



# Friends of Wimbledon Park

## Wimbledon Park Covid-19 discussion notes 01

### Summary

There is good agreement on:

- 1) Following the guidelines.
- 2) Staggering for different groups but may be difficult to implement
- 3) Runners overtaking walkers causes concern
- 4) One way system

A one way system could be just the perimeter path going clockwise. Other paths can remain two way and the Great Field isn't effected.

### Social distancing may need adjusting

A Belgian-Dutch Study:

'Towards aerodynamically equivalent COVID19 1.5 m social distancing for walking and running'.

- 1) Found at: [www.urbanphysics.net/Social%20Distancing%20v20\\_White\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.urbanphysics.net/Social%20Distancing%20v20_White_Paper.pdf)
- 2) Summary and conclusions include: 'In the absence of head wind, tail wind and cross-wind, for walking fast at 4km/h this distance is about 5m and for running at 14.4km/h this distance is about 10m. Further work should consider the effect of head wind, tail wind and cross-wind, and different droplet spectra'

### Dave Dawson comments<sup>1</sup>:

1. This study is not yet published and could be challenged.
2. Whilst the study is a considerable advance, in that it considers the trail of invisible droplets that a moving person leaves behind, it remains simplified. It assumes still air conditions. Where there is wind, the trail will not remain directly behind the moving person and topography may cause turbulence, so moving the trail unpredictably. Also, in a wind even a standing individual will present more hazard downwind than upwind.

### Lockdown cycle and suggested approach for Wimbledon Park

The lockdown is likely to go through suppress & lift cycles until a vaccine is found and administered. A vaccine will take a year or more. Exercise and Wellbeing are key considerations, the latter being enhanced by visiting greenspaces. (An article from the Royal Horticultural Society is at end).

Table 1: Suggested approach for different lockdown stages. Movement can be either way depending on whether either suppress or lift cycle is in place.

Lockdown	Coronavirus transmission	Wimbledon Park permitted exercise	Wellbeing	Social distancing
Zero	Nil	Park closed	Negative	N/A
One	↓	Park open, visiting discouraged, running & walking permitted	↓	Yes
Two	↓↓	Park open. Community involvement in staggering visits & one way. This could permit Junior park run & other similar activities. Athletics track available for supervised hire.	↓↓	Yes
Three	↓↓↓	Restricted opening of tennis courts, bowling green, volley ball & crazy golf. Also café	↓↓↓	Yes
Four	Highly likely	Back to normal	Positive	No

Using this definition we're in Lockdown One. A move to Lockdown Two maybe weeks away. Meanwhile we can identify problems in Lockdown One (relations between walkers, runners & cyclists for example) and prepare organisational matters that a move to Lockdown Two will bring.



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## Comment from key people:

Dr Gabriel Leung, chair of public health medicine at the University of Hong Kong wrote in *The New York Times*.

- 1) To see us through the next year or more, we must all prepare for several cycles of a ‘suppress and lift’ policy,”
- 2) Cycles during which restrictions are applied and relaxed, applied again and relaxed again, in ways that can keep the pandemic under control but at an acceptable economic and social cost. The end of the lockdown may not be the first end of the lockdown.

Dr David Nabarro, World Health Organisation’s (WHO) coronavirus special envoy:

- 1) This virus isn’t going to go away and we don’t know whether the people who’ve had the virus stay immune afterwards and we don’t know when we’ll have a vaccine.

Cabinet Office minister Michael Gove has said:

- 1) I would have thought for most people a walk of up to an hour, a run of 30 minutes or a cycle ride of between that, depending on their level of fitness, is appropriate.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock has said:

- 1) **Sunbathing** during warmer weather was against social distancing rules

Tony Leach (Chief Executive, Parks for London):

The proposed guidance for the duration of the lockdown are given below, in line with government advice including that people can leave their homes for exercise once a day:

- 1) Stay local and use parks and green spaces close to your home
- 2) Only go outside alone or with members of your own household
- 3) Keep at least 2 metres apart from anyone outside your household at all times
- 4) Keep moving and spread out when you are in parks or green spaces
- 5) Gatherings of more than two people in parks or other public spaces have been banned, this will be enforced by the police
- 6) Make use of your garden if you have one to help reduce visits to parks and green spaces
- 7) Keep your dog on a lead in public spaces to ensure you can safely keep 2 metres away from others
- 8) Take litter and dog mess home with you
- 9) Follow hygiene advice when you are outside and wash your hands as soon as you are back indoors

## From Wimbledon Park Covid-19 discussion thread:

Jonathan (Greenspaces LBM)

- 1) We feel this gives people enough time to stagger their visits out, it gives the young families enough time to get home to put the kids to bed and more importantly it enables people to safely use the park whilst still conforming to social distancing rules, especially for those without a garden or an accessible outdoor space.

Nick (Chair FOWP)

We could be in for the long haul with relaxations followed by reintroductions.

- 1) As Wimbledon Park can attract large numbers staggering visits will help. Most probably have a good deal of flexibility around exercise timings but key workers may not. Suggest a simple log be kept of park attendances so that quiet and busy times can be identified and visitors can adapt accordingly?
- 2) Overtaking can be a problem particularly after a wet spell when veering across the grass results in muddy feet. Suggest visitors keep to the right side of paths, family groups consider single line and over takers give way to oncoming visitors?
- 3) Exercise could be defined as keeping moving and not being at rest?



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Julie

- 1) In response to staggering times in the park, one thing to try might be making suggestions (at first) that different groups of people go at different times. So perhaps families with children go from 9-12noon and then dog walkers go from 12- 3pm and runners go from 3-6 and then key workers (who will have been able to do any of the above slots as not steadfast rules) will be able to have the park from 6-8 as well

Richard (Idverde)

- 1) A clever yet simple initiative in my local park has been someone chalking arrows on the pavement to ensure everyone walks/runs in the same direction, thereby reducing the amount of people passed.

Ivan

- 1) Brilliant idea. Actually, I thought of that as well - everyone running/walking clockwise around the perimeter.

Iain

- 1) That's a really good idea. Nice and simple.

Sophia

- 1) I do think we should consider what to do about the runners. Even if only going one way they will have to overtake quite a few people and the paths are too narrow to do it at a safe distance (and many runners seem unwilling to go on the grass).
- 2) France is allowing runners before 10am and after 7pm only, which seems like a sensible thing to do in a park as small and crowded as WP.

Alan (Greenspaces LBM)

- 1) Stay at home where ever possible, avoid crowd, if the park is busy please do not consider going in to it.
- 2) It would be wrong to try and manage the park in such a way as to try and fit more people inside with lines, one way systems etc.

Jackie

- 1) I think the French idea of restricting runners to specific times, as mentioned by Sophia, would be the best option. Walking in the park every day to take my allotted exercise with my dog I find there are very many more runners than in 'normal' times and they do cause anxiety and problems to other users by their sheer numbers.

Mirjana

- 1) I don't think we should implement more rules and separate runners and dog walkers and bikers etc we are all in this together and need to exercise
- 2) If there is an easy way to do one way great but may not be possible as there are many different routes around the park
- 3) The runners are many as these people would normally be at school at uni at work etc

Julie

- 1) I love Richard's input Re initiation of a 'direction' in the park and that could be done with arrows drawn in chalk which if we all go to the park we could all make efforts to draw if they are washed away etc (plus a sign at the gates)... it's brilliant as then people aren't passing each other.
- 2) Sophia's input Re runners before 10 am and after 7pm also great but will need more policing I think as it's quite restrictive and the runners may not like that but equally if this is mentioned on signs then people who aren't running may help with the policing naturally and runners will be hopefully less inclined to run (could walk or take the roads around the park).
- 3) I can easily get this message out on Grid Mummies Facebook group (1000 families in sf/WP grids ) and Sw19 mums (15000) and I can also print signs and put them on each gate today (just in plastic envelope) IF it's agreed
- 4) A survey got 94 votes FOR having clockwise direction and only 4 against an imposed direction



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Royal Horticultural Society (RHS): The Garden April 2020

## Feel good with Vitamin G

'Vitamin G' (green) can be the antidote to the negative effects urban environments have on our physical and mental health

Several studies show that immersing ourselves in nature, or even just looking at it, is good for both our mental and physical health. Nature has such a life-enhancing effect on us that some researchers have likened it to a vitamin – Vitamin G (green) – that our bodies need to function well, and recommend we take a daily dose. Pilot schemes in the UK even suggest that prescribing time gardening or walking in nature can be more beneficial in treating some disorders, such as high blood pressure and depression, than some conventional medicines.

### Dangers of disconnection

A number of research studies have examined the health problems associated with a lack of exposure to nature, or 'nature-deficit disorder'. Studies such as those in Germany and the Netherlands in the 2010s, for example, have shown that spending most of our time either surrounded by buildings or indoors negatively affects our physical and mental wellbeing.

A study of more than 340,000 people in the Netherlands revealed that those living without easy access to a green area were 33 percent more likely to suffer from depression and 44 percent more likely to be affected by anxiety disorders than those living within walking distance of a park or other natural environment. Some researchers believe that in poorer urban areas a lack of nature may even contribute to the higher incidence of mental and physical health complaints suffered by residents.

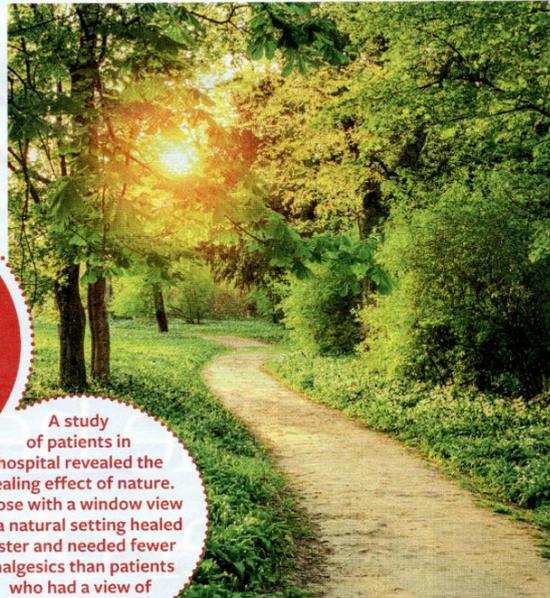
### Getting back to green

While living in 'grey' areas can be damaging to our health, exposure to green brings numerous benefits. A 1991 study showed that exposure to nature for just five minutes can lower stress and anxiety, improve mood and lower both blood pressure and heart rate. Other research indicates that being in

nature is mentally restorative, allowing us to focus better. Research in Europe, the USA and Australia consistently provides further evidence for the power of Vitamin G.

Health professionals are also tuning in to the 'green is good' philosophy. Therapists in the UK, for instance, use horticultural programmes to treat a range of physical and mental health conditions, including anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorders. Marginalised groups, such as young offenders, report increased feelings of self-worth and belonging while engaged in these programmes. In the business world, staff retention levels and productivity are higher in workplaces that maintain gardens or keep indoor plants.

So, it's clear: boost your Vitamin G levels by connecting with green whenever you can.



Research has found that a 10 percent increase in people's exposure to green space translates into an improvement in health equivalent to being five years younger.

A study of patients in hospital revealed the healing effect of nature. Those with a window view of a natural setting healed faster and needed fewer analgesics than patients who had a view of a brick wall.

Research suggests that a lack of exposure to green spaces increases the incidence of attention and mood disorders, such as attention deficit disorder in children.

Many of us are lacking in vital exposure to greenery. In one survey, 1 in 10 children in the UK had not visited a natural space in 12 months; that proportion grew within low-income groups.

<sup>1</sup> Dave Dawson: Nevertheless, the study shows clearly that the usual social distancing guidance is quite silly where people are moving and that the risk is greatest in the slipstream the person leaves behind. The faster the person is moving the greater distance behind them is risky. So, avoid approaching within 10 metres behind a moving person.

Any prescribed distance is somewhat arbitrary, as there is not a sharp boundary between hazard and no hazard. This study would suggest that the present social distancing in the park carries a significant hazard. This is especially so where there's a long narrow way, such as beside the picnic area, crazy golf, volleyball and tennis courts. In these areas, achieving a 10 metre gap is difficult at busy times.