

Friends of Burgess Park Press Release 24 June 2019

Wild Burgess Park is wonderful for butterflies

A new survey reveals 16 species of butterfly are thriving in Burgess Park because of the unique mix of wild plants and trees. The survey findings come just as the park is facing massive new developments which could reduce the value of the park for wildlife.

Friends of Burgess Park has campaigned for many years to keep the wildlife areas' with long grasses, nettles and blackberry brambles. It's now paying off with the butterfly, bird and bat populations all thriving. The council has backed the park's importance for wildlife with the new £3.5m Burgess Park West wildlife area and Rust Square playground.

The Burgess Park West celebration on Saturday 22 June featured a moth release. Children and families had the opportunity to learn more about the amazing variety of moths and see them up close. May Webber from wildlife charity Butterfly Conservation said, "Moths are often overlooked, but with over 2,500 species in Britain, they are vital to maintaining healthy ecosystems." May was able to answer questions about why these insects are so important and explain their fascinating life-cycles.

This success story of city wildlife thriving in Burgess Park is under threat. It matters because British butterflies, and other species, are in steep decline, so carefully managed wildlife areas are crucial to their recovery. New buildings developments all around Burgess Park threatens the fantastic wildlife areas. But, especially those closest on the south side of Burgess Park, along Parkhouse Street and Southampton Way. Friends of Burgess Park hope the council will to stick to their commitment to enlarge the park with additional land on Southampton Way already designated for many years as Metropolitan Open Land.

FOBP is also supporting the Crowd Justice fundraiser to join the Council in a planning appeal brought by Peachtree Services, developers of Burgess Business Park (Camberwell Union). If the appeal succeeds, the development will set a disastrous precedent for other developments set so close to Burgess Park's nature area. The appeal has already raised over £3k towards the target of £5k. Please contribute before the end of June.

Notes to Editors

Friends of Burgess Park – The Friends of Burgess Park brings together local residents and other interested groups who are concerned to protect, promote and enhance an important, inner-city London park.

Burgess Park is one of London's biggest parks. The park was created after hundreds of dwellings, factories and churches were demolished, thirty streets were covered over, the Grand Surrey Canal was filled in, and bomb-damaged areas were incorporated and grassed over. This unusual method of park development took place gradually, within living memory. Wildlife has always played an important part in the park development further enhanced by the 2012 redevelopment and council masterplan which has been further extended with the Burgess Park West scheme completed 2019.

<http://www.friendsofburgesspark.org.uk/>

Contact: Friends of Burgess Park friendsofburgesspark@gmail.com

Burgess Park West – Southwark Council has invested £3.5M in taking out New Church Road extending and landscaping the New Church nature area and Rust Square with a new playground. On Saturday 22 June 2019 the Southwark Deputy Mayor Cllr Barrie Hargrove and Cllr Lury formally celebrated the opening of the nature area and new playground.

Butterfly Conservation is the UK charity dedicated to saving butterflies, moths and our environment. Our research provides advice on how to conserve and restore habitats. We run projects to protect more than 100 threatened species and we are involved in conserving hundreds of sites and reserves. www.butterfly-conservation.org @savebutterflies

For butterfly pictures or interviews about declines, please contact Katie Callaghan in the Butterfly Conservation Press Office on 01929 406037, or email kcallaghan@butterfly-conservation.org

Butterfly species survey blog includes the list of 16 butterfly species spotted in Burgess Park <http://www.friendsofburgesspark.org.uk/burgess-goes-wild-butterflies/>

Bird species survey blog <http://www.friendsofburgesspark.org.uk/sparrows-starlings-warblers-whitethroats/>

Burgess Business Park Planning Appeal- Support the local community campaign to fight the planning appeal. Donate on CrowdJustice. <https://www.crowdjustice.com/case/stopcamberwellunion/>

Photo credit: Monica Heeran

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