

Volunteer Group Briefings | July 2025

1. Horticultural Group Update - Elizabeth Dobbie

Successes:

- We are preparing for Enfield in Bloom judging in early July, and the Walled Gardens are looking exceptionally fine; The Long Border is the best it has ever been.
- The warm, dry spring has meant a beautiful show of roses, though it was a poor year for our rhododendrons.
- Each Wednesday morning since Christmas, 12 to 15 of our 25 volunteers have consistently worked in the ornamental beds.
- Two successful fundraising events – the spring plant sale and June Open Garden – have raised £1750 for new plants.
- We plan to use our stall at Palmers Green Festival to showcase the enjoyment of being a gardening volunteer.

Challenges:

- Thieves are stealing plants from our borders; knowledgeable park visitors sometimes take showy plants and even newly planted specimens.
- While working well with park professional staff, we have made no progress in securing a planned, routine maintenance schedule for lawns, hedges, and path margins. This often means that attractive borders are undermined by the surrounding environment.

2. Broomfield Park Conservatory Group - Geraldine Anwar

Successes:

- **Events:** The Conservatory Group has continued with a series of successful events. Marc Harris, a local musician and songwriter, performed on a very hot Sunday afternoon, attracting a good crowd. Marc is happy to play while visitors look around the Conservatory, though some prefer to sit and listen. Two of our volunteers held popular Tomato and Chili plant sales, which were sell-out events (thanks to Clock House Nurseries for their support!).

- We also organised a Tree Trail for children on Wednesday and Sunday of half-term. Everyone who took part enjoyed the experience and was awarded a small plant upon completion.

Plant Donation:

We rarely accept plant donations from the public, but we could not resist this Moonflower pictured.



- **Work-ins:** The group holds regular work-ins to keep The Conservatory looking its best. (images below). Approximately a dozen volunteers attend these Saturday mornings, carrying out work both inside and outside the Conservatory. Jobs include weeding, pest control, potting plants on, and cutting back. It is important that the Conservatory looks its best as it has been entered for Enfield in Bloom again.



Challenges:

- Securing assistance from Park staff for necessary jobs around the Conservatory, as the number of park staff appears to be ever-decreasing.
- A new challenge we are experiencing is Carpenter Ants burrowing into the wooden window frames. We are concerned about the damage they may cause and are attempting to treat this ourselves, as due to staff redundancy, we have not received an offer of help from the Council.

3. Broomfield House Group - Colin Younger

Successes:

- Visits by Hazelwood Year 5 to trial excavations on the rear lawn, accompanied by three talks on the history of the House and Remembrance Garden (three volunteers involved).
- Talk given to Laurel Park School Year 11 regarding the Lanscroon Murals.
- Support provided for the Matchbox Collective's work on the design and execution of their project. Interviews have been posted on the Matchbox website and are now available on the FoBP Facebook pages (two volunteers involved).
- Briefings held for conservation consultants addressing the future of salvaged listed material in storage.
- An Excellent [report by the Enfield Archaeological Society](#) has been published detailing the excavations on the rear lawn, a model of an outreach event.

Challenge:

- Ensuring we are properly involved in the development of the plans being drawn up by the multidisciplinary team.



4. Palmers Greenery Community Cafe Update - Sarah Cotton

Successes:

- Completed cafe refurbishment following a successful and gratefully received pop-up at FoBP Bowls Club.
- Celebrated Volunteers Week and our 11th Anniversary with a dedicated volunteer celebration.
- Onboarded three new cafe volunteers, bringing our active volunteer team to 48 (excluding our Monday and Thursday partnerships).
- In July, we will complete the first year of our partnership with Barnet & Southgate College, having provided work experience and skills-based training for five pupils with additional needs.
- We have secured agreement with two local girls' schools (St Ann's and Palmers Green High School) to present our 'Make Space for Girls' plans to their cohorts and engage

them in a short survey about their use and preferences relating to Broomfield Park. This survey will also be available in the park over the summer.

Challenges:

- The only ongoing uncertainty is regarding Travellers over the summer period, which presents a live challenge at this time. We still do not feel that the Council fully understands the impact of encampments across Broomfield's many volunteer projects.

5. Lakes Team Update - Elena Phrydas

Successes:

- Sally Prothero, lead architect for Unlocking Broomfield, was invited to discuss the implementation of the Enhancement Strategy and how work between parties could dovetail without duplication.
- A resident juvenile magpie caught on netting around Broomfield House was successfully rescued by the Fire Brigade.
- We are awaiting full results from Thames Water on a sample taken from the manhole drain on the grass by the café. This is the point at which water is fed into the first inlet on the northwest side of the upper lake. Jenny and I managed to test this inlet for the first time; very high ammonia readings were recorded and reported to Thames Water.

Challenges:

- A lack of clear council signage regarding park bylaws and general information on how to keep wildlife safe and protected in urban spaces (e.g., responsible dog walking, respecting wildlife, nesting season).
- Urgent removal of netting from Broomfield House is needed to prevent more wildlife fatalities.
- Significant rubbish is often left over from parties by the bandstand, including hundreds of pieces of confetti, balloons, and general refuse. Clear, official signage is required.

6 Orchard Group Update - David March

Successes

- We had a very successful and well-attended 'Summer Picnic' on the 13th July, with six acts performing music organised by That Blue Patch. We raised about £400 from donations and the sale of refreshments, home baking and arts and crafts by Anne and Ralph Hutchings
- We have three new adult volunteers working regularly in the orchard
- Our DofE volunteering programme continues to be popular
- Our Apiary has been very productive, thanks to the bees and the hard work of our apiarists, Cathy Hooper and Mark Nolan

Challenge:

- By far the biggest challenge we have faced has been the escalation in anti-social behaviour in the Orchard (fire-setting, burnt Lime bike) and in the adjoining Community Growing Space (the Fire Brigade attended to a fire in the compost heap which spread into the hedge. More recently the Police were called to deal with under-age drinking and fire setting when a tennis tournament was taking place.

7. Education Group Update - Jean Thomas

Successes:

The 2025 school visits program has successfully concluded. On Thursday, June 26th, we hosted 60 children, accompanied by their teachers and parents, from Bowes

Primary School at the park - his year's educational workshops included:

- Wetlands led by Helen, Ruth S. & Stewart
- Birds/Lakes by Elena, Liz & Leslie
- Apiary by Cathy & Ruth D.
- Orchard/Wildflowers by Sarah, Jean J. & Tunay

This year we had two lovely Festival Makers, Daisy Talia who provided invaluable assistance in guiding groups between activity stations. Feedback indicated that the children, parents, and teachers thoroughly enjoyed the day, gaining valuable insights into the park's diverse ecosystems. Parents, in particular, expressed appreciation for the programme's entirely volunteer-driven execution.

Challenge

A key challenge identified was the request from teachers to reintroduce the Pond Dipping activity. This activity was omitted this year and last due to its labour-intensive setup requirements. Further discussion with the volunteer team is required to explore the feasibility of implementing a scaled-down version of this activity for future programs.

8. Events Group Update -David Williamson

Successes:

- A successful series of events ran through the 'Unlocking Broomfield' project.
- A large programme of FoBP events began in June and will run through to September.
- Events have been run in different locations – the orchard, 'Broomfield Bowl' conservatory, and bandstand.
- All Palmers Green Festival pitches are now booked.
- Despite a poor start to the weather in early June, the Broomfield summer events programme has started well with the 'Teddy Bear's Picnic', the Orchard Supper Club, 'Saturday Love' jazz and funk live music, and the annual Centre Stage concert.
- So far, over 1,200 people have attended events. 15 FoBP volunteers, 20 festival makers, and a further 20 volunteers from partner organisations made these events possible (see images below).

Challenges:

- While volunteers do an excellent job, the physical limitations of a number of volunteers impact event planning. Festival makers mitigate this challenge, but at a financial cost.



9. Habitats Group Update – Matt Pierce

Successes:

The habitats group has been working on the following since the last meeting in May:

- Renovating the hedge in the growing space by clearing encroaching brambles
- Mowing reeds on the path through the wetlands, and by the stepping stones, to keep these areas accessible for the public
- Mowing areas of flattened long grass on the wetlands banks and removing the resulting hay - this keeps the sward in good order
- Installing wooden posts to protect wildflower areas and trees from wayward Council mowers
- Recording butterflies - 2025 has been good for butterflies so far with more species seen than in the last two years and good numbers overall. Some of our butterfly initiatives seem to be paying off, e.g. in the case of peacocks, commas, brimstones and common blues

Challenges:

We have two big challenges

- Littering, vandalism and fire-setting in the growing space
- We are running out of space in the stable yard to dump cut material that we can't otherwise get rid of e.g. reeds, trees, woody material that won't compost. The accumulated dry brash is a fire risk. The Council have not fixed the broken gateway hence they can't get machines in to remove or shred this material.