

FoWOS News,

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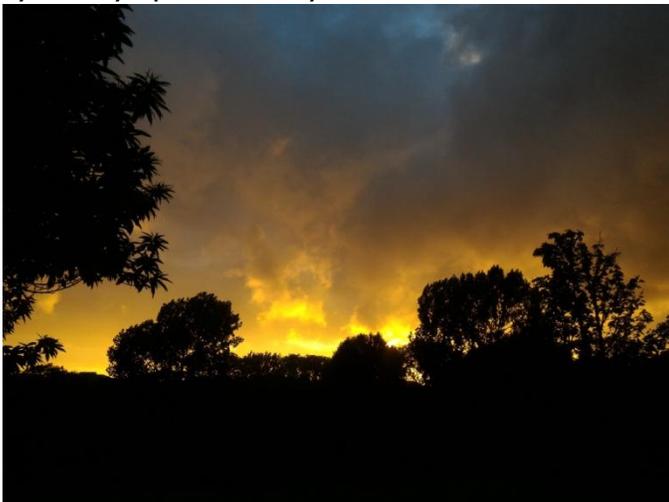
A Summary of 2017

Yearly Review

2017 began with our pleasant mild winter that evolved into a wondrous colourful spring and some lovely warm days in May. Sadly, all hopes of a memorable long hot summer never actually materialised, as our usual temperate maritime weather pattern of sunny days and regular bouts of rain, dampened spirits but meant the grass at the Open Space always looked green and the scrape never fully dried out as in previous years.



The mid-summer gathering of FoWOS at the end of June suffered a harsh shower as a cold front passed over, with the attendees taking temporary shelter under a tree! But we were soon rewarded with a rainbow, followed shortly by a very spectacular yellow sunset!



After the sun went down the clear skies began to reveal some of the brighter stars and the

bat detectors began to emit the demodulated sounds of emerging bats; with several seen flitting above the heads of those still enjoying the wine, victuals and good conversation.



There was no drastic flooding of Dollis Brook either that I can recall, though the approaching winter could change that.

The Open Space and Riverside Walk were well used this year, with children using the play area, with many dog walkers, joggers and people enjoying picnics. Also, we still have some visitors using the footpath for cycling, despite this being in contravention of the Open Space bylaws.

Sign of the Times

Some new replacement 'No Cycling' signs have gone up, and we hope riders will respect the rights of those using the footpath correctly and dismount. We are very fortunate to have this Open Space on our doorstep; an invaluable asset winding through the community for our enjoyment and general wellbeing. It is up to all of us to ensure we keep this a special place and report to the council anything untoward, like dumped items in the brook, graffiti or over-spilling waste bins.

Joining and becoming an active member of FoWOS is also a great way to assist in looking after the area by getting involved in the practicalities of keeping the Open Space in good nick; and you'll get fresh air and exercise!

In the spring there was a foraging expedition; an organised walk explaining what plants are edible with a brief history and possible uses of the free-to-eat vegetation that is available.

Flown Away...

There was a disturbing report from Germany recently saying that 75% of flying insects have been lost over the past 30 years.

In the UK all of us have surely noticed the reduction of insects on our windscreens and number plates compared how covered they used to get in the olden days on long drives.

This lack of insects has repercussions for other wildlife like birds, bats and other mammals that depend on insects as a food source. The more we develop and eradicate the natural green areas of our towns and cities, the more we remove the habitat vital for the fauna that we used to take for granted.

Thankfully the Open Space still has birds, bats and butterflies, but we used to see a lot more of all these; and as their habitat disappears, the more important places like the Riverside Walk from Barnet to Brent Cross become.



In The Shade

Thankfully, working in conjunction with Barnet Council, FoWOS plan to have a row of some Indian Chestnut trees planted adjacent to the childrens play area to eventually provide natural shade to the playground.

More Rubbish

FoWOS is grateful for those who turned out for our litter picks. It is unfortunate that we live in a society where some people have no regard for their fellow citizens or their environment. Carelessly dropped litter drifts in the wind, gets caught in the undergrowth and looks unsightly. Even if placed in waste bins, foxes, crows and squirrels will invariably remove items looking

for something to eat. We would encourage all our visitors to take home any discarded food, wrappings, and drink containers.

Soap Story

Little egrets were regularly seen again this year with two sighted, often sitting rather ungainly in the trees above the brook. In early June this one was seen hunting for sticklebacks in the calmer waters below the Hendon Lane weir.

Unfortunately, as so often, it was surrounded by a constant stream of suds from someone's wrongly connected dishwasher or washing machine in an adjacent road. The homeowner responsible is liable to a huge fine when the Environment Agency trace this back to its source. Once again, it doesn't seem right that someone paying peanuts for a cowboy plumber can cause so much needless suffering and damage to the environment. Please report to Thames Water if you see this occur.



Thankfully, sticklebacks were also seen in the brook, and we can only hope they continue to breed here, and entice the kingfisher more often; there being a reported sighting of one from the bridge near Dollis Road this summer!

That's all for this edition. Thanks for reading this far; I hope much was of interest.

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