimately. - as a dog walker: I feel there is enough space in the park for a small part to be restricted to dogs. - as a teacher in a local primary school (Brookfield): As it is a short walk up to the park from our school we have made good use of the park for nature exploration in the past and have really missed making use of the nature area this year. Many of our children still do not spend anywhere near enough time outside and being able to teach them about the wonder of the natural world so close to where they live is a wonderful opportunity. The proposed nature area would provide the opportunity of a contained outdoor classroom to use for this purpose.

42

Thu, 17 Feb 2022 at 14:26

I object strongly to the proposed changes of rights of access to land within Waterlow Park. It was bequeathed on the basis of access to all locals who wanted a Green space.

43

Thu, 17 Feb 2022 at 15:01

It appears Fowp have not been totally transparent about why they want to fence off this area. I am not sure about ' outdoor classroom for group instruction'. That suggests a club or school of some kind set up to the exclusion of other park users. The park needs to be open to all users at all times. I do not think areas of the park should be restricted to certain groups.

44

Thu, 17 Feb 2022, 17:04

There is already an area like this in the park that is fenced off, I don't believe it needs another one. This particular area is a popular spot for children to be able to enter through the the different gaps in bushes, climb trees & make dens, it feels like you will be taking away an important section of the park that doesn't have a equivalent elsewhere. I feel very strongly that it is also very important that this doesn't suddenly become an area for hire that the public cannot use at any time. The park should be open to everyone not just who can pay.

45

18 Feb 2022 at 12:00

Who will be allowed to use the controlled area? Who makes that devision?

46

Fri, 18 Feb 2022 at 11:49

I am in full support of the new Nature Education area being fenced off and being designated as a dog free zone. I am a parent who brought up my son just below the park and a regular park user as well as someone who has used the nature reserve previously both for private, quiet contemplation and to deliver forest school sessions, as an early years teacher/forest school leader. I believe having a quiet zone which is safe for children to explore the ground and earth without the risk of putting their hands, knees or worse face in dog excrement is really important for their development and for positive risk taking and being to explore safely without constant adult vigilance. The space could encourage parents less confident to spend time in a wooded area with their children that is fenced off. I am passionate about the healing properties of nature and have become certified a a Therapeutic Nature practitioner recently. Its important to have quiet, safe spaces in the heart of London where more vulnerable people, such as those with mental health or learning disabilities and community groups can use with support, without the pressures of busy public spaces - so a fenced, wooded area could facilitate that. With the nature reserve being closed for the rest of the year this could be a good alternative but also it may be good to protect the nature reserve from too much footfall in future and this space is more robust to cope with woodland exploration; as well as having far more trees and denser vegetation than the nature reserve so is even more suitable for learning and play.

47

Fri, 18 Feb 2022 at 12:07

On the Upper Nature Area proposals, is it intended to be permanent? Your information implies that it is merely to replace the Upper Pond area while that is being restored and regenerated, but then you say that you would plant trees etc and put up fencing, which sounds permanent. I am against any privatisation of areas of the park. Camden Council, like many other councils, has been making money out of our public parks by charging for one-off events in various areas of Waterlow Park but it is absolutely not acceptable that this proposed Upper Nature Area should be accessible only by paying a private company for a session there: all areas of the park must remain open to all (except dogs) apart from a few hours for events. I am happy that dogs would not be allowed: there are too many for the acreage of Waterlow Park as it is! However, free and open access for all to all areas must remain. The lockdowns have taught us how valuable open space is if we didn't know it before, and it is not right to charge for use of this park.

48

Fri, 18 Feb 2022 at 12:54

This scheme seems to benefit small groups of children (from state schools as well as private schools?) and doesn't take into account the very many older and disabled people who use the park. The area inside the gate is most accessible for these groups and the seats are very popular for enjoying the plants and trees, not watching children's activities. I strongly oppose this scheme.

49

Fri, 18 Feb 2022 at 13:01

I support the proposal to form an upper nature area as indicated on the consultation plan and described in the notification.

50

Fri, 18 Feb 2022 at 13:48

The Waterlow park consultation sounds brilliant and will be a welcome change to the park. Having dog free spaces for children to explore nature safely is so important.

51

Fri, 18 Feb 2022 at 13:06

I support the plans for the upper nature area in Waterlow Park

52

Mon, 21 Feb 2022, 10:36

I object to the proposal to enclose an area of Waterlow Park that would exclude members of the public at certain times. I also object if any such enclosure would be used by private enterprise in a commercial manner.

53

Fri, 18 Feb 2022 at 14:28

This seems like a good idea making good use of a rather dismal shrubbery

54

Fri, 18 Feb 2022 at 14:03

I am in support of the new nature area. I recently read about the damage that dog urine does to plants and biodiversity and it makes sense to exclude dogs from a small area of the park to try and support nature. I have kids and they love to play in the area and also enjoy the forest school after school club [*name removed*], previously in another part of the park. This is very popular with kids from the local state primary school, [*name removed*]. Kids have little space to play outdoors in nature in the city so I am supportive of any measures that facilitate this.

55

Fri, 18 Feb 2022 at 14:50

It seems to me that it is VERY important that the Park should be a garden for all, and NOT become a series of enclosures. Youngsters should be genuinely encouraged in their love of nature ALL OVER the park, NOT in tiny little excluding enclaves. Please do not encourage more fences and barriers. It would be very good to have plenty of bird stations around the park, and maybe areas in and around the ponds for encouraging frogs, toad, newts etc. There will, of course, always be the problem of foxes, who are themselves part of nature. As are people, dogs and cats. . . . Would there be any possibility of allowing children to climb trees, if they agreed it was at their own risk? Very few trees would really be damaged by this and those that were would perhaps benefit from being replaced. . . ??

56

Fri, 18 Feb 2022 at 16:26

I am happy with the proposal and think it will add to the amenities of the park. There will still be plenty of space left for people walking dogs.

57

Fri, 18 Feb 2022 at 16:17

I think the setting up of a new nature education area near the top park gate while the upper pond is out-of-bounds during works to improve biodiversity there is an excellent idea and I am fully supportive.

58

Fri, 18 Feb 2022 at 18:37

Dear Sir/Madam,
As a tenant of Highgate, I disagree with the proposed private area designated for Waterlow Park.

59

Fri, 18 Feb 2022 at 18:47

I support the proposal to make a new nature education area.

60

Fri, 18 Feb 2022 at 23:15

It looks a good plan, but it is not clear whether this change is temporary or permanent. One page says it is just while work is done on the upper site, but that is not mentioned in the detailed description. My main worry would be the amount of noise that might be generated when we are used to entering into a peaceful wooded area. Could I mention that we need a small ramp at the entrance to the park from the High Street. I have a friend who is wheelchair-bound and travels in a motorised buggy between North Hill and St Joseph's Church every day. She would so love to go travel via the park rather than along the busy pavement but although she can gain access to the park via the entrance next to St Joseph, she can't manage the step at the lower entrance onto the High Street. Many thanks.

61

Sat, 19 Feb 2022 at 11:10

I think it is a very good idea. It is good to get children out in the open & could encourage them to visit at weekends

62

Sat, 19 Feb 2022 at 10:58

(further response, added to response #14)

63

Sat, 19 Feb 2022 at 12:05

I am opposed to the proposal to enclose a further area of Waterlow Park. This will mean that the main entrance to the park will be significantly changed with in effect a long tunnel like. I am strongly opposed to areas being taken over by private companies to the exclusion of the residents of the local area.

64

Sat, 19 Feb 2022, 22:04

Dear team, I like the concept of dog-free learning area, and protected wildlife/plants space. The bug hotel etc sound very good and beneficial to all. I only wish the proposed space was larger! Im an amateur botanist but somewhat involved with or interact with many gifted professional botanists with focus on native plants and trees. So the section 3 is where I am most concerned that all plants added will be native, providing the best diversity of pollen and nectar and shelter for our threatened insects in all forms. I might have no reason to be concerned, so forgive me if not! I also feel quite strongly that since it is a woodland you are enhancing, that it be true to what a woodland would contain. Given self-generated plants and indeed trees (self-sown) are the preferable option for real sustainability, and authentic outcomes, wondering if some space will be allowed to generate its own habitat to an extent (if it were down to me, I would opt for this alone, allow it to develop, and then introduce extra planting after a few years if what was appearing was not fulfilling enough). The botanists and tree people i am in touch with usually have as their mantra: dont plant, but do a survey of the site, and allow it to self generate. However, I am not stupidly idealistic - I know this might be too slow a pace for your aims. But perhaps the above can be included in some way. The second priority (personally) would be to consider a bog garden, which wd provide habitat for damp-loving plants and associated insects and perhaps newts/frogs! And perhaps it might bring a few dragonflies from your very nearby pond! However, another reason to suggest it is because wetlands/mangrove/bogs are the best carbon capture habitats. Better than forests. I have read this recently repeatedly, and have a nice graph that illustrates it. So although a small bog garden will not be doing much carbon capturing, the point of it would be to focus discussion on the role of bogs/peatlands and other wetlands as superior to other habitats. I feel this is another neglected area taught to children. Unfortunately anyone i know, believe it is trees that are the best carbon capture habitats. Trees are essential, and im obsessed with them but wouldnt it be super to add the topic of hierarchy of carbon capture, using the bog garden to demonstrate its value? In addition, most local kids will never see a real bog! I also like the idea of it connecting to the nearby pond where I have seen great dragonflies. I am excited to think of children spending time there, learning and enjoying the nature. I like the idea of more hedge planting always, so long as it is native/mixed hedging as you already have along the pond. I welcome your proposal. Just to also say I apologise I cant help in a practical way ever due to chronic illness.

65

Sat, 19 Feb 2022, 16:29

Dear Friends of Waterlow park, I m interested in the aims of the new nature area. However, I strongly disagree to any area of Waterlow Park (a garden for the gardenless) becoming exclusive to those who pay for the use of this area .This is absolutely not what Sir Sidney Waterlow would have agreed with .

66

Sat, 19 Feb 2022, 17:11

I'll support actions that creates protected spaces to improve biodiversity. The volunteers do a fantastic job and the park has improved enormously in recent years.

67

Sat, 19 Feb 2022, 18:14

I oppose any form of privatisation. There's an inscription in the park 'a garden for the gardenless'
and it saved my life when I was in that position living in a high rise flat in Holloway.

68

Sat, 19 Feb 2022, 19:15

I have signed the petition against this. This area or any other area of the park for that matter should never be privitized. Its a public space for the public.

69

Sun, 20 Feb 2022, 16:22 and Sun, 20 Feb 2022, 18:00

Any project to encourage nature and education of it's necessity is to be applauded. I am appalled at the current campaign to stir up protest against this proposal, it does not appear to be based on substantiated information. Friends of Waterlow Park need to quash the allegations being put forward by a representative of the [name removed]. Copy of email sent to [name removed], Good afternoon. My take on this would seem to be controversial! I applaud any project however small, that seeks to provide wildlife friendly habitat and promotes education into it's importance. Within the conservation world it is recognised that if you provide the correct habitat wildlife will follow. I refer you to the current work of the RSPB, WWF and Knepp House . This is not just about bats and birds, it could be of more significance to nectar/pollen feeding insects and flora which start the whole chain. I love dogs and we all know the impact they can have on gardens, which makes it obvious to me why they would be excluded! There may very well have been 1500 (over what period not stated) siting's of foxes but that does not equate to 1500 foxes dwelling in Waterlow and as their aim is food, it is unlikely their activity would impact on the recommended area. On the subject of the proposed area, it represents a very small portion of the park as a whole and I cannot see it would have much/any impact on park users (there is a fenced off area around the wildlife pond, which seems to receive very little footfall. With regard to charging for the education aspect. If Waterlow does not have the staffing facilities to provide this very important part of the project, free of charge, then why not obtain the services of a professional, who does have the knowledge and resources. The charge is for provision of personnel with the required qualification to impart knowledge and interest in the topic, of the importance of such spaces and just what a small area, (like a back garden) can achieve and what might be found. There is nothing to suggest that an entry fee into the area is to be requested or that it will not be open to all apart from dogs. Further it would be completely against the whole ethos of why Waterlow park was given over in the first instance. I am not willing to believe that people who care enough to give their time, would not understand that and only wish to benefit the park financially or otherwise. The Friends of Waterlow park are asking for volunteers to carry out a survey of the whole area of the park. The plan is to use this information to review how the park can be managed in a more nature friendly, way to encourage wildlife. I certainly believe it currently falls very short of this aim. Therefore the disputed project forms only a small apart of a very much bigger picture, where fees are not involved. I really think the aim of this project is being missed and that it's very sad the conspiracy approach is being taken. Just how jaded have we become that we have lost the ability to hope this might be a positive thing and give it support!

70

Sun, 20 Feb 2022, 17:04

I am definitely in favour of your proposal to create a space which could be used for nature study by children and others, while the area around the upper Pond is being regenerated. It is a space that is barely used at the moment and I hope you will be able to make it of interest to children. I understand that there is no intention to charge for the use of this space and that the rumours of "privatisation" are unfounded.

71

Sun, 20 Feb 2022, 11:52

I disagree strongly with the proposed creation of a new nature area at the north end of the park. The park is used by many different kinds of visitors and separating off that area and excluding dogs should not in any way be a priority in the maintaining of Waterlow park as a park for all people at any time.

72

Date: Sun, 20 Feb 2022, 12:24

Hello, I would like to register my objection to this proposal and further, my disgust at the duplicity of using the proposition of an area for the education of children as a guise to set up a commercial venture for your own benefit in the park charging said children 15gbp a visit.

73

Sun, 20 Feb 2022, 12:25

I am shocked and appalled at the threat of privatisation to part of Waterlow Park. The park was donated in 1889 by Sir Sydney Waterlow, then Lord Mayor of London, for the public to enjoy. At no time was there any intention for visitors to pay for the use of the park; it was, and is now, intended as "a garden for the gardenless" and so it must remain, a delight for all of us to enjoy freely.

74

Sun, 20 Feb 2022, 14:25

I object to the enclosure because I fail to see any benefits that cannot be obtained without enclosure. Nature education can be done in the park as it is; bio-diversity elements such as bee-houses, bird-boxes etc also do not need to be enclosed in fact the enclosure would limit the usefulness. To remove access to a small area for dog walkers is of no benefit to the park overall (since it does not reduce the number of dogs overall) in fact increased use by dogs of the remaining areas could cause problems. Privatisation of an area of a public park is just mean and discriminatory by reducing access to people who are less wealthy than others.

75

Sun, 20 Feb 2022, 17:54

Great ideas and I am in complete agreement. It gives people of all ages a chance to learn more about nature and will be good to be learning in the outdoors! I am so glad you are banning dogs because that would be very disruptive!

76

Date: Sun, 20 Feb 2022 at 19:30

I oppose the proposal. The park, in its entirety, should be for everyone. There is no justification for closing off part of it to dog walkers or anyone else, although I would have no problem with an area being designated (at least during certain hours) as 'dogs to be kept on leads'. Dog walkers already have to accommodate barbecue areas lower down in the park during the summer and the upper area is accordingly a valuable area for them.

77

Mon, 21 Feb 2022, 10:46

I object to the enclosure of any area meant for the use of all of the public, particularly if a private commercial venture has any financial interest.

78

Mon, 21 Feb 2022, 15:09

I support the proposal to create an area for nature education. I especially support the aspect of the proposal which would exclude dogs from this area. There has been an explosion in the number of dogs in the Highgate / Archway area, which is problematic for those who are not dog-owners and who are averse to the additional noise and mess in which it results (leaving aside the damaging effect of more dogs on the climate and the costs of extra waste disposal).

79

Mon, 21 Feb 2022, 15:51

The plans for a new nature area seem to be well-thought-out. This could become a good place to observe wildlife undisturbed by dogs and of benefit to groups wanting to study nature. It is however important that this area remain open to the public at all times and not reserved for private use.

80

Mon, 21 Feb 2022, 17:05

I think it seems like a lovely idea. My daughter (3) already loves exploring and adventuring through this area. While I have nothing against dogs (and most owners in Waterlow are very responsible) I do worry about dog poo in that area as I don't think owners necessarily know what their dog is doing. Having a dog-free zone therefore sounds like it could be beneficial for nature and children alike.

81

Tue, 22 Feb 2022, 08:32

I am not in favour of the erection of more fences or gates to produce an enclosure. The park is for all and should not be cluttered up in this way. People need space to exercise their dogs. Children do not need to be penned in to be given a nature lesson. A few seats made out of logs is acceptable as long as they blend in with the environment. Thank you.

82

Mon 21 Feb 2022, 16:54

I am commenting on the Upper Woods Nature Education consultation. It sounds like a wonderful idea. My main objection however, is about even the slightest possibility of the Park having to engage with a business and be charged for it. Your information makes it unclear about whether this may yet happen some time in the future. Please, please, bits of Waterlow Park should not be up for lease or sale. I'm completely aware of how Councils are currently starved of funds for things like Parks, but surely there must be a better way of raising funds that doesn't involve a business whose main aim is profit.

83

Tue, 22 Feb 2022, 11:34

I oppose the development of the Nature Education Area in the upper woods. I do not consider the changes as described to be necessary or valuable, aesthetically or practically, and furthermore, I do not want to see any part of Waterlow Park privatised. I really think you owed it to the public to put that information on the flyers you've posted near the park gates to ask for our input, i.e. your flyers should have said explicitly that the plan to let private groups book the space would have the effect of restricting public access.

84

Tue, 22 Feb 2022, 14:34

Hi there, As a daily dog-walker in Waterlow, I can appreciate how having an area that is dog-free may be of interest to some people, although I think putting barriers up, even if low ones, risks spoiling the feel of the park and making it feel overly curated. If there are ways of creating an area without barriers, then I think it could work well. The older-kids playground works well without any physical barriers and I would rather see something like that. My main concern, though, would be if the space were not be available to the general public at all times, and I would object to this space being bookable by schools or other businesses, which I don't think is really in the spirit of Waterlow Park as a garden for the garden less.

85

Wed, 23 Feb 2022, 10:42

Comment or Message	The proposal for a small area to be developed as a biodiversity area seems very sensible and imaginative. It will be open to children but not to dogs, which is an entirely appropriate proposal
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86

Wed, 23 Feb 2022, 09:36

The proposal to enclose part of Waterlow Park as a "nature reserve" is a poorly conceived, entirely unnecessary and counter-productive exercise and one which completely undermines Sir Sydney Waterlow's original vision. The park in its entirety is already a natural habitat for flora and fauna which can be easily enhance or improved with cheap and effective additions which don't require ugly and unnecessary fences and gates. Adding more bat and bird boxes around the park, planting hedge or low-growing shrubs would immediately improve the habitat, and encourage bird, animal and insect life. It is vital for the continued enjoyment of the many visitors to Waterlow Park that this plan is dropped immediately and that any funds that may have been reserved for this project are focused on improving Waterlow Park for ALL users, not just for some who might be prepared to pay for exclusive usage. Yours faithfully

87

Wed, 23 Feb 2022, 18:08

Feeding back on the consultation. I see your update that there are no plans to make the purpose enclosure bookable. This is a relief. My other concern is that by enclosing this space and making it more wooded you are drastically reducing the space and capacity of the park for people to sit outside, picnic, and enjoy the some outdoor spaces. London had some very high density housing and I value having the park nearby, I don't have a garden and the park is a crucial outside space for me and others.

88

Thu, 24 Feb 2022, 11:51

I am aware that this consultation has generated a good deal of alarm, but I think the first thing to note is that this is a very small area under discussion, within the scale of the park and all the other activities it affords, which at the moment is really just a thoroughfare currently not widely used; also the fact that it is proposed as a temporary replacement for the upper pond area as a meeting place for children's groups. It seems perfectly sensible to fence this small patch to keep dogs out, for the sake of preserving insect life, encouraging natural development and creating a quiet study area.

89

Thu, 24.02.2022, 14:22

WATERLOW PARK NATURE AREA CONSULTATION FEB 2022 The area under discussion is used by children, specially 4 - 6pm schooldays, and is also used by children during weekends. The information provided is incomplete, therefore the consultation is flawed and as such the results of the consultation cannot be reliable and cannot be used to make such an important decision about altering the fabric of the park. I therefore request that regard is given to the 'voices of park users' and this consultation is abandoned and a new consultation established which gives the full facts so people can make an informed decision.

AREAS OF CONFLICTING INFORMATION: TIME FRAME The initial consultation notices state that the area under discussion is to be a nature reserve "while the upper pond nature area is restored.." giving the impression that this proposal is temporary. Later consultation notices have this paragraph deleted, giving the impression that this proposal is permanent. Which is correct? The public need to be given full and correct facts behind this proposal.

SIZE OF PROPOSED NATURE AREA The outline of area on the proposed nature area is bigger on the [name removed] website than on the FOWP consultation notice. Which is correct? The public need to be given full and correct facts behind this proposal. [name removed] [CC] has given conflicting advice about the proposed users of this site: [They] advised in one email that the area under discussion will be used by small groups and families for which bookings will not be required, and, in conflict with this, [they] advised in another email that the area will be available to private/public/commercial users will be able to use the area with current restrictions [i.e. that groups greater than 25 and commercial users will require to book and that fees and charges will apply for commercial users.] Emails available upon request. Which is correct? The public need to be given full and correct facts behind this proposal. FOWP

FOWP claim no knowledge of any proposed private/commercial use of this space, however a FOWP volunteer, prior to the proposal being presented to Waterlow Park Trust Advisory Group [TAG], and thence to Camden Council, walked around Waterlow Park with the teacher of a forest school showing the teacher 4 - 5 different sites from which the teacher could choose the most suitable. The teacher chose the area under discussion. So the planned 'nature area' was actually chosen by a forest school, for a forest school. The walk-around probably took place Nov/Dec 2021 as TAG were asked to hold an extraordinary meeting in Dec to make a decision on the proposal as there was some urgency. On requesting a copy of the original proposal I was told this wasn't possible until it had been checked as confidential material within the proposal may need to be removed. What could be confidential? What is being hidden? What was the urgency for the extraordinary meeting? Why was planned commercial use not mentioned on the public consultation? The public need to be given full and correct facts behind this proposal.

FENCED ENCLOSURE There have been various reasons given for the plan to erect a length of fencing to create enclosure of the area [keep children in / keep dogs out / enhance biodiversity]; enclosure is not needed to study nature; the park as it stands currently is in itself a nature area, any part of which can be explored by children. So far the only proposed use of this space for which an enclosed space is essential is a forest school.

EXCLUSION Fencing is a social construct which is recognised as important in the allocation of ownership and user rights and as such even a low fence effectively creates a negative perception as an exclusive imposition, i.e. social exclusion. I appreciate there may be no formalised exclusion, apart from dog walkers [and different reasons have been given for this - dog faeces, decrease disturbance to wildlife and children] however there will be effective social exclusion through Forest school policy and their management of the public who use 'their' space

Effective exclusion through presence of a physical barrier

BIODIVERSITY Human land use is a primary cause of biodiversity loss. Increased

90

Thu, 24 Feb 2022, 14:28

I'm generally in favour of the plans for the nature area of the park (though would have liked more detail about how nature is to be encouraged to flourish - bird in particular, in the area). I'm not sure why you note that dogs will not be allowed under what's going to change. They're not allowed now and haven't been in recent years. People do not always observe this so there'll need to be some kind of enforcement or significant discouragement.

91

Thu, 24 Feb 2022, 15:50

Nature Education Area consultation - I strongly support the proposals as set out. It would also be good if the area could be used for nature-learning events for other users of the park, as well as schoolchildren

92

Thu, 24 Feb 2022, 16:15

This wooded area is too small for encouraging extra human invasion and activity. By all means add to biodiversity but it's not necessary to bring added human impact into another area of an already well used park. The park has to have different areas that are left relatively undisturbed by people. Schools, children and the public are already well catered for with play, growing and nature education areas, activities and events in the park and at Lauderdale House. Waterlow is not that large and has to provide some respite from increasing organised education and group activity, and city streets. Many people need it for simple rest and relaxation, enjoying nature without directed or group activity, and children especially tend to be over directed when it comes to exploring nature. They too need free time to just be in a lovely green garden like space and discover their own thoughts and imagination-outside of arranged education. Wildlife too needs more spaces where it can be free from human intrusion and interference. Once an area is turned into something for a particular purpose it is very unlikely to be temporary. Is it really a problem for educational groups and schools to wait until the upper pond area can be used again for their purposes? I am strongly against this proposal as it ties the desirable increasing of biodiversity to new extraneous and highly problematic human access to a quiet sensitive area. This makes no sense and is illogical. I'm not in favour of any human or dog invasion of the small wooded area. This would discourage maintaining sensitive biodiversity there. Thus there MIGHT be a case for putting up a very subtle low eco type "fence" to keep out dogs and people with new planting. (Perhaps just inside the outer shrubs to be even less visible.) Otherwise I think the proposal is unnecessary and would, in my view, generate more management and environmental problems when resources are very overstretched. The expansion of human activities into a small sensitive area inevitably leads to much trampling and other negative effects. There is already good nature and plant growing educational provision in the park and no need to invade a relatively undisturbed little wooded area. Such green nooks and crannies are essential for nature to thrive and there are few of these in the upper park. Also, Camden assurances easily come and go especially with a dysfunctional resource strapped authority, even if given in good faith at the time. I see the consultation is on behalf of Camden who will decide the outcome, and am not questioning the good faith of FoWP. There is a history of the Council misleading the community in "consultations", and attempting to "hijack" parts of the park for exclusive and/or private commercial use - so it's not surprising there is mistrust and suspicion when the proposal itself rings alarm bells. Children can be used as a cause celebre to befog and to justify creeping privatisation, overdevelopment, privileged access, and exclusivity. (It's not unlike private forest schools taking over more public spaces in local Woods and on the Heath.) We know that in times of no real funds for public services Councils are trying to commercialise parts of their green spaces to raise money. I would be pleased to be wrong about this, yet still oppose the proposal.

93

Thu, 24 Feb 2022, 19:20

To whom it may concern: In light of a recently formed petition against this proposal you need to be very clear about private use, monies you are/are not anticipating to make from this venture, and any exclusion of the general public at any time. Please keep me posted with full detail of all proposals.

94

Thu, 24 Feb 2022, 19:29

Enclosure: The area this proposal considers to enclose is one of the few sections of the park which is appropriate for families with small kids and babies as it is very near to a street entrance and the schools so it isn't far to walk with buggies and with small legs etc, The land is flat and shaded by hedges and trees, and barbecues are prohibited. The open wooded area is an integral part of the space and children love running in and out, making camps, playing hide and seek and catch while their folks man base camp/ picnic. Gates and enclosures will separate the space from the lawn adjacent, make simple childhood activity impossible, and utterly undermine the existing value of this lovely, exciting and popular spot. To be direct; enclosure in the public realm is insensitive and improper regardless of how it is framed, without exception but particularly here as it would cut off the very space kids play in. By its very definition enclosure keeps people OUT as much as it keeps people in. Movable enclosure, partial enclosure, are all ways of softening a blow- but its adds up to the same thing; enclosure. The very purpose of enclosure is to separate and as such it cannot be built 'sensitively' or 'done properly' and 'temporary enclosure' is a by-word for badly designed. This is a key topic in Urban Planning at the moment due to the negative social impact of the privatisation of the public realm. Exclusivity/ Access: When an open space is enclosed it becomes exclusive; you are in or you are out. You say "For the most part it will be open" but what that also means it that at some times be closed and no longer accessible which is unacceptable when a space is currently always open and enjoyed. Exclusivity is further emphasised when you introduce Private Enterprise which will allow access to SOME but actively prevent access to OTHERS. This is worse still where children are concerned and make no mistake- this proposal negatively impacts almost entirely upon local children and families. Biodiversity and Education:

I do not understand why the enclosure is required for the improvements you are suggesting. There is nothing to say that you cannot improve the woodland area or increase biodiversity throughout the park by introducing the items you mention in your consultation (log piles, insect hotels and bird boxes) without the need for enclosure. You could also provide kids packs about Waterlow Park flora and fauna if education was a particular importance; and thats just one of so many initiatives you could start to help children learn about the park; and there is already an enclosed and dog free learning area in the Kitchen Garden. Private Enterprise Use - It has come to my notice that at least one private enterprise group, and quite possibly others, have already begun advertising the use of this space for their activities. This has not been not made clear at all in your public proposal document which makes your notice appear to be intentionally misleading as their interest is something you are clearly aware of. I spoke to another regular park user this morning who was very shocked, and then suspicious, and somewhat heartbroken that private enterprise had already earmarked the area and that it was not mentioned in your notice. As per the website- *[name removed]* After School Club are offering after school care at this site. They state that booking will be possible in 2 weeks time (presumably to coincide with the end of the consultation period on 25 February?) and that activities will start in 6 weeks (April 2022). They offer space for up to 15 children, at £15 per child, for 2 hours, from 4-6pm, on two days per week, i.e. revenue of £225 per 2 hour session. The *[Name removed]* discusses the need for enclosure, as it seems integral to their statement about child safety (and possibly their insurance?). They mention how they would approach an adult but they do not mention another child who wants to explore the area. I can see that children were less likely to impose upon their original location in the conservation area but I wonder what their response would be to generation of young children who already play here. Would they be told to leave or would they simply be shut out and fenced off? The advertisement states they will have signage and that burning campfires will be an activity; we know campfires scorch and contaminate land, destroy canopies and wildlife; signage is unpopular in the park so I am unsure how they could even be regulated? The suggestion of 15 children (and a minimum of 2 adults?) like mentioned above, uttered

When I look at the plan of the park what I see is that it is already divided up into areas and atmospheres (some formal, others less so - the fields had names) bounded by paths, hedges and fences and I am against further sectioning off of areas, building upon green or segmentation of the park that I love and cherish and which is a portal to many places. We are already channelled around the park and regularly have to step aside or leave the paths to get away from council vehicles (which wasn't always the case) and that is bothersome as we go there to get away from traffic. As a dog owner who comes into the park daily, come rain or shine, I consider myself as being amongst the caretakers of the park, its eyes and ears, and wish to always behave responsibly and considerately. As an allotment owner I am uncomfortably aware of the levels of pollution in Highgate village that must affect the park, the chemicals that are used by the council gardeners that require protective suits, and the paucity of insect and bird life, compared to that on the allotments. I miss the speckled thrushes we used to see. I wish to see the return of a broader spectrum of wildlife, for people to be able to experience what the park could feel like when fully naturally alive. I enjoy the meadow that is allowed to grow high and then scythed and, in the absence of grazing animals, would like to see the nurturing of a greater variety of wild flowers there. My view is that the whole park should be considered from the point of view of bio diversity not just tiny pockets and that we could 'borrow' more, take advantage of the habitats of our less trampled neighbours, the cemetery. I do not want to see people compartmentalised or excluded. There are currently plenty of different areas in which we can be ourselves according to our personalities, time of life, abilities, differing daily moods or needs. I would also say that when the sun shines and the days are longer, the numbers of visitors rise and the park is used differently, more sociably but less kindly to nature, I am more likely to go elsewhere. I enjoy and revel in that happening, though I dislike the hazards of the mess. The rubbish left behind (skewers and bones not binned or taken away) is dismaying. I have a strong antipathy to over-organising our park (whilst being aware of how much goes into its maintenance and how upsetting some cavalier behaviours can be) also to any suggestion of blanket intolerance of dog owners, which I read in the current suggestions. There is a delicate balance to be found. Surely we all wish for variety and inclusion? I wish most of all for the park to be a nurturing place not a play pen. Nature is sufficiently entertaining and what is required is understanding of how it needs to be looked after and considered, not just used. It would be valuable and enjoyable - I'd like it - having a nature learning centre, as they do in Highgate woods, in one of the currently unused, covered spaces such as the aviary or the conservatory, as a way of opening the eyes, of those who may not yet know, to what is already there as well as what is involved in taking care of our environment. To conclude I very much appreciate what the volunteers contribute and wish to convey my thanks for all you do.

There needs to be clarification as the openness and status of this enclosure. If this plan to fence off an area goes ahead, will it really remain, as you say on the consultation form 'accessible to park users, except for dog walkers'? And will this be at all times? Or, as the critics of the scheme suggest, will the area be hired out to private groups at particular times, for their use only? Obviously, if this were the case, it would be entirely wrong and I would object strongly.

97

Fri, 25 Feb 2022, 09:04

I am very concerned about the proposed plans to fence off some of Waterlow Park. Why is fencing required? Why does this area need to be enclosed? I understand that the given reason is to increase biodiversity, but some private groups have agreed to pay to use this part of the park to the exclusion of others outside these groups. This goes against the legacy of Sir Sydney Waterlow who gave his property to the PUBLIC. We already have the visitors' centre, the event room next to the cafe and the small pond area - all of which are fenced off/rented out/for use of private groups. This new area is yet another place for groups to exclude the general public. Fencing it will have no effect of diversity and the exclusion of dogs, children and members of the public is appalling. I understand an arrangement for the use of this space has been entered into with a least one private group where it would be used as an after school club, a time most popular with local children who, unless paying, would be excluded. This is disgraceful. Additionally, and incongruously, any increase in human habitation of this area will inevitably be detrimental to biodiversity. Why has Friends of Waterlow Park not conveyed this? I am protesting vehemently against yet more "development" of Waterlow Park as it is not necessary, will have a detrimental effect on the public AND on wildlife, and goes against the ethos of the park which is to be a garden for the gardenless - not just for the benefit of some privileged groups.

98

Fri, 25 Feb 2022, 12:54

As a regular user, I write opposing to any new restricted/encircled/fenced off areas within Waterlow Park. Your proposal appears to be a bit vague and lacks detail, so it is difficult to understand why exactly you want a restricted area at all. It appears that in exchange for excluding dogs all that is on offer are a few log seats? The other items mentioned (planting, etc) can surely be achieved irrespective of any dog or other restrictions? In fact, even the addition of log seats would surely not require excluding dogs/people from the area? In the absence of any logic around this proposal, I would like to make clear that I am strongly opposed to any form of privatisation of any section within the park. Thank you for taking my views into consideration.

99

Fri, 25 Feb 2022, 14:24

Dear Friends, While I fully support and thank the good work the volunteers do for Waterloo Park, I cannot support the proposed Nature Education Area in Upper Woods. Closing off this area to the public, is surely not what Sir Sydney Waterlow had in mind when he gifted the land to the public in 1886. There is already plenty of land fenced off, the ponds is understandable for safety reasons, but to claim that this proposed new closure is for the benefit of 'bio diversity' is not a good enough reason. Especially if this area is going to be available for private hire. I see plenty of children playing there and dogs chasing balls, so if it was fenced off, the utility of the park for the public, is further reduced. Also, given the number of properties in the area being built without gardens, this proposal is unwelcome, the accessible park is reduced in size. Best regards

100

Fri, 25 Feb 2022 at 19:56

I strongly object to any more interference with this park's trees and bushes. It seems not a weekday passes without noise, disruption, trucks, machinery as yet another tree or bush or shrub is "cleared" (ie destroyed). Today I saw men entirely annihilate a shrub behind the upper west gate's noticeboard. All that remained were five square metres of newly bare earth. The shrub's branches filled an eight-foot by five-foot-high cage of one of two pick-up trucks. Why did this have to happen? Why is it commonplace to see caged pick-up trucks packed with newly-hacked branches and foliage in this park? What is the agenda? Is it: "If it grows, destroy it."? Can men please stop ruining this park with chainsaws and blowers please? It's a PARK, not a construction site.

People need a park for PEACE, QUIET and CLEAN AIR. These are just not happening here. Instead, frequent machinery noise, vehicle pollution, destruction of habitats and air pollution from dust and fumes of chainsaws, blowers and other noisy equipment.

NO TO ANY FURTHER WORKS IN THIS PARK. LEAVE IT ALONE PLEASE

101

Fri, 25 Feb 2022 at 20:31

Regarding the proposed Nature Education Area in Upper Woods. Hi, I just wanted to express my support to the proposal in its current form. It makes sense to create a new enclosed space while the upper pond area is restored. I am also interested whether this new area will continue in its new form when the original area's works have finished. Best regards,

102

Fri, 25 Feb 2022 at 20:47

please stop messing around with waterlow park which is perfectly fine as it is.

103

Wed 23 Feb 2022 at 15:01

I strongly object to the privatisation of Waterlow Park and the exclusion of the public to certain areas. The claim to protect biodiversity at the exclusion of dogs is utterly bogus.

104

25 Feb 2022 at 14:25

**Comment or
Message**

Enclosure is problematic and very undesirable without good cause. Here there is good cause but enclosure should not be a) unsightly or b) makes people feel they are not welcome to enter the space. How this is dealt with is key. Some thoughts on this

Do not let any visible enclosure come too close to the main path down from the top gate - so the 'point' of the triangular area where there is the old air raid shelter vent under a bush should be a decent distance away from any enclosure behind, dead-hedge or otherwise. There is an area of ivy on the ground behind this and I would not put enclosure on this area so that the public perception of this space at this point is pretty much unchanged. I don't think this will greatly reduce the area inside the enclosure but will make a big difference to perception.

The rest of this side of the area which angles away from the path up to the High Street gate is made up of bushes and gaps. It is important that when seen from the main path side that the bushes are not behind any enclosure, and the gaps are filled with more bushes, sticks or dead-hedging as appropriate but not pailing fence. The largest gap between bushes on the right might perhaps be a gate or additional opening to those already envisaged elsewhere? One thought is to put something for kids to climb over to enter the area here which acts as a barrier to dogs. Perhaps a style next to a gate? The side of the straight path towards the tennis courts is very shadowy. It is likely that dead-hedging is the solution to any enclosure here. Perhaps in time ivy or other creepers would be encouraged to grow over it. I would strongly advise not bringing this too close to the path but having it a few feet back into the wooded area. Also by not allowing enclosure to come to a point at the apex of this space it will be more out of sight when approaching. By keeping the enclosure a few feet away from the path it will not be visible until one is close by. It may need to come closer at the tennis court end where it can integrate with existing bushes.

Should there ever be any supervised groups of children in the area for more than a few minutes I would suggest that there be a system of discreet signs on the most visible gates which say who is using the space and what time they will finish. The users could be asked to chalk this information in themselves and wipe off when done. There should also be SMALL wood signs by gates indicating 'no dogs / nature area / do come in an explore' or similar.

105

25 Feb 2022 17:06

Very much in favour of this upper nature area, I am very disappointed that there has been much misinformation in the very sensationalist petition.