

Friends of Mycenae Gardens

NEWSLETTER NO 3 WINTER 2013

Sign up at
www.MycenaeGardens.org.uk

Next AGM will be at 8pm Thursday 14 March 2013

The Friends of Mycenae Gardens, which launched in March 2011, will hold its second Annual General Meeting on Thursday 14 March at 8.00pm in the Greenwich Steiner School, Woodlands, 90 Mycenae Road, SE3 7SE.

Anyone wishing to stand for election to the committee needs to be a member of the Friends and must be proposed by two other members of the Friends. A form is available to download online at <http://bit.ly/zmiClq> or write with the appropriate signatures direct to The Secretary, Friends of Mycenae Gardens, 75a Vanbrugh Park, Blackheath, SE3 7JQ to arrive seven days before, if possible.

Membership is free, and is available online at <http://bit.ly/zLwww>

The Friends group does not ask for a membership fee and relies on donations. Please make cheques payable to The Friends of Mycenae Gardens and send donations to the secretary (address above).



It's time to give some fresh support to Mycenae Gardens and the Woodlands Dell

Dear Friends,

Just as Spring will see the Gardens rejuvenated for 2013 I'm writing to encourage you all to renew your commitment to the group by attending our AGM or perhaps, if you're not a member, to come along, find out more and maybe even join the group.

We will have three committee posts to fill and my time as Chair will be coming to an end so there is a very real opportunity to get involved and make a difference to the Gardens and our community.

The Friends are a not-for-profit association, whose aims are:

- to protect and promote Mycenae Gardens as a site of nature conservation importance and a community open space and as a park that fosters the natural environment, wildlife, woodland and open space for the benefit, health and well-being of the whole community
- to support the use of the Gardens for recreation and learning, as a place for quiet enjoyment and study, and as an amenity for local people
- to help to balance the various uses and interests so as to improve and sustain the Gardens and to encourage a sense of community around the area of the Gardens
- to promote the interests of users of the Gardens in consultation with the local authority and other bodies, to keep members of the group informed on matters affecting the Gardens and to encourage all users of the Gardens to join the Group.

The Friends group will only be two years old in March and I really feel that we found our feet (not to mention our paws) in 2012 with our first big community event, Canine Capers. Special thanks go to Sophie Spencer, whose drive and enthusiasm for all things canine ensured this was a super success. Sophie was supported by Charlotte White, Valerie Swann and Mary Vu who together baked, leafleted and charmed you all into making that day a terrific

success. Watch out for Sophie's plans for dog owners in 2013; they'll be equally memorable.

Our hopes for 2013 are to better understand the biodiversity of the space. Armed with this knowledge, and your help, we should be able to set up a volunteer gardening group and extend the opportunities for children to play and learn in the Gardens.

Not green fingered? Worry not. We know that there will be brambles to be cleared, stag beetle log piles to be built, bat boxes to be erected and maybe even fact sheets for visitors to enable them to understand more of what they might find.

On management of the gardens we accept that the Council's attempts to reseed the lawn in 2012 look unsuccessful, so let's try again this year with renewed vigour, aeration, seed and water.

I would like to take this chance to thank Charlotte White and Dr Colin Gillespie, who undertake the less glamorous roles of Secretary and Treasurer, David Hall who not only is our link with Mycenae House, but continues to produce our beautiful publicity material and website, and Eileen Bell who is our link with the Steiner School.

Gael Dundas
Chair



Your chance to shape the future of the gardens

Many thanks to Jack Kay, who joined the committee a year ago and was unstinting in his support for the gardens and our Canine Capers dog show. Jack, an eminent Fleet Street photographer before retirement, decided to move with his family to Somerset before Christmas, so can only be with us in spirit. An exhibition of some of his celebrity photographs is planned this year at Mycenae House and we wish him every success with that and his new life in the country.

Jack's absence creates a vacancy on the committee, as does the retirement of other committee members, so we would like to invite anyone with enthusiasm, and especially with experience or ideas of looking after spaces open to the public, to stand for election.

The first committee meeting will be Thursday 18 April.



A number of issues confront the gardens and we hope to address them in the coming year, but we welcome any contributions.

We are pleased to announce that the shipping container, which has provided secure storage for the Olympic medal-winning Metro Judo Club, will be removed from the grounds very shortly. Metro Judo Club has now relocated to a purpose-built facility at Thomas Tallis Academy in Kidbrooke.

The Friends hope to arrange installation of a new sign welcoming visitors to the space, together with an information board displaying notices. Many thanks to the Westcombe Society for a generous gift to help with the expected costs.

Last year proposals for the installation of substantial play equipment in Mycenae Gardens provoked some opposition when planning permission was sought. Councillors called for a more detailed assessment of the impact of the plans, the proposal was withdrawn and has not so far been renewed.

The current use of Mycenae Gardens in particular poses various challenges and the Friends are committed to coming forward with plans to help Royal Greenwich ensure the space is suitable for all its varied users.

The open grass clearly comes under strain. The council has already tried spreading seed to restore the surface, but it is hard to have confidence that this alone is the solution. The area of grass is currently restricted, and the marvellous line of ancient plane trees cast a shadow for so much of the year that grass will never grow over a considerable area. Much of the remaining space is given to natural history interest in the form of unkempt woodland and bramble banks. At the same time much of Woodlands Dell, which used to be far more open and even provided space for local children to play football, has been reclaimed by natural growth and most of it is difficult for people to access.

The committee is working on a management proposal to put to the council that will take account of all the various demands on the gardens and the dell to accommodate the wildlife, vigorous activity by younger users, undisturbed access for dog walkers and peaceful enjoyment for others, be they young parents with toddlers or those seeking more sedate leisure.

Establishing what everyone wants from Mycenae Gardens and Woodlands Dell is important so if you have ideas, or can contribute specialist knowledge, do take this opportunity to get in touch. Visit the website <http://bit.ly/XIVdhK> or write to Friends of Mycenae Gardens, c/o Mycenae House, 90 Mycenae Road, London SE3 7SE.

Here's the committee: why not join them?



Charlotte Cooper
You may have seen me and my Jack Russell terrier Tilly in the gardens or around Westcombe Park. I have been secretary of the group for two years — although I am standing down to give someone else a chance. I think it's really important that as dog owners we get involved in the management of our local spaces.



Sophie Spencer
I love Mycenae Gardens for walking Ziggy, my dog. I really appreciate the gardens first thing in the morning and in the early evening when the garden is more at peace and the birds and wildlife are easier to see and hear. It is a beautiful space to feel at one with nature so I felt it my duty to get involved.



Dr Colin Gillespie
I am a retired General Practitioner, having worked in the area for 40 years, and have lived in Mycenae Road since the early 1970s. I am naturally interested in the proper custodianship of not only the park but the much neglected Dell. With this in mind I would like to help our organisation achieve this.



Valerie Swann
I live locally and frequently visit the gardens with my grand-daughter and my dog Barney. I have joined the Friends to help restore and maintain the quiet, natural beauty of the gardens. Thus I would like to help set up a local volunteer gardening group and the Friends would welcome your support to this end.



Mary Vu
Joining the Friends of Mycenae Gardens as a member and committee member has been a highlight of my moving from Marlow, Bucks, to south east London. I was welcomed to the community, made friends, and became more aware of the environment where I live, having a voice in helping to keep the gardens so they can be enjoyed by all.



Gael Dundas
I was delighted to discover Mycenae Gardens and to learn the garden I'd assumed belonged to Woodlands House was community open space. I've really enjoyed the committee and the chance to meet so many people. Although other commitments mean that this must end I'm confident peaceful enjoyment of the gardens will remain a big part of my life.



Eileen Bell
Having enjoyed the gardens for over 13 years I was delighted when we were able to move Greenwich Steiner School here, refurbish Woodlands and help to renovate the area which had become so blighted by graffiti and vandalism. It's a pleasure, as the school's representative, to be part of a diverse community sharing the gardens and working together to protect it for future generations.



David Hall
As a close neighbour of the gardens for nearly 25 years I value the way they bring a touch of countryside to our community. The wonderful treescape and the space which allows the birds, the bugs and the mammals to thrive makes a great contribution to the character of the whole area, and deserves our care.