



AUTUMN 2019

creos NEWS

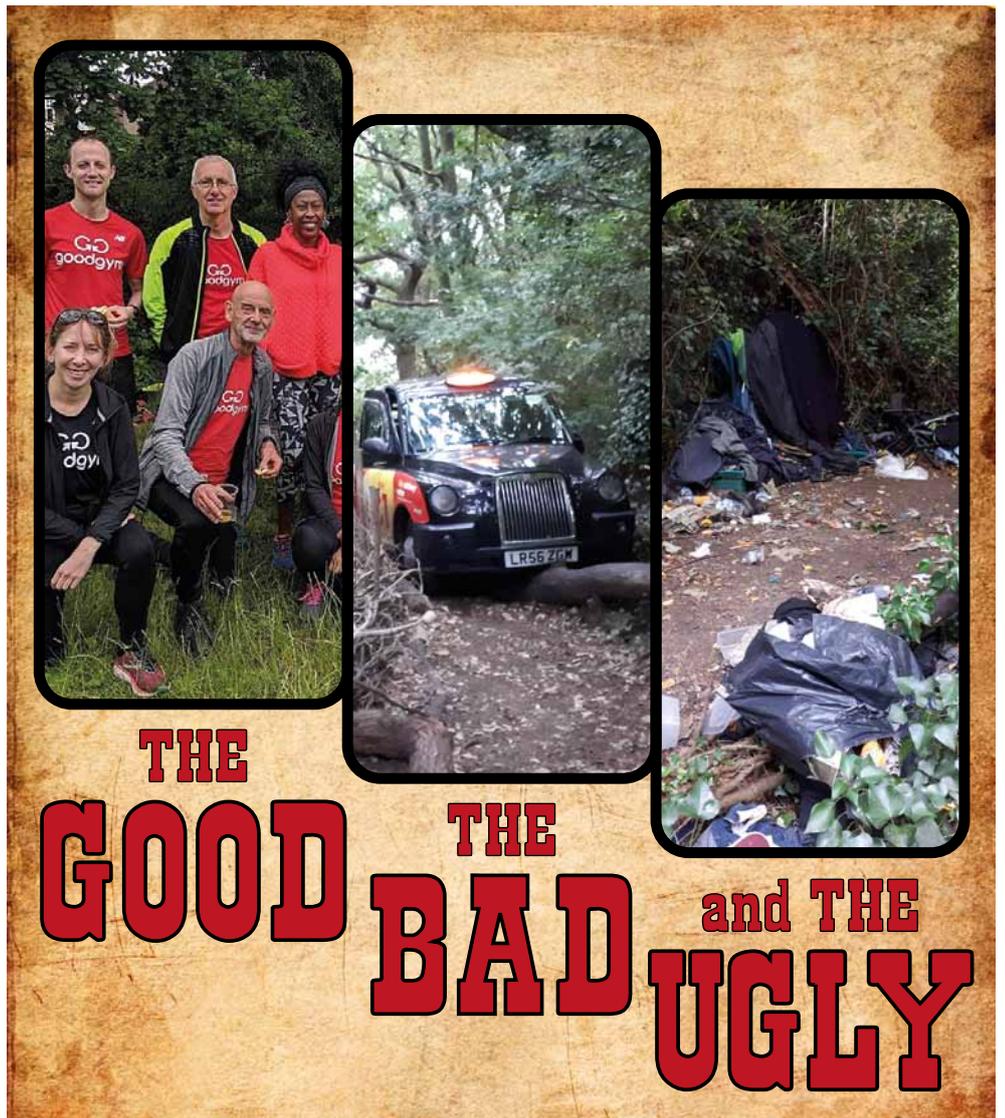
Crouch End Open Space

CREOS is a voluntary group set up to preserve Crouch End Open Space for the enjoyment of all. This area is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and a vital green corridor for North London's wildlife.

There have been some interesting developments at CREOS in the last few months, creating quite a bit of entertainment for your "country" walks. The most visually impressive was surely the long strip of wildflower meadow created in the corner of the school playing field. As part of our plan to increase biodiversity, a small sub-group of CREOS volunteers had worked hard on this in the early summer and their efforts and expertise were rewarded with a fantastic display of colour that lasted well into the autumn. The nearby hazel coppice is also doing well, with some hazels already reaching a height of almost 2 metres.

Not so welcome was the taxi that took a wrong turning and ploughed its way right down the path from the cricket club car park, eventually becoming impaled on one of the edging logs. Getting the vehicle out involved even more damage than getting it in, leaving the wood-chip path totally destroyed. CREOS volunteers, however, cannot be deterred. With the help of our energetic Good Gym friends, the path and the dead hedge round the boundary oak are now well on the way to being fully restored.

So that's the good and the bad, but what about the ugly? Unfortunately, for over two years, we have had to put up with a massive rubbish dump behind the trees near Boundary Oak walk where homeless campers left behind lots of litter and abandoned possessions. As the council are obliged to help rough sleepers, rather than just remove the rubbish, we were not allowed to clear



it ourselves and had to put up with plastic and other waste getting blown about by the wind and spread out by wild animals. And if you saw a collection of broken chairs at our main entrance a few weeks ago, they too were found in the bushes and were removed by our workday volunteers. It actually required two lorry loads and two days' work by a team of Veolia workers to remove all this, but the good news is that it is all gone. For now...!

Christmas party invite inside!

RE-WILDING — WE'RE ON TREND

The creation of our experimental wild flower meadow at the top of the school playing field has been a great success, judging by the number of appreciative comments we've had from the public this summer.

After seeding, dry conditions inhibited growth for weeks – a source of much worry – but with some welcome rain, it took off and flourished throughout July and August. In September, the flowers were allowed to set seed and the area was then scythed. Hopefully the fallen seed from this year's annuals will flower again next year, together with perennials which take longer. The protective wire fence has been stored until next year.

As suggested in the Management Plan, wild flower plugs were planted in the meadow to increase biodiversity – Wild Carrot, Ragged-Robin, Lady's Bedstraw and Field Scabious amongst others. In September we added Yellow Rattle seed to weaken the grass and so encourage the growth of flowers. Some (Red Clover and Musk Mallow) have taken immediately, others are not so successful.

The newly-planted hazels in the coppice are now growing vigorously but so are nettles and saplings (poplars and witch elm), which need to be removed – a task for Good Gym volunteers on workdays.

At the edges of the meadow, some bays have been created by trimming back brambles which can otherwise

become dominant and invade the grass. This procedure also encourages diversity of bird and insect life.

Our monthly workdays every 3rd Sunday) have been well attended by Good Gym volunteers, if not by actual CREOS members!

We are fortunate to have these young people, especially for the on-going task of replenishing all the paths with wood chips.

With a combination of paid and voluntary work, CREOS hopes to fulfil more of the Management Plan aims next year. *Jacky Wedgwood and Jane Bywaters*

SPOTTED!

Red admiral butterfly, perched and basking, possibly to hold its territory near the nettles around the playing field. Note the larvae, wrapped in a leaf, must be in sunshine. Four other species of these beautiful butterflies: small tortoiseshell, painted lady, comma, and peacock also need nettles as larval food.





TO ALL CREOS MEMBERS

You are cordially invited to the 2019

CREOS CHRISTMAS PARTY

Kindly hosted by Deborah and Paul Perlin
at 105 Wood Vale N10 3DL.

(front door immediately adjoins Queens Wood)

The party is on Sunday 15 December 2019 from 12:30 to 15:30.

Buffet lunch, with wine and soft drinks.

Although there will be no charge, donations towards the cost of CREOS activities will be much appreciated.



ARE YOU GETTING YOUR TWO HOURS A WEEK?

We seem to be inundated with research in recent times, telling us how good it is to get out amongst nature. The latest research, by Dr Mathew White of the University of Exeter Medical School, even gives us a prescription for a two-hour “dose” of nature per week in order to boost our health and wellbeing. Just being in a green open space is enough, he says. You don’t even have to take any exercise! Other studies have also shown the physical and mental health benefits of time spent in parks and woods, but this new research is the first major study into how long is needed to produce the effect. It could be that two hours in nature could soon join five a day of fruit and veg and 150 minutes of exercise a week as official health advice.

Stress is a common problem in modern life and psychologists at the University of Westminster have also recommended a woodland walk as a treatment. In highly-stressed people, it has even been shown that just a ten or fifteen minute walk can be enough to bring stress hormones down to a normal level.

Research like this makes a strong case for people to get out and about in more natural environments. This is good news then for those of us living next to Queen’s Wood and Crouch End Open Space. This, however, is not the only good news. Another recent study, this time one published by scientists at Imperial College London and the University of Leicester, looked at the air quality in London’s parks and green spaces. They pointed out that most of central London’s parks, such as Hyde Park, Regents Park, St James’s Park etc have air that is not safe to breathe, with levels of nitrogen dioxide in excess of 60 µg/m³! To put this into perspective, the European Union safe limit is 40 µg/m³. Compare this then with Crouch End Open Space, where the air stands out as being in the best category of all, with only 22 – 30 µg/m³! You can see for yourselves on their useful interactive map – search “imperial college air quality map”

Best wishes and good health to all! *Glenys Law*

HOW CREOS BECAME A CHARITY

When CREOS was re-established in 1984 the committee decided to apply immediately to become a registered charity. This is not as straightforward as you might think; the Charity Commission (CC) scrutinises all applications closely to weed out organisations that don't qualify for charitable status, and has a bias towards rejecting applications.

At the time CREOS was fortunate in having a solicitor on the committee who provided his services pro bono and managed the application process. The initial application had to be accompanied by a copy of the constitution, a description of CREOS's activities and a copy of the accounts for the past three years. The initial response from the CC was to query whether CREOS's purpose (protection of the open space) was of sufficient 'public benefit and altruism necessary for a charity'! The CC also demanded to see a map of the area showing who owned what land. At the time, CREOS did not possess the relevant information about land ownership, and this necessitated a time-consuming

research into historic documents and the land registry. It was not until 1986 that a coloured map was prepared, distinguishing council land, Shepherd's Cot and other clubs, for submission to the CC.

Next (now March 1987), the CC demanded some changes to the CREOS constitution. These changes were accepted and ratified at the CREOS AGM in April. At long last the application was approved and CREOS was registered as a charity (no. 296860) on 28 May 1987.

A key part of the application was to state CREOS's charitable purpose. This is at the front of our constitution and is worth restating here as a reminder to all:

- To conserve, protect and enhance the Crouch End Playing Fields as an area of open space for public recreation;
- To conserve and protect the area as a natural habitat for a wide variety of wild life.

Rob Jackson

THE CREOS SUMMER PICNIC

Oh what fun we had at our annual CREOS picnic. This year we combined with the Great Get Together in memory of the MP Jo Cox and what a good idea it was!

The meadow looked gorgeous thanks to everyone's hard work at keeping it looking gorgeous.

Our biggest turnout to date!

The band All Shook Up shook us up with their enthusiasm and panache, the cooks of Wood Vale treated us to some delicious food and our barbecue chefs managed to cook food on the inside and out.

Jen entertained and Dan educated the big and little kids. Our members, friends, neighbours chatted, laughed and enjoyed a few drinks in the sunshine.

And as for the dogs, watch out crufts here we come... Even my dog won a prize (with a bit too much input from his owners).

As a permanent date now in our Summer diaries, our picnic goes from strength to strength and in these strange times we all appreciate our friends and neighbours a little bit more.

Emma Prinsley



HELP GROW OUR MEMBERSHIP

CREOS always needs a larger core of active members. So when you've read this edition, do pass it on to anyone you think may be interested in helping preserve our open space as a nature haven for wildlife and walkers. To join, make a donation, or volunteer please contact our Membership Secretary: Alys Elphick on info@crouchendopenspace.org. For more information about CREOS visit crouchendopenspace.org