



Friends of West Ham Park

Friends of West Ham Park Meeting

Thursday 24th November 2022 at 7:00pm
Meeting by Video Conference

Attendees

Charlotte Cook (Chair) Alan Cooper (Vice Chair) Ricky O'Garro (Park Supervisor), Roger Jones, Nicky Brown, Eugene Czsauderna, John Rands, Pearl Saunders, Ron Innell, Ian McClelland and Lyndsay Jones.

Apologies

Helen McGrath, Lucia Rios Steele, Zoe Flynn

Introduction

Charlotte welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially those attending for the first time.

Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes from the meeting on 22 September were agreed as a correct record.

Treasurer's Report

There had been no income or expenditure since the last meeting.

Report from the Park Supervisor

Ricky reported that the restructuring of the whole CoL organisation was nearing completion and would be announced on 20 January 2023. The uncertainty that this project has caused has resulted in many stress related staff absences and resignations.

Playground Project

There are still a few issues to finalise. The Fothergill information panel will be installed when ground conditions allow. Charlotte has been asked by Stephania whether 30th December or 6 January would be suitable dates for an official opening, and will liaise with Lucia as to whether school children will be able to attend, as requested by Stephania. Ricky had not been advised of these dates, and pointed out that the park closes at 4.30 on those dates, which does not give long for a school group to be organised when school finishes at 3.30. Members of the group felt that it would be better to wait until spring.

Bird Flu

No dead birds have been found in the park so far. Any FWHP volunteer finding a dead bird should report it to the staff who will have suitable disposal kits available. Do not pick the bird up. Eugene was advised to keep the bird feeder in the Vegetable Garden regularly cleaned.

Recent Friends Activities and Volunteer Hours

The September Bat Walk was cancelled due to bad weather.

Volunteer hours reported:

Vegetable Garden (September) – 47.7

Vegetable Garden (October) – 79

Bird Survey (September) – 6

Bird Survey (October) – 7.5

Litter Picking (September) - 23

Health Walks (September) – 8

Litter Picking (October) – 30

Health Walks (October) 12

Upcoming Events

Newham's Biggest Leaf Pile is now scheduled for 27th November, leaf fall having been very late this year. Recently the weather has been very wet which might make the leaves too wet for enjoyable handling and the ground too wet for vehicles use. It was agreed the Charlotte and Ricky would check the state of the leaves and the grass areas and decide on the day.

Park in the Dark

This will be held on 2nd December. The choir from Park Primary School will be performing again. Ron has arranged for food supplies from Morrisons. Glow sticks have been purchased. General arrangements were discussed.

Food Bank

This will be held on the Bandstand on 3rd December. Ron has now found a local church happy to receive contributions, and they are able to collect our donations. Ron will liaise with Ricky about vehicle access.

Ongoing Activities

Vegetable Garden

All going well. Some crops have been sown which will over-winter.

The local Home Schooling Group and now visiting monthly and both children and adults seem very keen on the project.

Bird Survey

The team feel that there may have been fewer birds around this year, but we will wait for the annual results.

Wildlife Garden

No attention needs until the spring, when we will need to sow more cornfield annual fields. Ricky will order them. Eugene offered some wildflower seeds from the Vegetable Garden which will also be used.

Health Walks

The Newham Mental Health Group are referring people to our walking group. At least one person has been helped to recover from agoraphobia.

Litter Picking is continuing, weather permitting. There is not too much litter at this time of year. The Corporate Volunteers from National Grid did an excellent job in October, and also did a lot of good work in the Wildlife Gardens.

SINC status

Our understanding is that the proposed updated status will be included in Newham's new Local Plan due to be published imminently.

Liaison with the Groups and LFGN

The LFGN Group had created a Climate Resilience sub-group of which we were now part. The purpose of this sub-group is to explore and promote understanding of options for parks and open spaces to help mitigate the impact of climate change. Roger would report back on progress and any actions relevant to WHP. LFGN would also be holding an end of year social which we would attend, to promote the activities of the Friends Group and liaise with other Friends Groups. The Newham Green Forum had now been established and the initial meeting well attended. The next meeting was 30th November.

Stratford Academy

The school had approached the FWHP for advice on tree planting and other activities as part of their Climate Action Plan. They had also offered to take part in our voluntary activities (eg litter picking). Ron, Lyndsay and Roger had met them, made suggestions and proposals to them, and were now awaiting a response from the Academy.

Future Events

Ricky reported that there will be two fairs in the park again, one mid-May and the Community Fair in July.

Tree Identification Walk

Eugene is happy to lead further walks. He and Ricky will discuss the possibility of a new leaflet or QR code update.

History Events

Newham History Month will be June 2023. The theme is not known as yet. Agreed to discuss at the Much meeting. An article contains several errors about the history of WHP has appeared in Newham Voices. Ron will write an article containing the corrections.

Newham Unlocked

This event was cancelled following the death of the Queen. It is hoped to hold it in 2023, details to be confirmed.

RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch

The members group who had a still and led a guided walk this year would like to repeat the event 21st and 22nd January 2023. This will be subject to there being no restrictions relating to the Bird Flu epidemic.

Future Meeting Dates in 2023

It was agreed that future meetings (save that currently planned for 24 November) would be held on the second Thursday of alternate months, starting with January 2023.

January 12th

March 9th

May 11th

July 13th AGM

September 14th

November 9th

These will all be Zoom meetings except the AGM.

Publicity and Media

Nicky reported 3,500 posts on Facebook recently. Although many concerned an escaped parrot, now safely back at home.

Newham Voices article rota:

January - Charlotte, Park in the Dark and Food Bank.

February - Roger, Planning for Climate Resilience

March - Lyndsay, annual "state of our birds" review

AOB

Ron had received an invitation from Councillor M. R. Verdi to a reception for International Volunteer Day on 5th December. Everyone will be given a certificate of recognition for work done in the borough. Agreed that Ron would attend and collect the one for FWHP.

The meeting closed at 20.40