



Friends of West Ham Park

Friends of West Ham Park Meeting

Thursday 18th May 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, Ron Innell, Marion Innell, John Rands, Georgina Philippou, Mary Edmondson, Lucia Rios Steele, Stephania Horne and Lyndsay Jones.

Apologies

Joel Farrell, Helen Mossop, Pat Mossop.

Introduction

Charlotte welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes from the meeting on 9th March were agreed as a correct record.

Treasurer's Report

The current balance is £486.68. A grant of £180 has been received for the Coronation Event, and withdrawn by Su. We have also bought a new flag showing our current logo.

Report from Stephania Horne (Assistant Director, Natural Environment, CoLC)

Stephania attended briefly to update us on the organisation restructuring by CoLC. The WHP team are now closely connected to other Open Spaces teams which will enable them to access the expertise of the others, in particular the Tree Team, and the Events Manager who has experience of working with the Muslim Community. There will also be help with the wider sports strategy and investment in cricket facilities.

Charlotte expressed our support for helpful new ideas.

Report from the Park Supervisor

Questions have been asked about the recent removal of a number of trees. Some are sycamores affected by Sooty Bark disease, which kills the tree and also causes breathing difficulties if inhaled by people. Other trees have suffered from the dry summer of 2022 and ground compaction. About 25 trees in total need to be removed. A replanting scheme will be developed.

In order to help relive ground compaction, which has led to tree damage and also probably affected birds which feed on worms on the sports pitches, a new aerator machine has been purchased. Roger suggested that Ricky might submit an article to Newham Voices with a picture of the machine.

Team Organisation

The restructuring, as detailed by Stephania, means that the three vacant positions will not be filled. There will be a new manager to oversee WHP, Queens Park and Golders Hill Park. Our keepers will now be titled Rangers.

The sudden death of Declan Gallagher, Senior Operations Manager, has been a shock to all who

knew him. FWHP offered our condolences to his friends and family.

Playground Project

The Playground opening took place on 21st March and went well, with the new planting doing well so far. The Fothergill panel is still not permanently fixed as someone had tried to remove the fixings and more secure ones need to be found. The gravel is still not stabilised and a replacement surface will have to be found, incurring a further cost. The water in the Splashpad is still not working, new pipes are to be laid, Ricky is chasing the contractor.

Community Fairs

Taking place 15th–17th May. The revenue from these events is very helpful to the park.

Cricket

A grant has been obtained for relaying the artificial wicket on the main pitch. This will raise the standard of the pitch and allow for more matches, hopefully engaging with more secondary school pupils.

Ongoing Activities

Bird Surveys, Health Walks and Litter Picking are continuing as usual.

Vegetable Garden

Eugene has 10 or 11 regular gardeners, including an autistic man with his career. A home schooling group visit monthly. The use of some greenhouse space has been appreciated.

Events

Food Bank Collection on 15th April went well, the receiving banks were pleased with the contributions. Nicky pointed out that we should make it clear that we are collecting not distributing food, as there was some confusion.

Newham Sustainability Fair

We had a stall at this event in Forest Lane Park on 1st May. There were lots of interesting groups represented, and we were able to engage with plenty of regular and potential new users of WHP.

Coronation Event

The “5 -a day Crown” event run by Su and Eugene in the Vegetable Garden was well attended and very popular. It was hard work!

Funding Applications

Alan had attended the Community Forum and explained the funding offer which is open for applications. Another try for planting around the playground was discussed. Roger suggested we also look at the Mayor of London’s funding offer. Once the various criteria are known, Alan will co-ordinate ideas and formation of sub-groups.

2023 Programme and Activities

Links and Affiliations with other Environmental Groups

We are awaiting the results of a grant application to Mayor of London to fund a new hedge around the playground perimeter. This is expected in early July.

We continue to attend the LFGN meetings. At the next meeting (12th June) we have agreed to make a presentation on our experiences and successes in engaging the local community in park events.

The Climate Resilience sub-group will meet shortly to consider the results of a wide ranging survey on drought issues in London parks and open spaces. Roger will let Ricky know of any output that would be useful to the park.

Digitisation of the Great Eastern Gardens route walk is being progressed which will help establish it and gain publicity.

The London Parks & Gardens trust had asked if they could include the Dr Fothergill exhibition artwork in their website entry for the park. We have agreed, and let them have the material.

The ‘Make Space for Girls’ charity were holding a series of events this coming weekend. Ricky and

Roger to discuss the provision of suitable in formal seating in WHP as recommended by the charity. The annual CPRE/LFGN survey of public satisfaction of London Borough parks and open spaces had just been published. Newham was 20 out of 30 with a high score on overall satisfaction but lower scores on other attributes. Roger agreed to circulate the link to the survey.

Stratford Academy

We met with staff and students on 20th April. We were surprised to find that the students had no knowledge of our activities. After discussions the students agreed to prepare a plan detailing how they would like to be involved. We have heard nothing more from them to date. Roger will follow this up.

Planning for Future Events

Bat Walks

Friday 25th August led by Lyndsay, Friday 22nd September led by Ron.

Newham's Biggest Leaf Pile

Provisionally Sunday 19th November, to be finalised once the rate of leaf fall this autumn is known.

Park in the Dark

Friday 8th December. Lucia will check the availability of the Park Primary School choir.

Food Bank Collection

Saturday 16th December

Future Meeting Dates in 2023

Thursday July 13th AGM

Thursday September 14th

Thursday November 9th.

These will all be Zoom meetings except the AGM, which will be held on the Bandstand.

Publicity and Media

Newham Voices article rota

Articles are needed by 15th of each month.

Roger and Ricky will provide the article for the 15th June deadline

Lucia will provide an article from the year 6 children of Park Primary

New Initiatives

Charlotte asked about music events on the bandstand, as Stratford Academy seemed to be keen on arts and performance. It was agreed that this could be a project for next summer.

Roger is looking into the process to obtain a commemorative "Blue Plaque" for Dr Fothergill.

Alan and Eugene will find out if there are any stalls left at the Forest Gate Festival on 8th July.

AOB

Charlotte reported an update from Frames of Mind, regarding their project From The Ground Up. They are looking to plan a launch date for the bench QR code trail, (featuring digital art and animations made by residents from Newham's supported housing scheme, Hamara Ghar). That should launch early July, before the schools break up and thought it might be a good idea to tie into an activity or event already taking place, around that time. They have asked if we have any events planned for then. Charlotte to report back.

Ron had received an email from Newham Trades Council asking for a speaker from FWHP at a meeting. He has asked for more details. They are concerned about development of the Nursery Site

The meeting closed at 21.00.