

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 7 May 2013

It has always proved to be a useful exercise to review the past year for this report. Inevitably, dominant themes and issues can be discerned and we can consider and evaluate what has been achieved as well as assess risks and tasks for the coming year.

On the positive side, there have been a number of good developments to report – in particular, the setting up of our website, and associated with that, a new logo and leaflet. I hope members have found time to check out the website and will agree that it is a well-designed, attractive and informative site. It is also a place where we can keep members informed of issues and developments via the news section. We also have a charming 'robin redbreast' logo for letterheads, leaflets and the like. Examples of the new leaflet are available tonight and we hope you will take more home and use them to encourage friends, relatives and neighbours to join CREOS. Whilst others have contributed to establishing this website, we all owe Jacky Wedgwood a vote of thanks for promoting and organising the production of both the website and the leaflet.

Also in the past year, we pushed the Council to cut down a number of dangerous trees and also remove various accumulations of fly-tipped rubbish. (Glenys Law's son Alex also single-handedly cut up and removed a tree that had fallen and blocked one of the paths last Spring!) Many of the pluses of the year are also recurring successes – the annual strimming of the meadow, removal of litter, production of newsletters and the organisation of the Christmas Social – all vital CREOS activities. We also organised a walk around the site with Ian Holt, Haringey's Conservation Officer and Education Department Representatives as a first step to establishing the attitude of the Council towards getting assistance with and permission for more durable pathways on land under their ownership (grant-giving bodies require confirmation that the owners will allow the work). We have also commissioned a bat survey to assist with resisting inappropriate planning applications – as a protected species, their habitat must also be protected. Finally, we supported Wood Vale Tennis Club's funding application to re-build their dilapidated club house.

Regrettably, this year has had a number of negatives too, notably the weather and unsuitable planning issues. Firstly, the weather! The abysmal weather conditions disrupted many of our workdays so that the routine path maintenance and other outdoor tasks were not carried out. In addition, the water-logging of the site turned huge areas into muddy bogs. Largely as a consequence of that, there has been major damage to existing pathways and damage to plant life trampled underfoot by users creating new routes through the site. We now have a lot to catch up on and make good. On the planning front, we first had the Pavilion's (formerly North Middlesex Club's) 'refresher' application for their already granted permission for a multi-sports area which they had not yet started. (Planning approvals have a limited life and need to be renewed.) This was always likely to be granted although the objections of CREOS and others did secure a couple of useful additional conditions to the consent.

Dominating the planning issues however, has been the application by Holly Park Tennis Club to get permission for a huge, 3-storey high translucent 'dome' to cover 3 tennis courts. Their application is a near repeat of one unanimously thrown out by Haringey in 2002. CREOS has taken the view that the scheme was inappropriate for this site and inconsistent with Metropolitan Open Land and local planning principles and guidelines. The new application has however been more forcefully promoted by Holly Park. It has proved to be very divisive proposal, both in concept and execution. The scheme arrived fully formed with no warning or obvious consultation with other 'stakeholders' – CREOS, the Conservation Officer, local residents and, it has transpired, even Shepherds Cot Trust, their freeholders, were kept in the dark! CREOS had to work fast and put in a lot of effort to prepare a formal objection and encourage a good response to the consultation. The scale of the responses, pro and anti, makes this application one of the most controversial Haringey has ever faced. The date for the formal decision has yet to be announced and we may need to act swiftly if, as often has been the case, this hearing is set for the summer holidays when many members will be away. Whenever it comes, we will make sure that CREOS is represented and our objections are heard.

In summary, it has been an eventful year which has included a number of good, practical achievements, unprecedented and horrible weather and significant planning threats. Our organisation however remains strong, and I believe strengthened, by the adversities and challenges. That said, there is, I'm afraid, much work to do in the coming year.