



Friends of West Ham Park

Friends of West Ham Park Meeting

Thursday 14th September 2023 at 7:00pm
Meeting by Video Conference

Attendees

Charlotte Cook (chair), Alan Cooper (deputy chair), Desmond Blake, Eugene Czsauderna, Mary Edmondson, Ron Innell, Marion Innell, Helen Mossop, John Rands, Pearl Saunders, Ricky O'Garro (Senior Park Ranger).

Stefania Horne (outgoing superintendent) joined briefly to say farewell. Bill LoSasso (newly appointed Assistant Director) joined briefly to introduce himself.

Apologies

Joel Farrell, Nicky Brown, Jules Maurice-Williams, Pat Mossop, Lyndsay Jones, Roger Jones, Marlene Sideway. Roger and Nicky sent email reports.

Introduction

Charlotte welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 13th July were approved.

Treasurer's Report

The current balance is £5986.68. There have been two donations from George Irvine and Roger and Lyndsay Jones. Roger and Lyndsay's donation will be used for planting a hedgerow around the playground.

Update from Senior Park Ranger, Ricky O'Garro

- a) In the aftermath of the fatal stabbing of Rahaan Ahmed in the park in early July, park guards patrolled daily in the summer, but this has now ceased. The extra cost came from the park budget. Ricky was first on the scene and very affected by this experience, and the long hours spent reviewing the CCTV to assist the police.
- b) There are several new appointments in the Open Spaces management team, including Emily Brennan (director), Charlotte Williams (operations manager) Kiaran O'Keeffe (formal parks manager) and Bill LoSasso as above.
- c) West Ham Park retained its Green Flag and Green Heritage awards this year. The London in Bloom awards will be announced shortly. Congratulations to the staff for these achievements.
- d) *Playground issues*
 - The trellis style support for the children's Fothergill panel was being used as a climbing frame and had to be removed. A new structure is being sought, with smaller mesh to prevent climbing.
 - The gravel surfacing has not bonded as it should so remains loose. The children have been using the loose gravel to create dams and other features in the water play area and thus blocked the flow of water. The surfacing will be replaced by a shredded tyre mulch.

- e) Some of the trees in the Orchard at the West of the park have died because of dry conditions and the difficulties of providing sufficient water. Slow release watering bags have been used on the new trees planted in the fields and could perhaps be used in the orchard. Volunteers to prune and weed around the orchard trees would be welcome and the park could provide training courses.
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Current and recent activities

a) Regular weekly or monthly activities

- The weekly vegetable garden sessions are going well. There is a core group of 10-15 regular attendees, and the tomatoes have done very well.
- Monthly bird surveys continue, and a new birder has been recruited.
- *Weekly Health Walks* led by Marion and Ron, continue and are currently partnering with an NHS mental health group of walkers. Desmond Blake has a similar group and will liaise with Ron.
- Weekly routine litter picking continues. Ron has noticed less litter recently.

b) Ad hoc and intermittent activities.

- *Wild life garden maintenance*
A session of pond cleaning may be held on 13/14 October. To be confirmed.
 - *Bat walks*
In August the bats didn't come out to play after a downpour. Next one is Friday 22nd September at 7:15, led by Ron. Please let Ron know if you can help.
 - Planting in the playground will take place in the Spring.
 - The London to Southend charity bike ride set off from West Ham Park in July. The participants were positive, and the park earned some money so this may happen again.
 - Please remember to forward your volunteering hours to Charlotte directly each month.
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Social Media activity

FWHP has about 1000 followers on FB and 700 on Instagram

There were just shy of 1500 interactions on FB and 150 on Instagram in the past four weeks. The parakeets are very popular

Ongoing programme and activities

- The Nursery site development is covered in Trees Not Towers meetings
- *Links with other park user groups*
Charlotte has emailed other groups who regularly use the park, but no response received.
- *Green links*
Roger and Alan maintain our presence at meetings of the Council for the Protection of Rural England (London), the London Network of Green Spaces and Sustainable Newham. Alan reported that sustainable Newham intend to hold another Green Fair in May. They are keen to establish links with community gardens. They have enough grant money to pay an organiser. Finding out about their funding sources may be useful to us.
- *Newham Academy school link*
Roger reported that there has been no further response from the school about suggested activities despite his emails to his contact, Zoe. The last email on 04/09/23 bounced back.

- *Grant applications*
Alan completed a difficult on-line application process for a grant from the People Powered Places programme of participatory budgeting. If short listed, a presentation will have to be made on 21st October, and voting then starts.
 - *SINC status of the park*
Roger reported that there will be no action until the final consultation on Newham's new Local Plan is published in November.
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Future planning

Autumn events and dates for volunteering.

- September *Bat Walk*, as above.
 - *Newham's Biggest Leaf Pile*
Provisional date Sunday 19th November but may need to be changed once the rate of leaf fall is known.
 - *Park in the Dark*
Friday 8th December. Lucia will check the availability of the Park Primary school choir.
 - Collection of donations for the *Food Bank* 16th December.
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Forward planning for 2024

- Charlotte will liaise with Lucia to try to progress links with other local schools.
 - Summer events suggestions
 - a Friends of the Park picnic
 - a photography exhibition in the house near the Main Gate, (currently unoccupied)
 - a music event on the bandstand if a band or group can be found to play free.Please contact Charlotte if interested or can contribute to getting these off the ground.
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Future Meeting Dates in 2023

2nd Thursday of every other month.
Thursday November 9th

Future Meeting Dates in 2024

Thursday January 11th
Thursday March 14th
Thursday May 9th
Thursday July 11th (AGM)
Thursday September 12th
Thursday November 14th.

The meeting closed at 21.00.