



Friends of West Ham Park

Friends of West Ham Park Meeting

Thursday 24 February 2022 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, Pat Mossop, Mary Edmondson, Alan Cooper, Uta Saatz, John Rands, Marlene Sidaway, Ian X and Lyndsay Jones.

Apologies

Jim Holt, Nicky Brown, Joel Farrell, Bruce Cleghorn, Helen & Colm McGarth and Jules Maurice-Williams.

Introduction

Roger welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked Charlotte for offering to host the meeting on her Zoom account. He reminded everyone of the protocols set out in the agenda. He said the meeting would concentrate on items 3 and 6 of the agenda; many of the other items were to be noted for information.

He explained that he and Lyndsay would not be able to be relied upon for FWHP events for a while due to medical treatment commitments.

Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes from the meeting held on 23 November 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

Treasurer's Report

Marion reported that the account balance is £1850.21, which includes the balance of the grant money for the Fothergill Exhibition.

Report from the Park Supervisor

Playground Project

Work was going well until a layer of asbestos was uncovered beneath the paddling pool. No one has been exposed to any danger and work is on hold until the specialist team arrive. The contract price has scope for such contingencies and will not be affected.

Plans for 2022

Ricky explained that there are no major plans for 2022 whilst CoLC concludes its major operational revue. There will be funfairs on the running track area 20-22 May and 15-17 July.

Operational Review

Ricky outlined the new CoLC management structure for Natural Environment Division and how the park would fit into this. This would come into operation at the beginning of April. There would be a second phase of the review, which would look at the park's operation and management structure, along with all the other open spaces teams. This would be implemented later in the year.

Carbon Agenda

CoLC is planning to increase the ability of its Open Spaces to store carbon. In WHP this means an

increase of hedge planting around the boundaries. The local community will be encouraged to help with this, in the autumn.

It was pointed out that building on the former Nursery Site would increase CoL's carbon footprint. It was also noted that a new native hedge between the Community Orchard and the football pitch would possibly be more beneficial and have a better chance of growing well than a hedge along the dry and hard packed park boundary.

Roger thanked Ricky for his support, and honest assessment of the reorganisation. We accept that a change of this scale is difficult for all involved. We would be very happy for Ricky to continue as Park Supervisor if this position is included in the new structure. Roger mentioned that Park Keeper Deane retires on 11 April. He will contact Friends separately about a card and gift for Deane.

FWHP Activities

Roger introduced this item saying that once the COVID restrictions had permitted FWHP events to operate again in Spring 2021, all our various activities had contributed 625 hours of voluntary work, which was a great credit to the group. We have demonstrated the value we can add to the park and the local community. Ricky reported that CoL are impressed with what we have achieved, especially the variety of events and numbers attending and send us their thanks. Ricky added his personal thanks.

Community Vegetable Garden

Eugene reported that the group are now developing links with other community garden groups, and hope to arrange visits to each other's gardens.

Bird Surveys

Lyndsay reported that she had now compiled the annual report for 2021, which shows that we recorded 36 species over the year. This was a better result than feared, as the team had felt that there was less bird activity than usual Thanks to the bird survey team for their continued reliability. Marlene commented on how lovely the whole park was looking, and congratulated everyone involved.

Volunteer Hours

For the period December 2021 to February 2022 are as follows –

- Park in the Dark 6 people for a total of 12 hours. 200 people attended.
- Food Bank Collection 5 people for a total of 10 hours. 20 people attended.
- Bird watching – joint with RSPB Local Group 8 people for a total of 15 hours. 40 people attended on Saturday and 50 people attended on Sunday.
- LSE Students: 'Craft your dream neighbourhood' research project 4 people for a total of 10 hours. 70 people attended over the 2 days.
- Space Exploration Weekend - 8 people for a total of 24 hours. 40 people attended the Star gazing and 50 people attended 'Build a Solar System in the Park'
- Vegetable Garden - details supplied direct to Park office
- Bird surveys - 6 people for a total of 18 hours
- Wildlife Garden Maintenance 4 people for a total of 6 hours
- Health Walks – details supplied direct to Park office.
- Litter picking - 8 people for a total of 95 hours

Total volunteer hours = 190 hours.

Future Programme

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

From the Ground Up

The sub group, led by Charlotte, reported that as part of a range of community activities 'From the Ground Up' were working on a time lapse film of the playground development, and planning an event around the Fothergill exhibition, led by Mary and Pete Henson, provisionally to be held on July 8th. They also asked for more information about the regular Health Walks, which Ron provided.

Litter Picking

Ron suggested that the regular six litter pickers will assume they are doing their usual days, anyone else who wants to do a turn or fill in for someone else can contact Ron. He suggested another weekend community litter pick, as people enjoy helping out. This could take place around Easter and/or in the summer holidays.

Playground redevelopment

We hope to use the money left from the grant for the Fothergill Exhibition to put some information boards into the playground to link the themed ship and play sculptures to the history of the park. Mary and Lyndsay are making enquiries.

Linking Green Spaces

Roger reported on the continuing liaison work with London Friends of Greenspaces Network. A key emerging proposal was the possible creation of a 'Great Eastern Gardens Route' linking open spaces in East London from Shoreditch to the Thames, including West Ham Park. This proposal was only in its infancy but would be developed over the next 12 months.

Newham History month

Ron reported that for this year, Newham Council are only interested in events connected to the 2012 Olympic Legacy. We could possibly focus on the First FA Cup match, which was held in the park. A separate discussion will be held about this. Marlene and Charlotte will contact the Upton Football club. This could be an opportunity to work with local football and cricket teams.

'Spring is here' event and Tree Identification Walks

Eugene now has his walk ready to present, and would like to have the information recorded on our website. He will work with Nicky on this. The RSPB involvement with our January bird watching event was very successful. To build on this a second event built around bird watching and birdsong identification and Tree Identification was proposed for 24th April. Alison will work with Eugene on the event. The walks and talks would need to have numbers restricted to be successful.

The Dogs Trust

This charity is concerned that take up would be low, but Ricky has assured them that we could publicise the event well. They would need volunteers to help, which we could provide. A date will be arranged, possibly in June. Alan observed that a similar event at Well Street Common in Hackney had been very popular. Ricky will develop a proposal with Dogs Trust.

Wildlife Garden

Ricky has bought the suggested mix of cornfield flower seeds. We plan to remove the cover from the soil, dig out surviving weeds, sow the seeds and then net the area with the netting removed from the pond, until the seeds germinate. The suggested date is "early spring, after the last frosts", which is hard to determine. We plan to do this work over the weekend of March 19/20.

Food Bank

Ron will contact Irene and find out which food banks the donations are going to, and discuss possible future dates for collections. We could approach Morrisons again once we have dates.

Affiliation with other park user groups

Roger proposed a social event on the bandstand to get members of other park user groups and local organisations together informally and discuss how we can help each other. Ricky was happy to facilitate such an event and would work with Roger to develop the idea.

Publicity and Media

We need to decide titles and authors for the next few Newham Voices articles. Please send suggestions to Roger as soon as possible. Alan proposed an article of the outdoor gym which he was willing to prepare for later in the year.

Nicky has designed and had printed our new business cards, which are available for any of us to hand out as necessary. Please contact Nicky if you would like some of the cards.

There is a leaflet dispenser on the wall of the office which is not currently in use. Ricky agreed that we could use it for FWHP material.

Future Meeting Dates for 2022

7th April

14th July and AGM

22nd September

24th November.

These will all be Zoom meetings, except for the AGM, 14th July on the Bandstand.

AOB

Ian was attending for the first time, said he felt very welcome, and would be willing to help with future activities.

Mary asked whether there was a standard form for organising events, and whether the scripts for leading events were accessible.

Roger replied that there is a form, which he completes for CoLC for each event, and there is also a script for Ron's history walk and Eugene's tree walk. It would be useful to set up a cloud based data store for all of the Groups documents; artwork and other material and he will set this in motion.

The meeting closed at 20.37