The Friends of Queen's Wood, London, England



A Friends group helping the local authority to manage a broadleaved urban woodland for conservation



This case study is one of a set written as part of a Forest Research project. Some case studies are written by the community group, others by researchers who visited and interviewed group members, but they have all been validated and endorsed by the community groups.

Forest Research developed a standard method for describing the case studies, outlined in Lawrence and Ambrose-Oji, 2013 "A framework for sharing experiences of community woodland groups" Forestry Commission Research Note 15 (available from www.forestry.gov.uk/publications).

The case study comprises three parts:

1. The **Group Profile** provides essential information about the form and function of the community woodland group. Profiles were prepared following the methodology

2. The **Change Narrative** which documents key moments in the evolution of the community woodland group with a particular focus on the evolution of engagement and empowerment

3. The **Engagement and Impacts Timeline** documents milestones in the development of the community woodland group, its woodland and any assumed or evidenced impacts.

The case studies collectively provide a resource which documents the diversity and evolution of community woodland groups across Scotland, Wales and England. The method ensures that the case studies are consistent and can be compared with each other. We welcome further case studies to add to this growing resource.

For further information, and for the detailed case study method, please contact:

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1. Group profile

Woodland: Queen's Wood, Haringey, London
Map ref: TQ 288 885
Webpage: <u>http://www.fqw.org.uk/</u>
Date of profile: May 2013
Resources: site visit, interviews, management plan (Game 2000, and Riley 2010), group accounts

1. Institutional co	ontext (in May 2013)
the woodland(s)	The London Borough of Haringey owns the wood. Alongside it, but not formally part of Queen's Wood, is a stretch of woodland, also owned by the Borough through "Homes for Haringey". A small area of Queen's Wood is leased from the borough and run privately as a café with its own organic garden.
	Classification of tenure: Informal agreement (public)
use rights to the	The Wood is designated as a public park and the byelaws associated with this are applicable. There is a byelaw prohibiting cycling in the wood.
woodland(s)	Public access is permitted 24 hours a day. There is a public right of way along the eastern boundary of the Wood but this is little used compared with the other paths in the Wood.
responsibilities	The minimum legal requirements for H&S, historic monuments and pest and diseases management as outlined in the UK Forest Standard.
affecting the woodland(s)	Designated as a Local Nature Reserve in 1990 under section 21 of National Parks and Access to Countryside Act. Local Nature Reserves must be controlled by the Local Authority through ownership, lease or agreement with the owner. The main aim must be to care for the natural features that make the site special. This underlies the group's approach to Queen's Wood.



2. Internal organ	isation of the group/enterprise
2.1 Group members, representation and decision	The group is open to all, though most members are residents of the local streets around the woodland. The geographic core is from postcodes N6, N8 and N10. This is an affluent area in north London with small pockets of deprivation. Whilst the group feels that it represents the whole of the local community, most members come from a similar stratum of society.
making	Decision-making takes place at three types of meetings.
	• The AGM, which is open to all, and at which committee members are elected. At the most recent AGM 25 people attended of whom seven were committee members, some were ordinary members and some were newly interested. The AGM is combined with an informative talk in order to attract new people. All those present were eligible to participate in the decisions of the meeting.
	The FQW committee meetings, which are quarterly.
	 Management Committee meetings, held three or four times a year, including some members of the FQW committee and local authority representatives (the conservation officer and someone from the Parks operations team).
2.2 Communication	Regular communication is facilitated by a monthly bulletin sent by email to the members and a quarterly-newsletter is circulated electronically or in hard copy to all members.
and learning processes	There is an informative website which also posts information about the meetings and the events.
processes	Working parties take place on the last Sunday in a month so that people have a clear reference point for the dates. The working parties are advertised on the notice boards at the entrances to the woods. In addition interest walks (e.g. bird walk, tree walk, wild flower walk) take place several times a year.
	Once a year there is a family fun day or similar event, which provides entertainment aimed primarily at young children.
2.3 Structure and legal status	The group decided to formalise itself nine years after its inception in 1990. In 1999 a constitution was adopted for three reasons: firstly to legitimise the actions of the group, secondly to enable the group to take on new and more ambitious tasks, especially if it was to attract external funding, and thirdly, to 'spread the net wider' and attract new volunteers. The current chairman describes the group, once formalised, as becoming more organised, and there

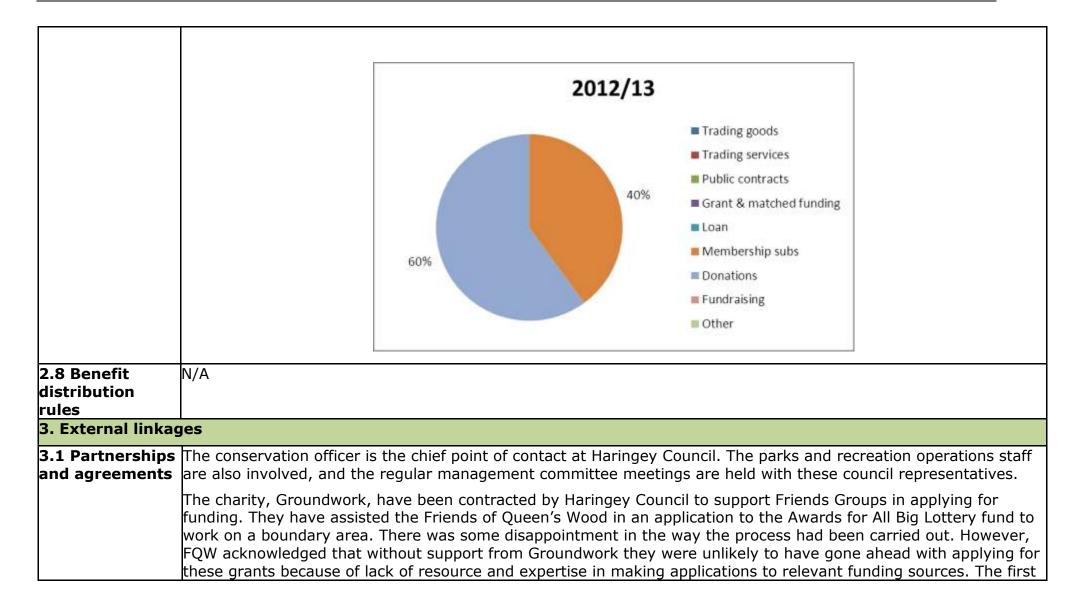


	was a gradual building up of the group as a consequence.
	The group has considered becoming a charity to improve their financial resources largely through increased personal donations as it was hoped that some people may feel that they would contribute more if it were a charity; however concerns that it would put an undue bureaucratic burden on the group discouraged this idea.
	Classification of legal form: Unincorporated Association
2.4 Regulations/ responsibilities affecting the group/ enterprise	There are no responsibilities arising from the legal form of the group. There are however legal restrictions in their role as all management tasks still have to be approved by the council
2.5 Forest management objectives and planning procedures	A formal management plan was adopted in 2000 (Game 2000) and a subsequent plan was written in 2010 (Riley 2010). Both plans were prepared by agencies in London, the London Ecology Unit and The Ecology Consultancy. Haringey Council paid for the first plan, and the second was funded with money raised by the Friends Group from a charity. The current chairman noted a high degree of consultation in preparing the 2010 plan, and the author and the group 'worked closely' on it. The group refer to this plan closely in deciding their course of actions and what work they will be doing with their volunteers. Updating is undertaken every 1-2 years to reflect actions taken and new perspectives and plans.
	The main aim of this plan is to 'preserve the characteristic of ancient woodland that already exists and prevent further loss of habitat by careful management'. The primary objective of managing Queen's Wood is for public access and enjoyment, while preserving its essential character as a Local Nature Reserve. It is clearly viewed as an amenity resource, which seems compatible with its urban location. The Chairman expressed his view that public access was linked to quality of life, even in this already affluent and leafy area. Recreation was not a word he felt adequately reflected the purpose of the Wood and he continually drew a distinction between the old style of management where the paths were swept and it had a feeling of town park, to now, where, although managed, the feeling is much more of a natural woodland with biodiversity value. Education was something that the group were happy to facilitate and indeed the wood provides the site for some local educational activities, but again this was not a prime objective of the group. There is no question of productively managing the woodland to harvest timber or any other forest products, or employment.



	Overall aim of plan: Conservation
2.6 Implementing the woodland management plan	Haringey Council have primary responsibility for implementing the management plan through its operations staff. However, they work closely with FQW since the latter provides valuable support and undertakes work and activities which would not otherwise take place. FQW volunteer working parties are able to undertake maintenance tasks such as cutting back of holly, litter picking and general "tidying up" without needing to consult the council. More major tasks are undertaken after discussion and approval by the council, and may be funded by them or from external sources including grant funding. Recent path improvement work, for example, was supported by funding from the Forestry Commission and the Council. Action taken by FQW also sometimes attracts criticism from a small minority of users of the Wood and an agreed management plan, which has been put out to consultation, provides a valuable source of authority for this.
	We don't just go ahead and do things, nor would we want to. The council have prime responsibility.'
2.7 Business/ operating	Membership fees are the same as they were set originally in 1999 at £5 per individual, £10 for households and £3 for concessions.
model and sustainability	The group does not generate income, other than by fund raising, subscriptions and donations. Income varies by year depending on whether the group has a specific project they wish to achieve. For the Financial Year 12/13 the income was roughly:
	Membership: 40% of total – around £1,000 pa
	General donations: 55 % of total - around £1,000 pa provided by organisations staging events or carrying out other projects in Queen's Wood the council suggests they donate to the friends as a means of recompense
	Revenue from other activities 5 % of total – around £100 pa generated from sales of e.g. tea and coffee, books at events held in the wood (included in donations total).
	The group is in a healthy financial position and has a small capital reserve. There are no plans for using this at the moment. Views within the group differ as to the most appropriate use, but decisions are reached by discussion on the committee and consultation with members.





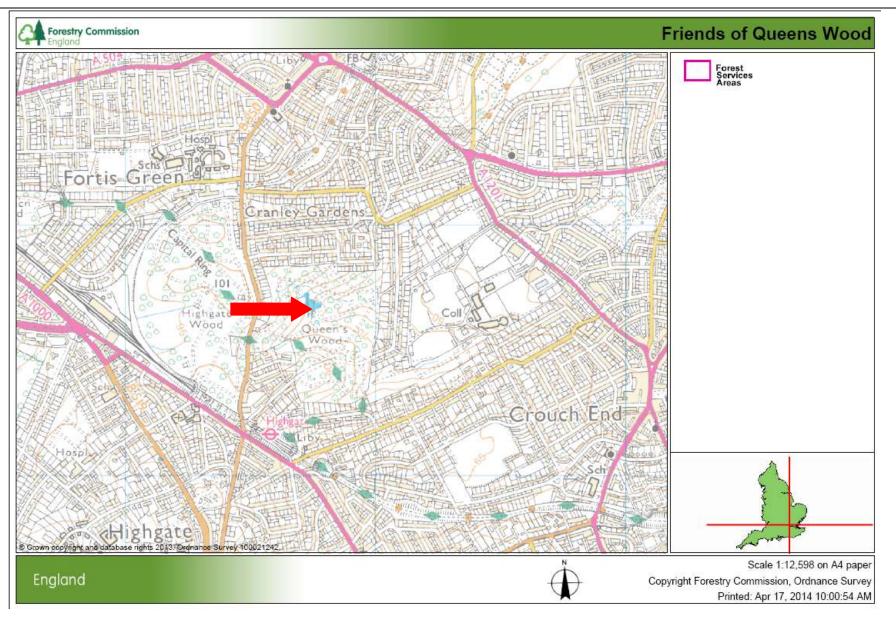


	application (2012) was not successful. Groundwork are still working on two further applications with FQW.						
	The FQW participate in the Haringey Friends of Parks Forum. This is an independent network for the 30 local Friends groups of Haringey residents who are active in 'taking ownership' of, and protecting and improving, our parks and open spaces. Friends groups hold regular well-represented meetings of the Forum every 2 months, and the groups communicate and co-ordinate through the Forum's email list.						
	The Friends groups also have a link to the The Conservation Volunteers who undertake some of the more substantial work tasks.						
	Adjacent to Queen's Wood, but separated by a road, is Highgate Wood. This is owned and managed by the Corporation of London and FQW does not get involved with this site, though it does maintain regular contact with Highgate Wood staff.						
4. Resources							
4.1	Size: 21 ha						
Forest/woodland	 Location: Western part of the London Borough of Haringey. The B550 Muswell Hill road is situated along the western boundary. Most immediately adjacent land comprises the gardens of residential properties. 						
	Access: There are public access points from all sides of the wood.						
	• Soil type and site potential: Largely on London Clay. The soils are heavy and impervious.						
	 Species mix: oak/hornbeam. 2007 survey identified 398 species of which 226 were recorded in 2007, 136 were historical records and 34 were additional species from the coppice area. 40% neophytes. 38 ancient woodland species. 						
	 Age of stands and major operations (date of last felling, planting, thinning): A tree measuring event in 2005 recorded that the average age of all the trees measured was 194 years. 						
	Volume: no data						
	 General mix of management compartments – divided into compartments A to Z. 						
	Features: Deadwood, ponds, glades, openspace former paddling pool, now wildlife pond. The previously						

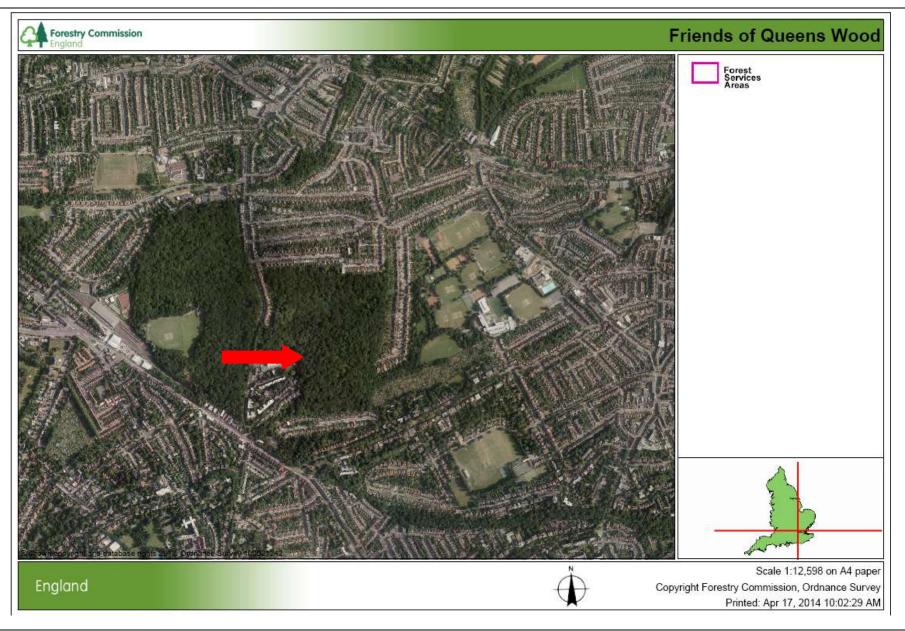


s provide a variety in growth with much undergrowth and open canopy.					
is used extensively and effectively in the wood to control access and protect uncommon species areas, including new coppice.					
n of woodland type: Broadleaved					
tation Classification stand type – w10 <i>Quercus robur – Pteridium aquilinum – Rubus fruticosus</i> one of the most widespread ancient woodland types in London area.					
gement history: The main operations of recent years include coppicing in certain compartments oval. A full table of operations is included in the narrative					
tion of woodland: well maintained					
• Biodiversity information: The woodland is deemed of Metropolitan importance for its flora. There are 41 notable species recorded.					
The ongoing costs of the group are largely met through the membership fees and donations received. Larger projects require specific funding sourced either through the council or through the Friends group's own grant applications. Specific funding of recent years sourced by the FQW includes a £4500 grant to pay for the 2010 management plan and a People's Places grant in 2005 for path improvement (£3837).					
the council also makes use of external funding sources and matched funding. The most recent mprovement was funded by the Council who accessed a Forestry Commission grant. Four years ork was paid for through the SITA trust that uses landfill tax money.					
In forming the committee the group has strategically sought people who can bring specific skills to the group. One committee member is an arboriculturalist by training, the treasurer is a retired senior civil servant, as is the chair, and two members, one a former teacher, bring a keen interest in ecology.					
b has made use of the ongoing commitment from a former conservation officer for Haringey ne 15 years in post from 1989. The FQW commissioned him to survey, research and compile s Wood' in 2010. He is "intimately and emotionally involved in the wood. Being involved from so atimate knowledge of it all."					
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2. Change Narrative

1. Group History. Moments of change, motivations and engagement

The friends group began in a period where council funding for maintenance of the wood had been largely withdrawn. Up to the mid 1980s there had been full-time park keepers employed by the council, and this ceased. In 1990 the individuals concerned took the step of moving from **informal enjoyment**, through **consultation**, to **active management** (volunteering). The volunteers would meet one Sunday a month to collect rubbish, clear paths, control invasive species etc. At this stage it was not seen as necessary to formalise the group as engagement was largely through word of mouth and the ambitions of the group were being met.

After running for nearly 10 years on this informal basis the group decided in 1999 to formalise itself by adopting a constitution, forming a committee and charging membership fees. This was deemed necessary for three reasons: firstly to legitimise the actions of the group, secondly to enable the group to take on new and more ambitious tasks, and thirdly, to 'spread the net wider' and attract new volunteers. This was the most significant change point for the group. The added legitimacy that formalisation gave the group allowed them to participate more actively in the management of the wood. Through group formation the group evolved into participating in **decision-making** and **active management**. However final decision-making and management authority still rests with Haringey Council, who are the land-owners. Once formalised, engagement increased, and there was a gradual building up of the group. It grew from 112 members in 2000 to 200 + members in 2010. This has been steady in recent years.

Since 1999 there have been four chairpersons of the group, each bringing a slightly different approach, but generally the evolution of the group has been a steady process, with more members joining and more detailed management tasks being undertaken along with the general maintenance. Since 2010 membership numbers have been steady, and the new management plan has been followed. In recent years there has been more focus on surveying in the woodlands, particularly the areas that have been coppiced, to track any changes to biodiversity.

Trust has been developed between the council and the group with the council and the group forming a Management Committee which meets three to four times a year to discuss what needs to done and the contributions that the group should make to maintaining and improving the Wood. The council have supported the group by amongst other things setting up instigating the Haringey Friends of Parks forum, which embraces all Friends groups in the Borough and of which FQW is a member, and



employing Groundwork Trust to assist such groups in their funding applications. The management plan of 2010 was undertaken in consultation with the group and the current chairman refers to it as 'our bible'.

The group has considered becoming a charity but felt that it would put an undue bureaucratic burden on them and was not felt to be worth it. The positive reasons considered for becoming a charity were to improve their financial resources largely through increased personal donations as it was hoped that some people may feel that they would contribute more if it were a charity.

2. Challenges, barriers and opportunities for change: Key issues in evolution

Facilitating factors

• Developing a successful **relationship with the council** has been significant in their evolution and now a structure is in place with management meetings with the council representatives three or four times a year, with the principal officers concerned on the whole easy to make contact with.

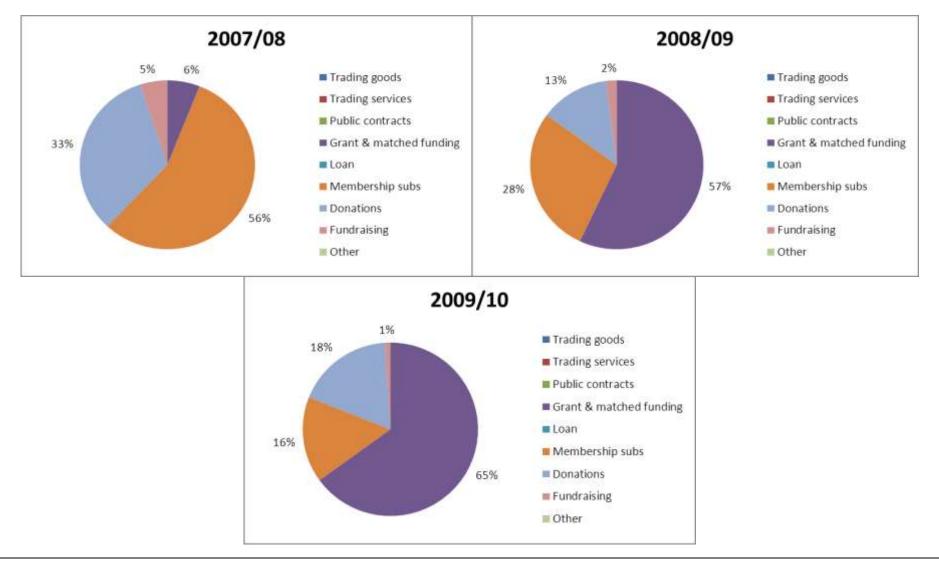
Barriers and Challenges

- A major challenge facing the group is one of **succession**. The most active group members have been involved since the start, and most of the FQW Committee are now in, or close to, their 70s. The current chairman reflected on how he felt society to be structured differently nowadays in a way that inhibits or presents **barriers to the participation of younger members**. He felt that modern working patterns reduce the amount of 'spare time' people have to take part, and the age of retirement creeping up there are fewer people in their 60s able to devote themselves to this kind of activity.
- Working in partnership with the local council has at times presented a challenge for the group as they rely on the council to provide **funding for major operations**.

3. Evolution of income

Looking at the group's accounts from 2006 the income streams are relatively steady over the period. The major difference from year to year is the amount secured for particular projects within the wood. This has averaged at around £2,500 in any one year, and is roughly equal to all the other income sources combined. Viewed by the group as a particular kind of donation, this income stream has been classified as grant in the charts below. Looking beyond financing of particular projects, income to

manage the group is not considered a key obstacle, as costs are currently low and there are reserves in the bank. The chairman says that maintaining membership not a problem of lack of interest, just a problem of inertia at the time of paying subscriptions.



3. Queen's Wood history and change: Benefits and impacts before group involvement

Queen's Wood is believed to be ancient woodland. There is evidence of coppicing dating back to the early 17th century with hornbeam coppice and oak standards. This ceased in the 19th century as the wood became enclosed by suburban development and took on an amenity role. Subsequently the hornbeam coppice formed a dense canopy.

The Wood has been owned by the local Council (Hornsey, then Haringey) since 1898. It has a long tradition of public use, primarily for recreational purposes, and, being an urban woodland visit numbers to the woodlands are high. Local residents recall enjoying the Wood in the 1960s when there was a park keeper and the paddling pool was well used. The Wood has also long been used by commuters walking from the residential streets to Highgate tube station.

The only major silvicultural operation of which we are aware was the coppicing of one area in 1992 was done through the council.

Time Period	Owner/Manager	Objectives / Benefits (and evidence)	Major operations	Access and use rights
		The Domesday book mentions woods for 710 pigs.		Grazing rights, but not clear how allocated.
13 th Century		Hunting for nobles		Hunting
1600 Known as South Wood.		Hornbeam coppice with oak standards	Evidence of coppicing dating back to early 17 th century.	Coppicing and grazing
	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	The owners wished to develop the area for housing.		



1898	Local protest and fundraising allowed wood to be purchased by Hornsey Council	Queen Victoria. An Act of Parliament of	replaced pond with concrete paddling pool	PROW
1990	Haringey Council	Designated as a Statutory Local Nature Reserve by council. London Ecology Unit list it (together with nearby Highgate Wood) as a Site of Metropolitan Importance, their highest grading		PROW

4. Queen's Wood history and change: Benefits and impacts since group involvement

The next table shows the major operations done in the woodland since the group have become active, and the objectives/benefits of these. The group has increased the emphasis on surveying in the woodland and this has provided useful data showing the improvements to biodiversity through the coppicing management strategy. In both areas coppiced there has been a recorded increase in species numbers continuing several years, and including the arrival of several new species.

Since public usage has always been high there is no noticeable increase in this since the group began but it is perceived that people are enjoying the woodland in its current state. It has been mentioned that, in comparison with the neighbouring Highgate Wood, which is highly managed and well maintained, Queen's Wood offers a more 'wild' woodland experience. Even within the Queen's Wood friends members group there are differences of opinion regarding the appropriate level of 'wildness' and 'management'. The coppicing work has sometimes attracted some resistance from users who do not wish to see any of the woodland cut. The group has also had an impact on wider issues of relevance to the conservation of the Wood through taking a lobbying role. This was brought out in response to the proposed closure of the council conservation unit and the private sell off of the lodge. Both campaigns were successful. In 2007 the group successfully opposed Transport for London funded plans to establish cycle paths in the wood.



Date	Major operations	Who did work	Objectives / Benefits (and evidence)	Who funded
1992	Coppicing compartment K	Contractors	16 species were recorded in the year prior to cutting. By the end of 1992, 55 new species had been seen, and this total had risen to 74 by the end of 1997. By 2007 only 31 species remained.	
2003	Tree survey carried out	FQW volunteers	Provide baseline data	FQW
2005	Oak sleepers installed as new steps	FQW and BTCV	To improve access	FQW and BTCV
2005	Holly removal			
2007	Full flora survey of wood	David Bevan	To provide baseline data and assess impacts of coppicing - 225 species recorded.	FQW
2007	Owl survey		One pair of tawny owls found nesting in the wood	FQW
2008	Bird survey		27 species of breeding birds, 11 further species, 4 of which on endangered list	FQW
2008	Holly removal			
2009	Mature hornbeam coppiced an area of 0.6 ha in east of Wood (compartment P)	Contractors		Grant from SITA trust and Haringey Council
2009	Changes to the flora in the coppiced area were monitored throughout 2009		36 species were recorded from the area prior to coppicing. By the end of the year an additional 105 species had been seen. 34 of these species were new	FQW
2010	New management plan	The Ecology Consultancy	To guide management work for next 10 years.	London Tree and woodland Grant Scheme and Haringey Council



2010	Large wildlife pond and ancillary ponds created	Froglife	To improve biodiversity	Froglife. Grant from BIFFA landfill tax trust supported by Haringey's Making the Difference fund
2011	Invertebrate survey	Acacia		FQW
2012	Path improvement work	Contractors	To improve ease of use of the woodland and to encourage users to stick to the paths to prevent trampling of the woodland floor.	Council/Forestry Commission
2013	Wet woodland coppiced in area in north west of wood (compartment U)	Council		Council/Forestry Commission

5. Future plans

The group seems to be a stable body at the moment with no plans to change its model of engagement, either with the council or the public. The group are keen to follow the management plan that runs till 2020 but will keep it under review in the meantime. There are no plans to develop the group's activities beyond the current approach around managing recreation and improving conservation values.

The group have an application for funding pending, to carry out landscaping work in an area close to the café where there is some erosion to the surroundings. The chairman reported that a major priority is improving the condition of the paths. Some of these are in a very poor state affecting visitor enjoyment of the woodland as well as leading to further damage and encroachment into surrounding vegetation as walkers make new paths to avoid mud. Improvements of this sort require significant funding. It is not clear how far the council may be able to provide this or if FQW would want to, or could, raise the funding. Managing users and user conflicts is an ongoing issue. For example, use by dog walkers is high and there is a problem with dogs entering the wildlife ponds, there is also increasing numbers of cyclists using the woodlands against the park bye-laws. The group would like to see better signage and a positive way of managing these issues.

The group have developed their aspirations for the future and published them on their website. They are listed as:



- Supporting the management of the wood according to the management plan. This includes cutting back some of the more intrusive holly and coppicing to allow more light onto the woodland floor.
- Continuing the Friends' regular work of litter picking, cutting back unwanted seedlings (e.g. ash) and other conservation work including coppicing in co-operation with the LBH Conservation Officer
- Continuing to co-operate with the tenants who manage the cafe and organic garden at the Lodge
- Organising regular events in the wood and at the Lodge including events for children such family fun days
- Contributing to improvements such as vandal-proof litter bins and benches made from recycled materials
- Supporting the use of the wood by theatre groups and appropriate art events
- A key ongoing plan is to improve the paths and make the major ones disabled and pushchair friendly.

3. Engagement and impacts timeline

Year	Event		Barriers and challenges	and outcomes Social (evidence)	Woodland	Changes/ Impacts and outcomes Financial/ Economic (evidence)
1990	informal work parties	INFORMAL ENJOYMENT to ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT via CONSULTATIVE	Litter collection primary activity indicating insufficient council work (although was a parks warden?)			
1999	Group decide to adopt a constitution, and become formalised with clear roles and a Chairman		coordinating role	There was a gradual building of the group from this point on. 112, members including 76 households.		
2001	elected	ACTIVE MANAGEMENT To ACTIVE MANAGEMENT (informal)		Growing membership reported in 2001		
2006	FQW website goes live			5000 hits in first 6 months		May assist with grant applications



2008	Third chair elected	More proactive role of chair		
	Fourth (current) chairman elected	Continuing proactive role of chairman		