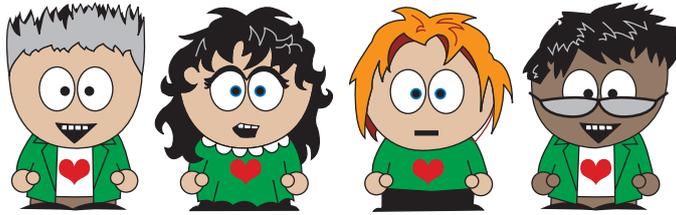


FRIENDS of WEST HAM PARK



WE ♥ WEST HAM PARK

**Friends of West Ham Park
28th January 2021**

Meeting by Video Conference

Attendees

Roger Jones (Chair), Ron Innell (Vice Chair), Marion Innell, Lucy Murphy (Park Manager), Nicky Brown, Joel Farrell, Eugene Czauderna, Helen Mossop, Pat Mossop, Charlotte Cook, Jules Maurice-Williams, Mary Edmondson, Sue Lever, Alan Cooper, Jim Holt, John Rands, Hilary Rands, Pearl Saunders, Khalil Laher, Camilla, Ute Saatz, Hani Ahmad and Lyndsay Jones.

Apologies

There were no apologies.

Introduction

Roger welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanking Charlotte for offering to host the meeting on her Zoom account. He reminded everyone of the protocols set out in the agenda.

Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes from the meeting on 20th October 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

Treasurer's Report

Marion reported that there was £1500 left of the grant for the Fothergill Exhibition, after paying £288 to Kew Gardens in November.

The account balance is £2512.61, including the grant money.

Report from the Park Manager

Lucy reported that two trees have been lost in the recent high winds. All the trees are surveyed regularly, and the surveyor thinks that 10 – 15% of all the large trees will be lost in the next few years. Ground compaction plus alternating very wet and very dry spells are taking their toll. All trees will be replaced, but consideration is being given to choosing species which tolerate these conditions better than the traditional varieties we have at present.

The park has recorded double the usual number of visitors during the pandemic, and Park Guard have been called in to enforce safety regulations and enable those park staff still able to be at work to concentrate on core maintenance work.

Charges for sports facilities and school use will have to increase from 1st April. A simpler system will be introduced for tennis bookings, as there has been a problem with people making multiple bookings and not turning up.

Su reported that the information QR code posts are not working. Lucy has this in hand.

There was a discussion about large groups of young men congregating in the larger shelters, and appearing to be drug dealing and delivering. Park staff have no enforcement powers. This will be passed to the Safer Neighbourhood teams. It was agreed that this activity, although illegal, was not threatening other park users.

Playground project.

£773k has been received from City of London (CoL) and Option Two has been put out to tender, which is to refurbish within the existing area and hope to extend at a later date. Replacement of many of the play items is now needed urgently as they have become unsafe. We will be looking for grants and donations to make up the shortfall, and FWHP will look for grants which we may qualify for, especially for new planting and landscaping.

Hani offered to assist with any approach to the Heritage Lottery Fund, as she has worked for the fund in the past.

Nursery project.

There is no further update available from CoL at this stage.

Current and recent activities

Collection events for a local Food Bank were held at Halloween and before Christmas. Park users were very generous and the food bank has asked if we could hold another collection. It was agreed that an Easter event could be organised. Roger thanked those who had been involved in running the two events.

Wildlife Garden

Park Primary are still using the Linden Gate garden. Some ad hoc use of the large wildlife garden over the winter. No FWHP maintenance session have taken place due to COVID restrictions.

Dr Fothergill's Legacy

Mary reported that we have now signed off on all the minor amendments. We should be able to agree an installation date for spring 2021. We now need to work on the information packs for schools. Lucy will put Katie, the new Learning Officer, in touch with Mary and Lyndsay to make a start on these.

Vegetable Garden

Eugene has been working with Andrea from the Park Office and holding regular public sessions, limited to two people or households, on Tuesdays and Wednesday. They will start the seeds when appropriate and hope for restrictions to be lifted in the spring.

Regular Bird Survey

This has continued through the lockdown. Thanks to Alison and Frances for taking on extra areas. A large evening roost of parakeets has been noticed, and we are concerned that they will monopolise the nesting holes at the expense of other species. Jim offered to supply nest boxes with smaller holes.

We will look into the siting requirements for these. RSPB will have details.

Bird Watching Weekend 16th and 17th January

It had not possible to hold this event under the present pandemic lockdown.

Lyndsay and Nicky have compiled a beginners guide to birds most easily spotted in the park, which is now included in the website. We hope that people will download this and have a go at the RSPB survey for themselves.

Volunteer Hours

For the months of November, December and January, these were as follows

- Bird surveys - 6 people for a total of 17 hours
- Fothergill exhibition preparation - 2 people total 4 hours
- Food Bank event December - 4 people total 8 hours
- Total - 29 hours.

Website

Nicky reported the existing hosting arrangements would cease on 24th May. There was a discussion over alternative options. Questions were raised as to how much use the website receives. Jim offered to set up a system to record activity. Nicky, Jim and Roger would discuss options for the future of the website and make a recommendation to the March meeting.

FWHP Logo

We have considered changing the logo, which people seem to either love or hate. Jim will set up a survey once he, Roger and Nicky have discussed possible options.

Hedgehogs

Pat has a contact in a Hedgehog Protection Society and has been asking about ways to encourage or protect hedgehogs in the park. Numbers have collapsed all over the UK in recent years, and they are now considered endangered. Keepers and Gardeners remember seeing hedgehogs in the past, they were certainly present in 2006, but no signs of them have been seen for some time. It was agreed that Pat would arrange for a hedgehog expert to survey the park, and assess whether hedgehogs are present, and if not, if it is practical to release rescued animals.

Future Programme Ideas

Wildlife Garden

A new Learning Officer has been appointed, and hopefully she, Ricky and Lyndsay will be able to meet in the garden and agree a work programme in the spring.

Community Litter Picking

We hope to hold another event, probably after the busy Easter weekend.

Future Meeting Dates for 2021

These, post meeting, were agreed as follows -

25th March

24th June (AGM)

23rd September

25th November 2021.

The March meeting, at least, would be held by Zoom.

AOB

Roger reminded everyone that he is due to stand down as Chairman at the AGM in June.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.