

A proposal from the Warner Estate Residents Association (WERA)

The proposal is for an all-weather path to replace the present informal, and very muddy, desire line from the top of Park Avenue North, across the Redston Road playing fields and the old race-course, to join the lower road at the eastern end of the car park. The matter was first raised in early 2008 on the WERA yahoo email group (which has over 100 members). It was argued that a proper path would make the park more accessible particularly for those with buggies and mobility problems and that it would also encourage people to walk to Muswell Hill. A teacher from a Muswell Hill primary school said it would fit in with their walk-to-school programmes. The small number of WERA members who were not in favour were concerned about increased parking in Park Avenue North, possible increased anti-social behaviour and motorbikes using the path. All the responses are archived and can be viewed on the WERA website (www.wera-n8.co.uk press "communications").

WERA invited the Parks Manager to speak about recent developments in the park at its July AGM and at the same time to outline a provisional proposal for the Redston Fields path. The AGM was attended by over 60 members. The principle of an all-weather path was supported by a large majority (it was not necessary to count the votes). WERA recognised that there needed to be more discussion about the exact route, the surface fabric and other matters. The Park Manager stated that any proposal for the path would need more details, would have to go to the Trust Board, and might need a planning application as the park is a conservation area. This would provide an opportunity for anyone (within WERA or outside) to raise objections.

The Park Manager presented a preliminary case to the Board in October. The Board deferred the proposal because of a number of objections, but we believe these can be answered and that on balance the proposal will benefit the wider community as well as residents in our area.

- The existing desire line shows the need for some kind of path, but in wet weather it is almost unusable even for pedestrians, and impossible for buggies.
- The main benefit of a path along this route is to provide a north-south link across the park from Crouch End and Hornsey to the Palace and Muswell Hill, but it would have special benefits for school-children from the south of the park who might use the path to walk to one of the schools in Muswell Hill.
- The path need not affect the use of the playing fields either for the present informal football matches, or for any permanent football pitches which might be laid out again in the future; the proposed path would be very near to the edge of the long grass and the newly-planted trees, leaving adequate space to the west to accommodate a full-size football pitch..

- The existing path from the lower road to North View Road adds an extra 350 metres to the walk and in any case only local people know about it.
- We would ask that the path be made of materials sympathetic to the topology and appearance of the Park.
- Joy-riding motor bikes are a problem even for the existing path, so some kind of deterrent is needed in any case. This could be addressed by the design of the path and the park entrance.