



Friends of West Ham Park

Friends of West Ham Park Meeting

Thursday 9 May 2024 at 7:00pm
Meeting by Video Conference

Attendees

Charlotte Cook (Chair), Alan Cooper (Deputy Chair), Ciaran O'Keefe (Formal Parks Manager, North London), Ricky O'Garro (Senior Park Ranger), Roger Jones, Nicky Brown, Ron Innell, Lucia Rios-Steele, Helen Mossop, John Rands, Eugene Czauderna, Pearl Saunders, Des Blake, Yvonne Brouwers, Ian MacDonald, Stevon Russell and Lyndsay Jones.

Apologies

Joel Farrell, Jules Maurice-Williams, Pat Mossop, Ciaran O'Keefe (CoLC).

Introduction

Charlotte welcomed everyone to the meeting. As there were several people attending for the first time, she asked everyone to introduce themselves. New members are especially welcome.

Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes from the meeting on 14 March 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

Treasurer's Report

The current balance is £5895.08. Payment for the website is due soon.

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

The grant we have obtained for further painting, around the mounds, will only be paid when the plants are to be ordered and paid for, probably in the autumn.

Marion and Nicky will arrange for Nicky to hold one of the account debit cards.

Report from Senior Park Ranger:

Ricky reported that all sports facilities are currently prepared and in use, including the running track. Several schools have already booked their Sports Days. A project called Ambition, Aspire, Achieve is running sports and other activities for disadvantaged and "At Risk" children which are much enjoyed.

More Tree Surgery work is needed. Several Sycamores have succumbed to Sooty Bark Disease, almost certainly caused by the stress of previous summer's droughts. He is taking advice about suitable replacements for a warming climate. The Spiking Machine is in regular use and seems effective. The grass is healthier, the Mistle Thrushes are back, and so, recently, are the Green Woodpeckers which have been absent for more than a year.

He reminded us that good weather means a very busy time for the keepers, and they appreciate our greetings and encouragement.

The Green Fair, organised by Sustainable Newham on 6th May, had been successful in spite of a very rainy day. Alan is FWHP representative with Sustainable Newham and both he and Ricky praised the group's excellent organisation. Des echoed these sentiments. Sustainable Newham will be encouraged to use WHP again, but it is understood that they will want to move around the Borough's parks. It appeared that not many of the people attending had been aware of the flyers, delivered to all addresses in streets adjacent to the park.

Publicity and Media

Newham Voices

Charlotte will write about tennis in the park for the June edition.

Lyndsay will write about the 150 celebrations for July. Lucia will write about the Fairy Trail being developed with the park Learning Team, for August. Des will write something for Black History month for September. Articles need to be with Nicky by 15th of the previous month.

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

WHP 150 – Photo Competition. This is now launched on our website, social media, posters and at the Green Fair. We will continue to promote it on social media until the closing date of 15th June.

Des would like to hold an event in October for Black History month. He will work up a proposal and liaise with Ricky and Charlotte. We are keen to support this idea.

Eugene has written a draft leaflet as a guide to the Ornamental Garden. There was a discussion as to the format in which this would be presented. A series of guide leaflets used to be available, and the boxes that contained them are still usable. Ricky thought that these can be more user friendly than the QR Code versions. Once the draft leaflet is checked we will take this idea forward.

Des suggested we investigate installing some "chat benches" to help counter loneliness. Nicky thought there is a national scheme, and will investigate. Newham already has already installed some. Please see end of the minutes for details.

Charlotte, Ron and Nicky have been invited to a CoLC reception to thank all City Volunteers.

City Bridge Trust, who have given us grants for the Fothergill Exhibition and the planting around the mounds, have offered us 10 free tickets for the Tower Bridge Experience. We will arrange to go as a group on a mutually agreed date.

150th Anniversary Celebrations 20th & 21st July

Roger attended the Steering Group monthly meeting earlier that day.

CoLC's cultural events on the Saturday are now booked. We will need to provide one or two representatives to attend the civil reception for the Lord Mayor before the official opening at 12.00. City's music event will run from then until 15.00 on the all weather sports pitch stage, and FWHP music event will run from 15.00 to 18.00 on the bandstand. Our programme of performers is well in hand now, and we are extremely grateful to Brian from Forest Gate Dog Jammers for all his technical advice and help, without which we would not be able to run the event.

CoLC have a full programme of sports events planned for the Sunday, and we will run a family-friendly picnic and novelty races. We will liaise with Ricky about enclosing our area for this.

Roger stressed that we will need as many FWHP members as possible on hand to help during both days of the celebrations, and asked people to confirm their attendance asap.

Ongoing Activities

Vegetable Garden, Bird Surveys, Health Walks, litter picking, Wildlife Garden maintenance.

Some public Litter Picking days as held before were suggested, to supplement the ongoing regular rota. Ron will arrange some suitable dates.

The cornfield flower seeds sown on the wildlife garden have germinated well.

The bird watching team are one member short. Lyndsay will consider how best to find someone else who can commit to a regular monthly survey.

City of London were proposing a regular Insect Survey of some areas of the park to establish the impact of new planting. Charlotte had been contacted about this and will respond to CoLC including Ricky. Alan and Des expressed interest, and Lucia thought she might be able to do something with her schoolchildren.

Links and Affiliations with other Environmental Groups

Alan will continue to liaise with Sustainable Newham. Roger reported on recent LFGN meetings. These had focused on protecting trees with some useful advice on tree management and monitoring as well as interest from Imperial College on investigating the changes to the water table in the park area and what could be done to help local ground water retention to reduce tree stress.

Future Meeting Dates in 2024

Thursday July 18th (AGM)

Thursday September 12th

Thursday November 14th

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

AOB

Des has started a Friends group in Plaistow Park, which is his local park, and run by LB Newham. He asked for advice about organising a community litter pick. Ron will liaise with him We wish his group well and will support them where possible.

The meeting closed at 21.15.

Chatty benches

<https://www.newham.gov.uk/downloads/file/6397/chatty-bench> - If you would like to suggest a location for a new Chatty Bench please contact Donna Williams, Community Neighbourhood Link Worker via email Donna.Williams@newham.gov.uk or by phoning T: +44 (0) 203 373 6548; M: +44 (0) 7977 702 578 for more information.