



# Friends of West Ham Park

## Friends of West Ham Park Meeting

Thursday 11 January 2024 at 7:00pm  
Meeting by Video Conference

### Attendees

Charlotte Cook (Chair), Alan Cooper (Deputy Chair) Ricky O'Garro (Senior Park Ranger), Ciaran O'Keefe (Formal Parks Manager, North London), Roger Jones, Nicky Brown, Eugene Czsauderna, Ron Innell, Uta Saatz, Desmond Blake, Mia Kukthasan, Jules Maurice-Williams, Lucia Rios-Steele, Helen Mossop and Lyndsay Jones

### Apologies

Joel Farrell

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### Introduction

Charlotte welcomed everyone to the meeting

She reported that she will be having a meeting with Charlotte Williams, Chief of Operations and Park. She has also been invited to attend the next meeting of the CoLC's West Ham Park Committee

### Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes from the meeting on 9 November 2023 were agreed as a correct record

### Treasurer's Report

The current balance is £5895.08, after purchasing glow sticks for Park in the Dark. Charlotte recorded our gratitude to the park for funding the refreshments

The balance includes the donation of £5000 to plant a hedge around the playground

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### Update from Senior Park Ranger, Ricky O'Garro

Ricky reported that the planters in the playground had been planted up by a team of corporate volunteers and CoL apprentices. The beds are themed to fit the theme of exploration, representing Asia, Australia and New Zealand. Recent high winds brought down two trees, but the park had already been closed as a precaution and there were no injuries. He and Alan had a meeting with the Green Fair group, and both sides are keen for the event to be held in WHP this year. A meeting has been held to start choosing and organising events to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the park opening to the public. Representatives from FWHP are part of this group

Ron passed on a contact for someone who is interested in learning about pruning fruit trees

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## Report from Formal Parks Manager, North London

Ciaran read out a prepared statement:

- At the October WHP Committee, Members approved the recommendation to plan and commence a community and stakeholder engagement process
- The community engagement process will seek to understand the public needs and aspirations associated with the park and those of our partner organisations and other community groups
- These organisations and groups will include Friends of West Ham Park, local sports clubs, local schools and local resident groups and businesses
- It will provide the context of why the charity is seeking to redevelop the former plant nursery
- It will seek views on what would be an acceptable and viable redevelopment of the former nursery site
- It will commence in early 2024
- Officers are in the process of appointing a community engagement specialist to help to plan and deliver this activity

Alan asked, "Will the FWHP have an opportunity to input into the design of the consultation. Or see a draft before it is published". Ciaran agreed to discuss this with Bill LoSasso. He would also highlight to Bill that as a group you will take an opportunity to digest the update and respond in due course

Finally we agreed to include Ciaran and Charlotte Williams in future FWHP meeting invites and the circulation of minutes and agendas

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### Publicity and Media

Nicky asked that we arrange a schedule of articles, and authors, for Newham Voices, which was agreed. One of these will be by Mia, who is seeking funding for an Oral History and Art Trail project. This would include workshops and a display on the bandstand. The project is agreed with the park, in principle, and she should know shortly if the funding bid has been successful. FWHP are happy to support this project

*Post meeting note:*

*Mia was successful in her funding bid so this proposal will now be developed further*

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### Ongoing Activities

*Vegetable Garden*

Eugene is keen to attract more participants. Charlotte asked if it would be possible to provide basic gardening courses for beginners. He will work with Ricky, Pete Henson (Head Gardener) and the apprentices to plan something around this idea

*Bird Surveys, Health Walks, Litter picking, Wildlife Garden Maintenance*

Ongoing, nothing to report

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### Recent Events

All three events went well and had large attendances. There were a few lessons for next year from the Park in the Dark event. More helpers are needed for Park in the Dark, as it was difficult to keep people together

Leaf Pile, Park in the Dark and the food bank collection were held very close together because of the delayed leaf fall

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## **Bids and Grant applications**

Alan reported that our bid to Newham had been unsuccessful, but there was no feedback as to why. Roger has an upcoming interview with CoLC regarding our bid for their funding scheme. He asked Ciaran if he had been able to find out why there was so little publicity for these grants. Ciaran is trying to find out

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## **2024 Programme and Activities Celebrating the 150th Anniversary**

Des Blake suggested that we create an online "Register of Interest" for people to put forward ideas and record any skills they could volunteer. As mentioned above, a steering group has been set up with FWHP represented. There is a lot of archive material in the park office which could be available for Des and other volunteers to make use of

We will also look into possible Heritage Lottery funding

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## **Links and Affiliations with other Environmental Groups**

Roger has passed to Eugene details of a new local group called *Growsie*. He was in contact with them

The *Great Eastern Parks* walking route seems to be making progress and now expanded to become Shoreditch to Rainham Marshes. Funding applications and work with a property developer were making progress

Roger and Alan will attend the next LFGN meeting week

*Secondary Schools*. We have had no success with establishing links with these schools, possibly because they have such full schedules with curriculum requirements. The Learning Team now have an outreach member for older children and might be able to make more progress. This would be discussed at the meeting with the Learning Team on 23rd January

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## **Planning for Future Events**

It would be good to have more volunteers. Other local groups use online sites similar to that suggested by Des where people can record the kind of activities they would like to be part of. Nicky suggested that we set something like this

### *Easter Food Bank collection*

Ron will liaise with the group involved. We suggested the weekend of 23rd March

### *"Eyes to the Sky" weekend*

Roger and Lyndsay suggested stargazing and bird watching. To take place Friday and Saturday evenings 16/17th February, and bird watching 17/18th  
Everyone was happy to take this forward

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## **Future Meeting Dates in 2024**

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

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

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**AOB**

There was no other business

The meeting closed at 20.30