

18. Addiscombe Recreation Ground Annual Report for 2021

Since the last AGM, the gardening group has had a successful year, meeting on a monthly basis to maintain and enhance the two flower beds in the park. There has been a small cohort of regular volunteers with others joining when they are available. Plant donations have been received from local residents which have been welcomed. As well as the organised gardening sessions, volunteers from the group, as well as other park users, have contributed by watering plants during dry weather, pulling up weeds or adding plants. This very much reflects the ethos that the park is for everyone and everyone can contribute in their own way.

There has been colour in the beds during every season. Bulbs, including daffodils, crocuses and snowdrops appeared in the Spring. Flowering perennials and shrubs delighted in Summer with many lasting through to Autumn. The variable foliage provided interest in Winter.

As well as the two main flower beds, the gardeners have tidied up entrances to the park and started to do some planting along the Bingham Road entrance.

Perhaps the highlight of the year was the planting of 30 Sakura trees in the park. The pandemic had delayed their planting by over a year, but they finally arrived at the end of November. The parks department contractors carried out the planting and staking very efficiently on a bright and sunny day.

To mark the arrival of the trees a successful celebration event took place on Saturday 4 December. Cllr Felicity Flynn, Deputy Mayor cut a ceremonial ribbon and the event was attended by over 50 local residents and park users including Sarah Jones, MP for Croydon Central and local councillors Jeet Bains, Richard Chatterjee and Maddie Henson.

In the bright sunshine, the guests heard Keiko Miyakita talk about the significance of cherry blossom in Japanese culture and to learn from her and another Japanese guest Sachiko Pearce, who was wearing traditional dress, about other aspects of life in Japan, including the art of origami.

A range of cherry themed refreshments were served providing an opportunity for the local community to socialise in their much-loved park. In the future, it is planned to follow the Japanese tradition of hanami by holding a community picnic under the cherry blossom.

At the beginning of 2022 dates were set for the year's gardening sessions and the dates were posted on the three entrance gates. They take place on Saturdays between 09.30 and 12.00. The remaining dates are 7 May, 11 June, 2 July, 6 August, 3 September and 1 October. As ever new volunteers are welcome to come along for all or part of a session and donations of plants are always well received.

Many thanks to all of this year's volunteers. Feedback from park users is always very positive and the work is hugely appreciated.

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