



Friends of West Ham Park

Friends of West Ham Park Meeting

**Thursday 23rd September 2021 at 7pm
Meeting by Video Conference**

Attendees

Roger Jones (Chair), Ron Innell (Vice Chair), Marion Innell, Ricky O'Garro, Park Supervisor, Nicky Brown, Joel Farrell, Eugene Czauderna, Charlotte Cook, Jules Maurice-Williams, Mary Edmondson, Su Lever, Alan Cooper, Pearl Saunders, Ute Saatz, Hani Ahmad, Lucia Rios Steele, Helen McGrath, Colm McGrath, Georgina Philippou, Shaun Wilson and Lyndsay Jones.

Apologies

Pat Mossop, Helen Mossop, Jim Holt, John Rands, Hilary Rands.

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 and AGM held on 8th July 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

Treasurer's Report

Marion reported that there had been no expenditure in August. The account balance is £1950.00, which includes the balance of the grant money for the Fothergill Exhibition.

Report from the Park Supervisor

Ricky O'Garro, previously one of the Team Leaders, has been appointed as Park Supervisor. The CoL recruiting ban means that a new Park Manager will not be appointed until the CoL review of all Senior Management positions has been completed. There will be six levels of reporting rather than the current 10 levels, and there is no information available as to what the new structure will be. The meeting congratulated Ricky on his appointment.

Playground Project

A contractor has now been selected, and work should start in 4-6 weeks, taking around 20 weeks, during which time the playground will be completely closed. The Project Manager, Madhur Gurjar, will arrange to meet with the Friends to discuss the sculptures which form part of the project and will link to the theme of exploration and plant collection, and so to the Fothergill Exhibition.

London in Bloom

The 2021 awards will be announced on October 6th, when we hope to retain the current Gold Level Award.

Nursery project

No further news. A separate meeting is held by FWHP to discuss this project.

FWHP Activities

Community Vegetable Garden

Eugene reported that there are a good number of regular volunteers using the garden, and that they are developing plans for the 2022 growing season.

Bird Surveys continue as usual.

Wildlife Garden

This is proving difficult to manage, and is being taken over by brambles, nettles, ivy, etc. Ricky has discussed the future requirements of the garden with Katie from the CoL Learning Team. She currently only uses the area for pond dipping, and would like a greater variety of wildflowers to attract more insects. Lyndsay is suggesting that we turn the mound area into a cornfield flower area. She described how this could be started and managed, hopefully within the amount of volunteer time we are able to provide. It was agreed that we would try this approach, starting this autumn by clearing the mound.

Bat Watching

The August event attracted around 100 people and the bats put on a good show, to the delight of all.

Litter Picking

We held two public events which were well attended, especially the one held on the Bank Holiday Monday. We continue to help out with regular litter picking, thanks to Ron for keeping the rota, and to all who take a turn.

Grant Applications

We are hoping for a grant to landscape the new playground. We did not succeed in our bid for the money available from Newham. We have now submitted an application to the Mayor of Greater London's "Grow Back Greener" fund. Thanks to Hani, Mary and Alan for working on the applications.

SINC Upgrade to Borough Level importance for Wildlife

London Wildlife Trust agree that WHP should have this status, which is higher than the current Local Importance level. We are negotiating with them over the cost of their work to establish the upgrade.

Future Programme

All activities subject to no changes being made to the current Covid restrictions.

Litter Picking

Our help with this has been much appreciated by the park staff. We discussed whether we could continue to cover two or three days per week, and decided to do this until at least our next meeting. "Volunteer" tabards can be obtained from the office, to be signed for and kept by each volunteer. Please let Ron know your availability and he will arrange a rota and advise Ricky when we will be working.

Food Bank Collection

Ron will contact the organisers with a view to us holding another collection on the weekend of 18/19 December.

Wildlife Garden

Next working party date to be decided after further discussion of the ideas discussed above.

Bat Walk

The event planned for 24 September will go ahead. The August event was our most popular yet, and the bats were on good form. We received many enthusiastic comments and thanks.

Leaf Pile and Park in the Dark

We are assuming that these events can go ahead this year, on 7 November and 3 December respectively. Lyndsay will contact Godwin School and ask if their choir wish to take part.

January Birdwatch

The RSPB Central London group has expressed an interest in joining us for the event. Roger will be in contact with them and find out what kind of involvement they have in mind.

Hedgehogs

Pat has set up the footprint tunnels as agreed and is monitoring them for activity.

Volunteer Hours

For the period April to September 2021 are as follows –

- Bird surveys - 6 people for a total of 36 hours
 - Fothergill exhibition preparation - 2 people for a total of 24 hours
 - Fothergill exhibition opening – 10 people for a total of 20 hours
 - Wildlife Garden – 8 people for a total of 36 hours
 - FWHP Litter Picking - 8 people for a total of 100 hours
 - Litter picking events – 4 people for a total of 8 hours
 - Bat walks - 6 people for a total of 18 hours
 - Website - 2 people for a total of 40 hours
 - Grant Applications - 4 people for a total of 60 hours
- Total – 342 hours

Publicity and Media

Newham Voices has published our articles as agreed. Roger and Lyndsay will submit the October article about bats ASAP. Ron will write about litter picking for November and Lyndsay about birds for December.

Following interest in our Fothergill exhibition from *The Linnaen Society*, Mary has written an article for their magazine, and following contact with the London Friends of Greenspaces Network, Lyndsay has written one for the magazine of the *London Gardens Trust*.

Ricky suggested that we design new information posters showing our new logo and contact details, especially our social media sites. Nicky will do this and send them in PDF form to anyone who can distribute them. Hani offered to take them to libraries, and Lucia will put them on the schools network newsletters.

Affiliation with other Groups

Roger attended another online meeting of the *Friends of London Greenspaces Network*. An invitation has been issued for us to visit Lordship Rec, who have established their own successful community room and café.

It was suggested that all groups should make contact with other users of their parks, such as the sports groups. Roger asked Ricky for contact details. As there do not appear to be any other groups similar to ours in East London, we will try and contact some of the groups who applied for the Newham grant scheme, as some of them had environmental projects.

Planning and Development

FWHP hold a separate meeting to discuss proposals for the Nursery Site.

A proposal to erect an 18m telecom mast adjacent to Linden Cottages has been rejected by Newham Council following a great deal of local opposition.

Future Meeting Dates for 2021

The final meeting for 2021 will take place by Zoom on 25th November. The meeting will focus on planning for activities in 2022.

AOB

Charlotte asked about the posters for a neighbourhood picnic in the park on Sunday. Is this a group we should make contact with? Ricky explained that they had put the posters up without asking permission, and had also booked the bandstand but failed to confirm or pay. Roger will hope to talk to them on Sunday and see if we can help each other at all.

The meeting closed at 20.30