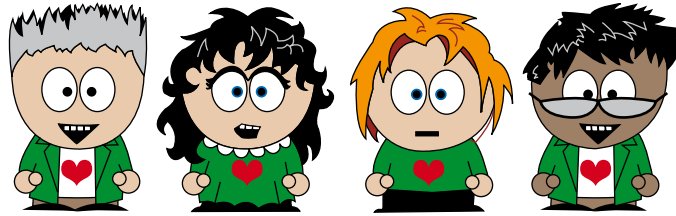


FRIENDS of WEST HAM PARK



WE ♥ WEST HAM PARK

**Friends of West Ham Park
29th October 2020**

Meeting by Video Conference

Attendees

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

Apologies

Eugene Czauderna, who was having difficulties with his WiFi connection.

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, and asked for feedback later as to the effectiveness of a video meeting.

Roger reported on the visit to the park by the Lady Mayoress of the City of London, and the Chairman of the Park Management Committee, on 28th October. Both had praised the efforts of FWHP for helping to keep the park open during the pandemic lockdown, and had been much impressed by Nicky's daily Facebook updates and Eugene's success in keeping the Vegetable Garden functioning safely.

Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes from the meeting on 5 March 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

There have been no meetings since this date due to the Covid19 pandemic restrictions.

Treasurer's Report

No report was given, as there have been no activities.

Report from the Park Manager

Lucy reiterated Roger's comments regarding the Lady Mayoress's visit and the thanks passed on to FWHP, and added her own thanks. The difficulties caused by the pandemic lockdown included 30% of the staff absent as they were required to shield, and unplanned expenditure on items such as sanitiser, gloves etc. It had been necessary to call in support from Park Guard to handle problems of overcrowding and people being unwilling to observe social distancing rules. This has meant that the budget for other planned works has been reduced.

It has been possible to continue some activities for vulnerable children.

The problem with cars being parked illegally at South Gate has been passed to the Police Community Support team.

Lucy was asked to pass on our congratulations to the gardening team for the stunning displays this summer, especially in the rose garden, and to all the staff for their work in keeping the park open all through the lockdown.

It was agreed that it had been a great team effort, and also appreciated by City of London and Newham Borough Council.

Playground project

No additional funding above that agreed by CoL has been found, as all charities are feeling the

financial effects of the lockdown. Lucy is proposing to adopt Option 2, 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.

Nursery project

A Senior Development Manager was appointed for the project, but has resigned. A replacement has been appointed. Noted that Lucy is not leading the project.

The Charity Commissioners have been approached as to whether some of the development options are compatible with the Park's charitable status. They have not been able to respond to date.

There was a discussion around this problem, the involvement of Newham Borough Council, and the proposals for further public consultation. It is hoped to have some idea of a time line for the project by January 2021.

Current and recent activities

Gate Opening and Litter Picking

It was agreed that we had all enjoyed being able to help out in this way, and had been encouraged by the number of park users who thanked and encouraged us. The three days of community litter picking as part of the Keep Britain Tidy Autumn Clean Up, had been very successful.

Wildlife Garden

We held a working party, observing social distancing guidelines, on 30th August. Ricky and William have since cleared and re-barked all the paths.

Dr Fothergill's Legacy

Mary reported that we now have the proofs for the display panels and have checked and corrected them. We should be able to agree an installation date for Spring 2021.

Vegetable Garden

Roger read out a report from Eugene. This is attached as Annex A. The garden has had a successful season and stayed open within the pandemic distancing rules.

Regular Bird Survey

This has continued through the lockdown. Thanks to Alison and Frances for taking on extra areas.

Volunteer Hours

March and September we recorded a total of 367 hours. This does not include hours spent leading the Health Walks, or working on the Vegetable Garden, as these hours are recorded separately.

Future Programme Ideas

Bird Watching Weekend – 16th and 17th January 2021

We feel that we could still plan to hold this event, concentrating on looking into the wildlife garden with people spaced out along the fence. More bird feeders will be put up in the garden shortly, so that there will hopefully be plenty of birds using them by January.

Wildlife Garden

We hope to hold another working party on 6th December 2020. This will be limited to a maximum of 6 people if the current pandemic distancing rules are still applicable.

Community Litter Picking

We hope to hold another event in Spring 2021.

Future Meeting Dates

It was agreed that the video conferencing format is workable if we are unable to meet in person. No firm dates were agreed but potentially a programme of January, March, June, September and November. We may hold another in January when we know what restrictions are still in place nearer to the time.

AOB

Park Keeper Nicole is retiring on health grounds on November 11th. Lyndsay has sent a card from all of us, thanking her for all her work in the park.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm

Annex A

Vegetable Garden Report for Friends of West Ham Park - 29th October 2020

It's been a strange year to say the least. Back in March we had an open day in the garden which we thought went well and was very successful. Shortly after that the National lockdown was announced. We persevered with the garden, as far as possible keeping to the planting guide drawn up by Andrea to whom we are very grateful.

Some people were initially nervous of coming to the garden but were subsequently reassured. We have had a number of new volunteers and now some ten people regularly work in the garden as well as some others who pop in every now and then just because they enjoy the atmosphere! We planted and tended to many crops and the ones we are pleased with include various beans, strawberries, tomatoes, potatoes and of course the pumpkins.

We also found ourselves looking after a baby squirrel, later named Haru which had fallen out of its nest. When this became too much for our knowledge and capabilities a kind lady from Ilford who looks after baby squirrels took it on. I believe Haru is still with her and doing well. We also had a baby robin who grew up in the garden and is hopefully still there and we also briefly looked after a baby magpie.

We were grateful to receive the peanut feeder from the wildlife garden and it is now being well used mostly by great tits and parakeets.

When the recent rule of six was announced in the face of increased incidence of the virus we regretfully decided to not allow visitors to the garden mostly for the sake of the volunteers, many of whom are at increased risk from the virus.

Winter is approaching but we intend to keep the garden going and prepare for next season. Just yesterday we had a visit from the Lady Mayoress during which she drew a name to win one of our pumpkins. Congratulations to Tim for winning it, we hope to arrange a time for him to pick it up! I believe the visit went well but will leave it to others to report on it.

I would like to thank all the volunteers, other members of the Friends who have supported us, all the visitors and everyone who has expressed an interest in the garden. I would also like to thank Andrea again, all the Park Staff and Lucy for her continued support

Dear Friends,

The current epidemic has changed our lives so much recently. This is true for the Friends of West Ham Park as much as anybody. Our role is to get people to come together and enjoy and support the park, just the opposite in many ways to the current government guidelines. However, we are still here and once the current restrictions are eased we'll be wanting to re-start many of our activities. In the meantime we thought we would put together a newsletter about the park. I hope you enjoy reading it and look forward to meeting up again in the near future at one of our events.

Keep safe,

Roger Jones,

Chair. Friends of West Ham Park