



Friends of West Ham Park

Friends of West Ham Park Meeting

Thursday 14 March 2024 at 7:00pm
Meeting by Video Conference

Attendees

Charlotte Cook (Chair), Ciaran O'Keefe (Formal Parks Manager, North London), Charlotte Williams (Head of Operations and Parks, Environment Department), Roger Jones, Nicky Brown, Ron Innell, Mia Kukathasan, Jules Maurice-Williams, Lucia Rios-Steele, John Rands and Lyndsay Jones.

Apologies

Joel Farrell, Alan Cooper (Deputy Chair), Ricky O'Garro (Senior Park Ranger) Uta Saatz.

Introduction

Charlotte welcomed everyone to the meeting. She had attended a committee meeting of CoLC and outlined our recent activities. The committee asked about our insurance cover for events, which is through the Park's umbrella policies, and asked about diversity. Charlotte explained that whilst our immediate organising group are predominantly white and over 40, our events are attended by every age and racial group in the area. The committee thanked FWHP for our contribution to the life of the Park.

Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes from the meeting on 11 January 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

Treasurer's Report

The current balance is £5895.08.

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

Report from Formal Parks Manager, North London

Ciaran read out a statement from CoLC detailing the consultation exercise to be undertaken in respect to the proposed development of the nursery site. This is included at the end of the minutes.

FWHP will review the proposal and report back to Ciaran.

Ciaran has had contact with LBN regarding the proposed low traffic neighbourhood, specifically as to its effect on the many school groups with walk into the park.

Charlotte asked about the recently fallen trees. Ciaran explained the policy of park closure when winds above 40mph are forecast had successfully prevented any members of the public being put in danger. All trees are regularly assessed and any remedial work is in hand.

The 150 Steering Group meets monthly.

CoLC are developing plans for cultural events on the Saturday, finishing with an evening concert. FWHP have ideas for afternoon performances by local groups, centred around the bandstand. It was confirmed that this would be possible and could be part of the proposed opening ceremony. FWHP will confirm bookings with the groups involved. Plans for a photographic competition are also underway, Ciaran confirmed that it will be possible to have an exhibition of the entries/winners, although the venue within the park is not yet decided. FWHP will take this forward. Sunday will be the sports day. CoLC have this in hand. FWHP will run a family friendly novelty sports event and picnic, to cater for the less athletic and younger children.

Publicity and Media

Newham Voices

The article for April, about maintaining the pond in the Wildlife Education Garden, has been submitted. The article for May will introduce the 150 anniversary and Newham Green Fair, written by Roger and Lyndsay

Charlotte will prepare an Easter Newsletter for our wider email list.

CoLC has produced artwork and logos to be used on all 150 material which will be circulated by Roger.

A group called SoRo (South of Romford Road) has been created to link community and environmental groups in the area. We are not currently linked with them, but will pass the information along to Des Blake, who attended the previous meeting and is starting a Friends group for Plaistow Park. He attended the recent LFGN meeting at which we are represented by Roger.

Ongoing Activities

Vegetable Garden, Bird Surveys, Health Walks, litter picking, Ongoing, nothing to report.

Recent Events

The *Eyes to the Skies* events were moderately successful. Friday night was largely cloudy but 12 people attended and were delighted to look at the Moon through binoculars and ask general questions about stargazing. Saturday night was cancelled due to total cloud cover. Saturday birdwatching was quite well attended. The bird feeders in the vegetable garden provide an ideal easy observation point. Sunday attracted very few people, the weather was again unfavourable in the morning.

Bids and Grant applications

The application to CoLC for hedge planting around the mounds has been successful. A scheme will be drawn up and planting should take place in the autumn. It had been hoped to plant the hedge around the playground in April, but after digging some trial holes, the ground was found still too dry and compacted. A full planting trench will be prepared and left open over the summer in the hope that spring rains will be able to penetrate the lower levels. Planting will take place in the autumn.

Links and Affiliations with other Environmental Groups

Roger reported on recent London Friends Greenspaces Network meetings. These include water management, introduction of beavers into London and how successful Friends Groups operate. There had been some interesting discussion and observations. Our Group seems to already operate with most 'best practises' that were suggested.

A new Group Friends of Plaistow Park had been established, led by Desmond Blake. Contact had been made with him to ensure we were working together.

Planning for Future Events

Easter Food Bank collection will be on 6th April. The food bank organisers would like to involve their young people in litter picking. We will need to litter pick more over the 150 weekend, and the TA Cadet Force have also offered to help.

Newham Green Fair is 6th May. Alan is organising a stall. More information to follow.

Bat Walks will be 23 August led by Lyndsay and 20 September led by Ron.

Mia reported that her Newham History Month event will take place on 15/16th June. Summary of the event is a small art trail guided walk of five points of memories in the park as collected through oral history interviews. The event culminates with an art workshop of cyanotype prints created with found objects collected in the park to create triangles of material. These will be turned into bunting intended to be hung in the bandstand, if the park is agreeable. Will be finalised in meeting with Ciaran on 22nd March.

Lucia and Thatcha are working with the school on a "Fairy Trail" theme with "doors" on trees which will go online at the end of June, and will also include tree identification.

Future Meeting Dates in 2024

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

AOB

Roger had been sent a link to the 1991 Newham Eco Plan. It is only of historical relevance but is an interesting comparison to the park of today. He asked anyone who would like the link to let him know.

The meeting closed at 20.50.

Statement from CoLC given by Ciaran O'Keefe to the meeting

Use of old Nursery Site Consultation

West Ham Park charity will be hosting engagement activities from Spring - Summer 2024 with the support of make:good, community engagement specialists, to ensure that the community's views are considered as part of the charity's future plans for the Old Nursery Site.

Newham-based engagement specialists, make:good will be engaging with local residents and organisations to understand their ideas and priorities for the Old Nursery Site in West Ham Park. This will lead to a set of key community priorities for the site that West Ham Park charity can consider when deciding the next stages of the project.

Between March and July 2024, the charity propose to run a variety of 1-2-1, group and public engagement activities with opportunities to engage in-person, including at the park itself and on-line. We will monitor and address any gaps in the reach of our engagement and continue to analyse and write up the feedback we receive throughout.

Between July and September 2024, the charity proposes to share with the community, a summary of the feedback we have received (including via a public exhibition in the park in July) and use this period to ensure that we have correctly interpreted the feedback given. In the Autumn, we plan to share the final results with our trustees and key stakeholders.

A webpage on the City of London website will soon go live and this is where details of specific events will be posted and other project information shared. The engagement material is already prepared so there is limited opportunity to amend this. However, make:good will soon be in touch with Friends of West Ham Park to invite them to participate in the engagement and this will be start of a series of opportunities to feedback to the charity on the future of the Old Nursery Site.

West Ham Park charity is committed to hearing from as many people and organisations as possible and would welcome the opportunity to share our events and online survey with your network to help us achieve this. If you would be prepared to share our engagement information via your mailing lists and social media accounts, then we will gladly send some suitable material for you to us