

# FRIENDS *of* LONG LANE PASTURE

## NEWSLETTER

No.8 March 2008

*Annual Meeting*  
*for*  
*Friends of the Pasture*  
Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> April at 2.30 p.m.

*We have again decided to hold our annual meeting on the pasture (though we are in negotiation for rather better weather than last year). We do, however, have a dry place to assemble should it rain. All our Friends are invited to see a short presentation, have a report on the past year, and go on a guided tour. We think you will be impressed by the changes: new pond, butterfly border, footpath, secure fencing, and so on. Do come, both to review the past and talk about the future.*

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There are two important changes that you won't actually see. First, Long Lane Pasture Trust has now been approved as a **registered charity** (number:1122236). Information about us can now be found on the Charity Commission website: [www.charitycommission.gov.uk](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk) This means we are now recognized as a properly established community group; it also boosts our fundraising efforts by opening up new sources of support and enabling the Trust to reclaim though Gift Aid tax paid on donations – about which more information in the next Newsletter.

Secondly, although the long-running saga of securing our **lease on the Pasture** continues, some progress is being made. In January the Council's Cabinet Resources Committee agreed to change the terms of our proposed lease from 7 years to 25. That is the good news. They also inserted a clause enabling the Council to review the lease *every* 5 years, which means they could break the agreement and take the land back if they wished. Although there was some discussion about the lease not being 'unreasonably withdrawn', members did not approve Ann Brown's request for there to be one break only for the Council to check that we were indeed doing what we had proposed and continued to have community support. This means that our Olympic challenge for 2012 is to make Long Lane Pasture a well-loved and popular amenity that Barnet will be proud to promote. And with your help we'll do just that.

We should add that we don't actually have a lease yet. It's gone to Barnet's equivalent of Charles Dickens's Circumlocution Office.

Winter, when the majority of wildlife is hibernating, migrating, or just ticking over, is when there is a great deal of human activity. Your working group has been very busy indeed digging, planting, and generally moving bits of the pasture from one place to another. Bramble clearance – a kind of punishment from hell – has now come to a halt as birds are beginning to nest. Spring feels very close indeed.

We took part in **National Tree Planting Day** last December by planting a mix of Blackthorn, Field Maple, Crab Apple, Guelder-rose, Hawthorn and Rowan (Mountain Ash). In addition, Kurt Weinburg kindly donated a Hornbeam. Together they will form part of a new hedgerow and provide an excellent habitat for insects, butterflies and birds. We have also planted wild flowers and sown a special wildflower seed mix on the new bank (formed when the big pond was excavated).

The rainfall has been very heavy. The ditches are full and the large pond has overflowed on to our newly completed disabled access path. We also have a number of smaller ponds we hadn't planned for so we do have to deal with a drainage problem. The butterfly border has been sodden for weeks, though we hope there has been no permanent damage. We did have a show of snowdrops on the bank and now the wild garlic is pushing through. We are hoping that the bluebells planted two years ago will make an appearance this spring.

Our **wildlife** records continue to grow. A heron has been investigating the pond, but there are no fish so he may have gone away disappointed. Not so the grey wagtail, a less frequent visitor than his cousin the pied wagtail, who was very happy indeed to discover a huge quantity of mosquito larvae to tuck into. We were equally pleased to see them disappearing down his throat. A flock of starlings bathe there and we have been visited by redwings (eleven together on one occasion) and five long-tailed tits. These, no doubt, are what have attracted the sparrowhawk. Jan uncovered a young toad while planting wild flowers. It has been carefully relocated closer to the pond, where newts have been observed – *not* good news for the frogspawn which has appeared more recently. Five woodmice have taken up residence under a corrugated sheet. Our fox now has a new mate.

Less welcome – far less welcome – are the two Canada Geese that have decided to eat their way through the marginal plants we are trying to establish on the big pond.

### **Dates for your Diary:**

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|-------------------------|--|
| 7 <sup>th</sup> June    | National Moth 'Night'. We will be running a moth trap on the Pasture over the night of 6 <sup>th</sup> June, with an identification session on the morning of Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup> June (weather permitting).. |
| 26 <sup>th</sup> July   | Butterfly Day (as part of Save Our Butterflies Week). We will hold a number of butterfly walks and provide information on the butterflies you can expect to see on the Pasture.                                    |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> August | Annual Blackberry Pick   |

In addition to which: the work group is on the site every Saturday from 10-midday. You are very welcome to call in and see what is happening and how much the Pasture has changed.

**Meanwhile:**  
**don't forget the Annual Meeting**  
**Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> April at 2.30 on the Pasture**