

# FRIENDS OF BROOMFIELD PARK



## Volunteer Update March 2026

### Introduction

FoBP volunteer group coordinators were contacted during February 2026 with a request to update on current activities and share successes and challenges. These individual updates are collated into this report which will be shared with the Trustees of FoBP and form part of the discussions at our regular Volunteer network meetings. In addition, these reports contribute to ongoing social media messaging and will be an invaluable resource when we compile our annual report in the autumn.

### Habitats Group: Matthew Pierce

#### Successes

- Two new people joined the group, so we now have nine regular volunteers.
- We installed wooden posts around our new wildflower meadow on the crane base, to protect it against mowers and vehicles.
- We collaborated with Enfield Council and Thames21 to remove trees in the wetlands. There were too many willows drying out the reedbeds and shading out wildflowers.
- We laid a section of hedge by the wildlife pond. The regrowth from this will create dense nesting habitat for small birds. We were helped by an 11-year-old boy who learned how to use an axe and a billhook.

#### Challenges

We need Enfield Council to deal with any green waste that we can't compost ourselves, mainly hedge trimmings and reeds from the wetlands.



## Tree Project Update: Kim Lumley

The Elms4London Project seeks to restore elm trees throughout London after their catastrophic loss caused by Dutch elm disease in the 1960s. This has relevance to Broomfield Park with the loss of the historic double elm avenue in the main parkland. The Habitats Group has been planting elm trees to support a variety of wildlife, in particular the endangered White Letter Hairstreak butterfly, (<https://elms4london.org.uk/wildlife>). We have already planted two disease resistant cultivars, Ulmus Wingham, but are pleased to have received seven new trees. These new disease resistant cultivars, Ulmus Lutece; Vada and Columnus were planted with volunteers on an 'event' day on 7th March.

We continue to manage the 100+ trees planted by FoBP since 2020 and have accumulated a large mulch pile from shredded Christmas trees. We will be clearing, weeding and mulching around the bases of these trees and will be on standby for regular tree watering if 2026 is as dry as recent years.

As part of the clean water project (FoBP/Enfield Council/Thames 21 and Thames Water) we met with Chris Langdown (senior tree officer for Enfield Council) to discuss the Lakes Enhancement Plan to discuss management of tree cover around the lower lake. We have been asked to coppice some of the smaller self-seeded alders on the East bank and will be doing this in February.



## Lakes Team: Elena Phrydas

**Water quality:** We tested the upper, middle and lower lake this month, which recorded a lower phosphate reading. Although this was better than past readings, the recent heavy rainfall may be a contributing factor.

**Meetings with Thames Water about pollution:** Regular updates on process to find sources. So far seven properties identified with house appliances leaking into the lakes. It is a very old drainage system from the Edwardian houses where pipes become blocked due to wet wipes most commonly. Caps come off, and sewage flows into the wrong surface water system and into the park, including anything from the roads as surface run-off.

## Unlocking Broomfield Project:

- Chalk treatment planned to help naturally break down silt. Plans for where removed silt will be recycled around the park are being discussed.
- Plans to have the 'Long Water' – shallow canal – restored by the gym area as part of the project.
- Bird Welfare: Following the hope for better quality signs, new 'Nesting season' signs have been strategically placed in areas where people enter to alert people to be sensitive to young birds and nesting families. A pigeon was tragically killed by a dog by the lakes in January. Once the swans choose their nest site a temporary protective fencing will be placed.

## Conservatory Group: Geraldine Anwar

**Successes: Conservatory events/openings** - The Conservatory Group completed our programme of events for 2025 with a month-long Ceramics exhibition based on the trees and leaves found in Broomfield Park. This was all the work of one of our volunteers, Cathy Taylor. Cathy also held a Leaf rubbing workshop, as part of the Unlocking Broomfield Park project. Our final event was a House Plant sale. We have a break from events over the winter period but have been hard at work arranging our programme for 2026.

Our first event was a children's activity held on 8<sup>th</sup> March, when children decorated a pot and planted it up as a gift for Mother's Day. We open regularly, on Wednesday and Sunday afternoons throughout the year. Visitor numbers are weather-dependent but on a sunny afternoon we have been getting well over 100 visitors, which shows that the public enjoys a visit to the Conservatory, all year round.

**Work-ins** – The Conservatory Group continues to hold regular work-ins throughout the year. We usually have a dozen volunteers in attendance. At the last work-in we took the opportunity to check our plants and dispose of those that were not performing well. We will be restocking with new plants as and when they become available to buy. Our specialist collections are doing really well. The strelitzia put on a good show this year. The succulents, the orchids and, particularly, the Bromeliads look good. We have updated our display board with information on the Bromeliad collection.

**Challenges** – The Conservatory Group does not have any major challenges at present. The one item that was raised by the Group was the Insurance policy. There are a few queries. One being that the policy only covers volunteers aged 16 – 80. Several of our volunteers are over 80 and others are rapidly approaching that age. The FoBP secretary, David Williamson, has, kindly, agreed to investigate the points that we raised and has already helped us with some of our queries.



## **Heritage: Colin Younger**

We have been supplying historical information in relation to the Unlocking Broomfield project.

Most recently this has been delivered to Stuart Sang who is the Interpretation design consultant for the project. He is now considering how this material might be reflected in his interpretation proposals. We have also had discussions with "Flying Geese" the consultants for the heritage activities plan which provides some interesting opportunities for volunteer development. BHT has in the past provided a range of talks, walks and presentations about the history and heritage of Broomfield house and Park, and there is a very substantial repository of information available.

FOBP does not have the capacity to translate this into a learning programme about the house and Park. We are looking for ways to create the necessary capacity. As a first step we have met with representatives from the Enfield Society and the Southgate and District Civic Trust to discuss their experience and ways we might learn from them. Some of the potential heritage roles that may be needed include:

- Research
- Planning and conservation
- Oral history
- Events
- Interpretation and education
- Funding and bid support

The next step is to recruit more heritage volunteers.

## **Events: David Williamson**

*"Summer at Broomfield: Gardening, Family Fun, Music and Culture for All"*

The winter has been a time for planning the summer programme. The summer events currently include a range of activities including:

- Family and community gatherings, such as Teddy Bear's Picnic, Orchard Picnic and Summer Sun-sation, that increase community participation, encourage positive use of public space and make the park welcoming and inclusive
- Music and cultural events such as R'Voices Choir, Yebo! Fest, Saturday Love All Dayer, Broomfield Blues and Palmers Green festival, which broaden cultural activity in the park, build partnerships and attract diverse audiences to visit Broomfield
- Community gardening events that promote environmental awareness encourage horticulture and biodiversity and raise funds for park improvement

### **How events support FoBP priorities**

FoBP's 2026 events will help achieve our key priorities by attracting new volunteers through accessible and engaging activities, while hands-on gardening and conservation work will protect and enhance the park's natural and built features. Heritage-focused events and festival programming will celebrate Broomfield Park's history and foster public awareness, and inclusive family, music, and cultural activities will encourage wider community engagement. Collaborative delivery with local partners will strengthen relationships, and fundraising from plant sales and ticketed events will support transparent financial management, ensuring all income is reinvested to benefit the park and its community.

**Challenge:** Developing continuity plan Recruiting organisation team members

## Orchard: David March

### Successes

- Wassailing event
- Duke of Edinburgh Award volunteering scheme

Our Wassailing event in January, with the music led by That Blue Patch, was a great success. We have been running a DofE volunteering scheme in the orchard since 2013. We meet up on Sunday afternoons and currently have six DofE volunteers who are supported by three volunteers.

We are going to build a 'dead hedge' as a wildlife habitat, using the prunings from the apple trees.

### Challenge

- We would like to attract more volunteers to join us when we work in the orchard on Sunday afternoons and to help out at events.



## Duke of Edinburgh Award Volunteering: David March

### Successes

- Well subscribed – we currently have eight DofE volunteers, who are supported by four of our own volunteers
- Making our first 'dead hedge' – a habitat for wildlife
- Learning gardening skills and about connecting with nature

Broomfield's DofE scheme has been operating in the community orchard since 2013. DofE volunteers help to maintain the orchard and learn how to look after the apple trees and wildflowers. They learn about the importance of teamwork and carry out a range of gardening jobs including planting bulbs weeding around the apple trees, composting leaves and clearing the paths around the edge of the orchard. DofE volunteers also help out at our events such as the summer picnic and apple day.

### Challenge

- Maintaining a good balance between the number of DofE volunteers and our own volunteers who support them. We have never turned away a request from someone wishing to do DofE volunteering.



## Horticultural Group: Elizabeth Dobbie

### Successes

The group is functioning well with 10-15 hardy volunteers working each Wednesday morning. The very wet start of the year has delayed some planned work, but the planting is thriving -- snowdrops and scillas bought with last year's Greenery grant are establishing in the Gazebo beds are settling in and visitors enjoyed the early flowering scented shrubs.

We were awarded a grant from the Garden Trust in November 2025 to update our tools, and they are now in regular use.

There is lots to see now and in the next few weeks

- epimediums in the Long Border
- flowing shrubs in the Memorial Garden
- crown imperials in the Dahlia bed
- tulips soon in the horseshoe bed
- euphorbias in the Mediterranean bed

## Art and Wellbeing: David March

### Successes

- We have continued to have weekly art activity sessions at the Clubhouse on Wednesday and Friday mornings for clients from two local care homes and a group from the local Mental Health Trust
- Participants have benefited from developing their artistic skills in a very positive and empathetic environment. They have gained pride through exhibiting their work at successful summer exhibitions at The Southgate Club for the last two years, where some of their work was sold
- Their work was also displayed and sold at the FoBP Christmas Arts and Crafts Sale
- On the last Friday of the month, individuals in the group are encouraged to take photographs with a camera. This is facilitated by local photographer Barbara Luckhurst and is proving to be very popular

### Challenge

- By far the biggest challenge we have is to attract volunteers to help at the art activity sessions and to help plan and organize our next Exhibition at the Southgate Club.

