



# Friends of West Ham Park

## Friends of West Ham Park Meeting

**Thursday 15th January 2026 at 7.30pm**  
**Meeting by Video Conference**

### **Attendees**

Alan Cooper (Chair), Dries Indesteege (Deputy Chair), Ricky O'Garro (Senior Park Ranger), Roger Jones, Ron Innell, Marion Innell, Nicky Brown, Uta Saatz, Eugene Czauderna, Lucia Rios-Steele, Thatcha Stokes (Learning Team) and Lyndsay Jones

### **Apologies**

Charlotte Cook, Jules Maurice-Williams, Helen and Pat Mossop, John Rands

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### **Introduction**

Alan welcomed everyone to the meeting

### **Minutes of the last meeting**

Minutes from the meeting on 13th November 2025 were agreed as a correct record

### **Treasurer's Report**

We have £2899.86 in hand, having received a donation of £500 from George Irwin (funfair) and donations via our GoFundMe page. The grant for the children's book box has been received, and the box and paint have been purchased. Sales of the cards showing the photo competition winners has raised £48.96

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### **Report from Senior Ranger**

The park was awarded Gold by London in Bloom. This year's best park award went to Queen's Park (we suspect that these awards are allocated in turn to deserving parks!)

The Sapele timber to repair the benches is being ordered and the bench repair work should be done in the spring

Work on the renovation of the toilet block is continuing, as weather permits, and should be finished soon. The renovation of 1 Margery Lodge is progressing, with the installation of an eco-friendly air source heating system

Keeper William Hess is retiring tomorrow. We wish him a happy retirement. Advertising for the vacant post will begin soon

The team from Park Guard will continue to be employed to augment the regular team of Rangers. Their presence has taken a lot of the stress and abuse away from our regular staff, and park users have also commented on feeling safer with them around. The cost for this service has been over £100,000 so far, and no decision has been made as to where this funding is to come from long term

The owners of vehicles damaged by the fallen tree in November have now been found, and claims are in progress

Ricky was called to a suicide attempt at the end of December. Emergency services were able to save the man

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### **ParkFest 26**

The first planning meeting with Ricky and CoLC staff will take place on 30th January. We plan a similar event to last year, with a few more stalls from appropriate local enterprises. Rob Federico is very keen to help and advise on appropriate levels of catering, again slightly expanded from last year. The Pearly King and Queen are happy to attend again, and we will confirm their booking after the meeting.

We have applied for a grant from a Lyle Local Fund – Newham, but are still waiting for their decision.

Roger asked everyone to be sure that they have the date, Sunday 12th July, in their diaries, as we will all be needed to help on the day.

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### **Green Fair**

Monday 4th May in East Ham Park. We could have a stall to promote ourselves, ParkFest and launch the photo competition if we are holding another. Please let Alan know if you are available to help at this event.

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### **World Book Day**

Thursday 5th March. Thatcha and the Learning Team are inviting all the local schools to hold related activities in the park. It would be a good time to introduce the children's book box. After discussion it was agreed to hold a short opening ceremony at 1pm and encourage children to donate and exchange books. The new signage for the book boxes has been designed by Nicky. The name for the Children's book box needs to be agreed. Ricky has very kindly agreed to arrange purchase of the signs.

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### **Grant Applications**

CoLC have appointed Susannah Behr to lead on the search for larger grants. She is in contact with Veolia, the waste and recycling company, and will attend our next meeting to explain how we might take this forward in relation to the redevelopment of South Meadow.

Roger and Ricky have received an email from Lee Milne at CoLC concerning the Camden Clean Air Initiative, whose representative Su met with – see November minutes. We had agreed that we did not feel that this was an appropriate use of our Vegetable Garden. This will be followed up by Su and Ricky, in consultation with Alan and Eugene.

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### **Planting, fencing and Signing**

The planting of additional trees in the orchard will take place from 11am on 24th January. A message will go out to all mailing list members.

Nicky has designed posters to go on the playground hedging, and planted areas around the mounds, explaining our involvement and the sources of funding. Ricky has very kindly agreed to arrange purchase and mounting of the signs.

We need to organise a survey of pollinators around the areas to complete the terms of the grants. This will need to be done around early April.

## **Eyes to the Skies**

Lyndsay suggested repeating this event, stargazing and birdwatching, over the weekend of 27th February-1st March. Ricky agreed that the park could be opened for the stargazing. We will offer this Friday and Saturday evenings, in the hope of at least one clear night. Lyndsay will organise and advise everyone shortly *Post-meeting note: this date has been moved one week to 6-8 March*

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## **Events completed at the end of 2025**

Leaf Pile, Food Bank and Park in the Dark all went well. Nicky sent a report to Go Parks London newsletter, where we received a good write up and photos. The food bank people were happy with the donations received

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## **Ongoing Activities**

### *Vegetable Garden*

Quiet at this time of year, but volunteers still attending

### *Bird Survey*

Lyndsay thanked the volunteers who reliably do the survey. It is proving very difficult to find anyone else to help out

### *Volunteer Hours*

Each group is to send their own numbers to Stella in the Park Office

### *Health Walks*

These have been advertised in our regular column in Newham Voices, hoping to attract some more participants. Thatcha suggested advertising in a new local cafe where some running groups meet. They may know people who would like, or prefer, to walk

*Litter picking* is continuing, but irregularly. Litter is not too much of a problem in colder weather

### *SINC status*

It is looking hopeful that the park will get an upgraded status when the Newham Local Plan is finalised

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## **Upcoming Events**

Orchard planting – 24th January

Eyes to the Skies – 27th February-1st March *Post-meeting note: this has been moved to 6-8 March*

World Book Day – 5th March

Newham Green fair – 4th May

ParkFest – 12th July

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## **Publicity and Media**

### *Newham Voices*

Lucia will write about Book Day, to Nicky for 15th February, and Dries will do an article for 15th March. Ron and Marion will ask Pete Henson, (Head Gardener) to write an article (or two), as he is a mine of knowledge about the garden

Our social media still receives a good amount of attention

### *Greeting Cards*

Cards showing some of our winning photos are available, contact Nicky – or go online here <https://friends-of-west-ham-park.teemill.com/>

We will consider whether to have all the winning pictures available as cards, and whether to purchase a small stock to be sold at ParkFest

A calendar was suggested again, as the Epping Forest group do quite well with theirs. However, Epping has a visitor centre and shop. We will look into the costs of production. Sales of this, or the cards, could possibly be handled by Rob at the ice cream van, or by Dries' wife when she has a stall at ParkFest

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

Nothing new to report

### **Newham Local Plan**

Alan and Jules attended a meeting last month, and will attend the next one on 4th February

### **CoLC Grant Funding Model**

Several of us attended the online meeting where CoLC were to explain how the Grant Funding model works and why they have moved to that from the former Deficit Funding model. The meeting was generally considered to have been rushed and quite unhelpful. We are still awaiting a reply to our letter asking our follow up questions

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### **Future Meeting Dates in 2026**

All meetings online by Teams, apart from the AGM in July

Thursday 12th March  
Thursday 14th May  
Thursday 9th July, AGM  
Thursday 17th September  
Thursday 12th November

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### **AOB**

Ron and Marion have been asked by a park user to provide information about how to start a friends group. The new group would be in Macedonia. Lyndsay and Roger, as founder members, agreed to discuss this with him, and explain what works in the UK. Ron and Marion to arrange contact

The meeting closed at 21.00