



Friends of West Ham Park

Friends of West Ham Park Meeting

**Thursday 25th November 2021 at 7pm
Meeting by Video Conference**

Attendees

Roger Jones (Chair), Ron Innell (Vice Chair), Marion Innell, Ricky O'Garro, Park Supervisor, Eugene Czauderna, Charlotte Cook, Helen Mossop, Alan Cooper, Ute Saatz, Hani Ahmad, Lucia Rios Steele, Helen McGrath, Colm McGrath, Georgina Philippou, Judith Etherton, Bruce Cleghorn, John Rands, Marlene Sidaway, Shahidul Alam, Zoe Flynn, Bo Chapman and Lyndsay Jones.

Apologies

Pat Mossop, Mary Edmondson, Jim Holt, Nicky Brown, Joel Farrell and Jules Maurice-Williams

Introduction

Roger welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially those people attending for the first time. He thanked 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 held on 23rd September 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

Treasurer's Report

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

Report from the Park Supervisor

Playground Project

All the necessary approvals are now in place and the budget agreed. Contracts are being signed and a start date will be decided soon. The sculptures have now been designed, and the final drawings for the Explorers' Ship agreed. Mary and Lyndsay have a proposal to include some information boards linking the ship to the Fothergill Exhibition, to be paid for with the remaining money from the Fothergill grant. Lyndsay will contact Fitzpatrick Woolmer to take this forward. We have failed to get a grant for the additional planting and are looking at other ways to fund this. Ron suggested that FWHP volunteers could donate seeds and possibly use the best of the Nursery greenhouses to raise some plants. Ricky will look into the feasibility of this idea.

London in Bloom

The gold standard was retained for 2021. Ricky thanked FWHP for our help and support which was noted by the judges and appreciated by all the staff. The Green Flag Award was also retained, but not "Park of the Year" which went to Queen's Park in North London.

Ricky explained that there are no major plans for 2022 in the absence of a Park Manager. There will be a funfair for three days in mid-May and a Community Fair in July.

Roger thanked Ricky for his support, and for all his support with FWHP activities.

FWHP Activities

Roger introduced this item saying that during the period April to September all our various activities contributed 343 hours of voluntary work, which was a great credit to the group.

Community Vegetable Garden

Eugene reported that the group are still meeting regularly in the garden, they are developing plans for the 2022 growing season and have plans to hold open days next year.

Bird Surveys

Lyndsay reported that the team are seeing fewer birds and fewer species. The usual increase in numbers after the summer has not happened. This may be as a result of the mild weather for the time of year, but does not explain why some species usually seen every month are absent. Welcome to Bruce, who has volunteered to help with the surveys.

Wildlife Garden

We held two working parties and have cleared the mound and covered it with black fabric to keep the ground clear until the spring. We have also netted the pond.

Bat Watching

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

Litter Picking

We are continuing to help out with a number of people doing this on a rota every few days.

Health Walks

Ron reported that they have a few new people taking part. Ricky suggested putting up some promotional notices in January, when people are making resolutions to do some exercise.

Volunteer Hours

For the October and November 2021 are as follows –

- Bird surveys - 6 people for a total of 12 hours
- Playground sculptures and interpretation panels preparation - 3 people for a total of 8 hours
- Wildlife Garden – 8 people for a total of 24 hours
- FWHP Litter Picking - 8 people for a total of 50 hours
- Total – 94 hours

Future Programme

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

From the Ground Up

Zoe and Bo gave us a presentation about this project and the meeting agreed that we should work together on a range of possible projects in 2022.

It was agreed that a sub-group would look at the proposals and present a plan to the February meeting. This would consist of Zoe, Bo, Charlotte, Ron, Marion, Helen Mossop, Lucia and Hani.

Litter Picking

We agreed that we are happy to continue with this, providing CoL see it as extra help and not as an alternative to a return to full staffing levels. Ricky agreed with this point. Ron will continue to organise the rota.

Park in the Dark. Friday 3rd December

We have cakes, mince pies and hot chocolate donated by Morrisons Supermarket. Roles and timing for the night were agreed. With many thanks to Lucia, we will have a choir of children and an adult choir from Park Primary School.

Food Bank Collection

Next event Sunday 5th December, tables to be set up on the bandstand as before.

RSPB Annual Big Birdwatch 15th and 16th January

The RSPB Central London group will have a stall with leaflets and information. We will monitor the bird numbers as winter progresses, and may decide not to hold the event if it is going to be difficult for beginners to see an encouraging number.

Hedgehogs

Pat has collected the footprint tunnels as the hedgehogs will be hibernating now. He will try the survey again in the spring.

Tree Identification walks

Eugene is planning a route to lead a walk in the garden, and will do a trial run with some of us before setting a date for a public event.

Astronomy Weekend. 4-5th February

Lyndsay and Roger will repeat the "Build the Solar System" event, and also hope to have a display of other aspects of astronomy on the bandstand. We will offer stargazing both nights, weather permitting.

New Playground opening

It was agreed we would want to celebrate this but agreeing details would need to wait until 2022.

Newham History month

This was planned to take place in June 2022. CPRE/Go Parks London have suggested working with us to prepare an arrange an event to take place during June. Ron and Roger would develop a proposal with CPRE/Go Parks London and present to the February meeting.

The Dogs Trust

This charity has expressed an interest in holding a fun dog show and training advice event. All agreed we would be happy to work with them. Ricky would initially contact them.

Community Fair

There is an opportunity for us to engage with local crafts people and also to promote FWHP at this event. Roger asked people to send in their suggestions before our next meeting.

Publicity and Media

Newham Voices articles have been well received. We need to organise topics and authors for the January and February editions.

Nicky sent details of current social media activity –

Nursery site: 140 signed up including 'core' Friends Group members

85% open email, 35% click through

66% view on desktop, 33% via mobile

Facebook: 700 followers, most in the UK and most in London but 1 in Botswana
(and other non UK locations)

66% female, 33% male

get between 100 and 600 views per post - most recently in the 150ish mark

Instagram: 300 followers

get an average of 10 likes per post

Affiliation with other Groups

Roger reported on our visit to Lordship Rec, and offers of help from them and other Friends of Greenspaces groups.

Shahidul from the junior cricket group explained that they are part of a London-wide cricket charity and expressed an interest in working with us on various projects. We will follow this up with him separately.

Roger has also made contact with the group who organised an impromptu picnic in the park last summer, and who are interested in becoming more involved with FWHP. A meeting with them will take place on 12th January.

Planning and Development

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

Roger is looking at various levels of protection that it seems the park should have but has missed out on. He and Charlotte urged everyone to respond to the Newham Local Plan consultation in their own words, it is easy to complete online.

GDPR

Agreed we would audit compliance of our data-bases/email lists.

Future Meeting Dates for 2021

It was agreed that Zoom meetings work best for most people and attract more participants. There was a discussion about meeting on different days of the week, but we decided to stay with Thursdays.

Next years' meeting will be 24th February, 7th April, 14th July for the AGM, 22nd September and 24th November all at 7pm by Zoom, except the AGM which is planned to take place on the bandstand.

AOB

There were no other items that are not covered earlier in the meeting.

The meeting closed at 20.40