



Friends of West Ham Park

Friends of West Ham Park Meeting

Thursday 9 March 2023 at 7:00pm
Meeting by Video Conference

Attendees

Charlotte Cook (Chair), Alan Cooper (Deputy Chair) Ricky O'Garro (Park Supervisor), Roger Jones, Nicky Brown, Eugene Czsauderna, John Rands, Uta Saatz, Ron Innell, Marion Innell, Georgina Philippou, Lucas Rios Steele, Jules Maurice Williams, Steve Russell, and Lyndsay Jones.

Apologies

Joel Farrell, Mary Edmondson, Su Leaver, and Pearl Saunders. Pearl has been unwell, and everyone sent best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Introduction

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

Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes from the meeting on 12th January were agreed as a correct record.

Treasurer's Report

The current balance is £414.16. A donation of £200 will be received shortly, given to Mary and Lyndsay for speaking at a Fothergill event in Forest Gate.

Report from the Park Supervisor

Ricky reported that the restructuring of the CoLC has been announced. Some Park Keeper positions are to be lost. Teams will be reduced to three per shift and there will be one Team Leader position. Temporary staff will not be retained but there will be some budget for casual staff in the summer. Ricky will have to address the problem of how to cope with fewer staff, particularly during the long summer opening hours. Alan asked how these cuts could be justified, and Ricky replied that a decision had been made to cut funding by 12%.

Playground Project

The Playground will be officially opened on 21st March. CoL has invited a large number of people (including representatives from FWHP). Ricky and Stella have organised the event. Children from Park Primary will attend.

Bird Flu

No dead birds have been found in the park so far.

Community Fairs

These are still planned for May and July.

Coronation Events

Charlotte asked about "other events" which Newham Council have listed, and which may mean that

there will be less chance of a grant for FWHP's "Vegetable Crown" event which Su is planning. Ricky was aware of only one event, involving music on the bandstand. He said that the park would be able to provide some items for the FWHP event.

Recent Friends Activities

As reported, Mary and Lyndsay had attended an event in Forest Gate Community Garden linked to our Fothergill exhibition. Charlotte asked if we were planning any Fothergill linked events this year, and Georgina suggested we could also celebrate the achievements of Samuel Gurney and Elizabeth Fry.

Roger offered to look into the possibility of getting a Blue Plaque for Dr Fothergill.

Ongoing Activities

Vegetable Garden

Eugene has several new recruits, including Steve, attending this meeting, and said that he is enjoying his time in the garden..

Bird Survey

Lyndsay has compiled the annual report, which is now available on the website.

Wildlife Garden

A working party will be held on 26th March between 11am and 1pm.

Health Walks

Continuing as planned, whatever the weather. Between 10 and 15 walkers attend regularly.

Litter Picking

There is not too much litter around at the moment. Volunteer picking is continuing as and when weather permits.

Newham Local Plan consultation and SINC status.

Roger reported that the Draft Newham Local Plan includes the upgrade in SINC status. Charlotte thanked those who had attended the public consultations and have submitted written responses. Roger noted that our comments had been well received at the meetings, by both Council Staff and other participants

2023 Programme and Activities

Links and Affiliations with other Environmental Groups

There were no new developments with Great Eastern Gardens Route.

Roger and Alan had attended the recent LFGN meeting. This included a very thought provoking presentation on 'Make space for girls' which was focused on how green spaces could be made more appealing to girls and young female adults. West Ham Park has less of the problems experienced in other parks. The presentation's main recommendation was more informal seating areas, targeted at females.

A variety of new groups in Newham are being started based around green issues, sustainability etc. An umbrella group, Sustainable Newham, is emerging, which Alan has kindly agreed to be our representative on. The Newham Nature Network Group, which the FWHP are a member of will become a Green Spaces sub group of Sustainable Newham.

Alan reported that a 'Sustainability Fair' event is being held around these issues in Forest Gate on 1st May. He suggested that FWHP should have a stall, and this was agreed. Alan will lead on this.

Stratford Academy

We will meet with staff and students on March 16th to discuss events that the students can be involved with. STOP PRESS - 14th March - this has been postponed due to strike action by teaching Unions.

Planning for Future Events

Charlotte asked about more heritage events. Ron has been talking to Pete Henson, the Head Gardener, and may be able to access some further archives relating to WW2 in Newham. There is already some material which has been used for school groups in the park and could be dated for all ages. Nicky reported that the Newham Heritage Month theme this year is "Arts and Culture", but suggested that we could do the WW2 event without it being linked to Newham's events. Roger will pass onto Ron the research done by the London Parks and Gardens Trust.

There was discussion about other possible events, including development of the South Meadow area which is heavily used by schools and a possible outdoor painting event linked to the Forest Gate artists group, but no decisions taken. These ideas would be followed up at the May meeting.

Su asked for volunteers for the Coronation event, these were noted.
Ron suggested a Food Bank event around Easter. He will organise this.

Roger has completed an application to the Mayor of London for a hedgerow around the playground. These applications are usually very detailed and time consuming.

Future Meeting Dates in 2023

Thursday May 11th

Thursday July 13th AGM

Thursday September 14th

Thursday November 9th.

These will all be Zoom meetings except the AGM.

Charlotte asked Alan to chair the May meeting.

Publicity and Media

Nicky reported that we have 1300 Facebook followers and 500 on Instagram.

Newham Voices article rota

Articles are needed by 12th of each month.

Charlotte asked whether children from Park Primary would like to write an article, and Lucia agreed to organise this.

AOB

Jules, Charlotte and Roger updated the meeting on the Trees Not Towers response to the Draft Local Plan and follow up actions. We will continue with the TNT public information meetings

The meeting closed at 20.55.