

To all those whom it may concern.

We, the board members of the Friends of Brook Green working group considering the Green, feel that it may be helpful to publicise what we see as its final desirable state, so that any works to be undertaken shall fit in with the wider scheme of things.

We would welcome feedback from the Community on this paper (whose views are broadly consistent with BMD's Landscape Strategy document which was commissioned by us and is now on our website) and expect to discuss it (amended as appropriate) with our full Board, Councillor Wesley Harcourt, other Councillors and officials of LBHF Parks Department. Once agreed, it should be circulated to all relevant parties.

Some of our desires may not be fulfilled for many years yet, if ever, but there are four main reasons for putting them forward now:-

1. the ever increasing density of population and usage of the Green
2. the cutbacks in staffing levels at the council, needing careful prioritisation
3. the substantial quantities of time effort and money which the Friends have put, are putting and will put into the welfare of the Green.
4. some recent or anticipated changes.

Brook Green is unusual in that it is narrow and closely overlooked; is legally a Common and therefore subject to certain constraints, the most relevant being that it cannot be locked at night; that it is the nearest open space for a very large population; and that it is much loved and its welfare cared about by a great many people.

Starting from the west:-

Little Brook Green. There are Boris bikes on its west side. The owners of the Access building will have input. We see the possibility of removing the fencing, and perhaps paving some of the desire-line paths. It could be used for other temporary markets as well as for the sale of Christmas trees, and part of it may need an all-weather surface for these purposes; but the overall character of grass, trees, crocuses and daffodils should be maintained. There is a substantial number of utility boxes; it would be nice if they could be elsewhere.

Western lawn. The southern boundary should be moved southwards to include the trees, leaving a narrower pavement (1.5m.), if any at all, and considerably increasing the grassed area, which can then be planted with bulbs etc. A hard path should be provided N-W to S-E, preferably following the desire line, i.e. not ruler-straight, possibly widening at its ends. The northern and southern fencing to be renewed but at a lower level, i.e. enough to deter dogs and children, at knee height or whatever is required for a Common. It may be possible to do

without one. The type of fence needs consideration; post and chains may not be robust enough. Higher, (i.e. normal thigh height) fencing may be desirable along the western boundary. The depressions on the surface should be filled in, and drainage improved where possible. Cannot commercial use be forbidden in winter, even if it means passing a bylaw? The surface is currently being badly damaged by formal children's games and by keepfit exercisers, though some are careful to use the hard surface in the north-east corner. There is a case for some sort of fence or net for a short distance between two trees at the east end, to act as a goal for informal football, hoping to prevent ball-bicycle collisions.

Tennis Courts. The courts have been provided with lighting and resurfacing, the configuration changed to 3 full size courts and two small areas for children's games with a separate entrance gate.

Pavilion and 'public area' around it. Much consultation has taken place. It is hoped that the designs can be granted permission soon. The footprint of the pavilion is agreed, and there will be tables and chairs between it and the courts, on a hard surface or paving, perhaps sandstone with brick strips. Parts of the small area on the south side of the pavilion will be planted with some suitable shrubs. There should be bicycle racks nearby.

The tennis court surround, the L- shape. South side: The southern boundary should be moved south to the tree line, or even to the kerb line. Although the idea of a wild flower meadow, mown late in the year, is attractive in principle, small ragged patches do not enhance the overall environment. There is a suggestion that there should be mounds there. Put a N-S fence with a gate from the SW corner of the courts to the southern edge of the Green, so that the 'garden' area is enclosed and can be locked at night, as seating for daytime visitors will be provided. There will therefore be two gates between the western Lawn and the pavilion. A path is to lead E – W from the cycle path to the pavilion gate, not ruler-straight. **The West side:** The N-S arm of grass to have bulbs etc, but to be mown later in the year, for aesthetic reasons. The N-S fence could go, or some of it, leaving a curved version of the small northern fence to free the awkward corner. If the N-S fence along the cycle path is retained, it should have a stile installed, so that balls may be collected without damage to the fence itself. No logpiles there, please. (see below). The cycle path and the pedestrian path should be differentiated as they are at present.

Playground. The makeover has been successful but we are undertaking a review to look at areas for further improvement now that the new facilities have bedded in. It is desirable to improve security, as there is much night intrusion. Moving the bins would help to make entry more difficult.

Kickabout. We ask that there shall be no commercial use from October to March. It might help the grass if the trees on the southern margin were reduced in height. The eastern gate is not self-closing, but should be.

St Paul's Walkway. Perhaps there could be more planting of bulbs/anemones. Remove one central bicycle hoop at the eastern end; it is not much used and spoils the line of the path; this was first promised about 3 years ago, and has been asked for at every opportunity.

Dog loo. Opinion is divided on this. One faction wants to keep it but suggests that ivy is planted around the fence. Perhaps a less aggressively coloured surface would help its appearance. Since the tiny space at the north end of Richmond Way is really no longer available for dogs, the BG area will be ever more needed. The other faction wants to do away with it altogether. Reports that it can be smelly are probably due to the presence of a stink pipe. In fact most dog-owners behave responsibly and those with puppies need somewhere safe to train them. A campaign to make users pick up, with one or two well-publicised fines, might improve the condition of the surface, but it is surely better to encourage dog faeces in one place rather than randomly distributed. Perhaps dog-owners could be persuaded to provide bags. Regular bin-emptying is essential.

This area would be a good place for the logpiles, in the two western corners. At present they are within a fenced area around the tennis courts, which is not a suitable location, and one which in the long term would be open to the public during the day. Logpiles can be dangerous things, and we should prefer that they are at least in one of the areas not normally or casually used by families. They are at present rather obtrusive, are vandalised, and are not appropriate aesthetically.

Area with shrub flower beds. We suggest we might sow wild early annual flowers among the shrubs.

Over all areas.

1. Tree felling and planting of major trees to assure succession in the future. We understand that LBHF's tree management plan for the Green will be completed shortly after which we will consider their proposals and publicise their report on our website to invite broader feedback. We think that, in the confined circumstances of Brook Green, some crown reduction of the large plane trees may be necessary to enhance safety and reduce shading.
2. More small trees to be planted. We are not sure that this is a good use of time and money. Former examples have not been a success, but we are not against the principle. We may in future need to replace the ash trees.
3. Bird boxes, as many and varied as possible, would be very welcome. We would try to encourage children to provide materials for nest building.
