



# Friends of West Ham Park

## Friends of West Ham Park Meeting

**Thursday 12th March 2026 at 7.30pm**  
**Meeting by Video Conference**

### **Attendees**

Alan Cooper (Chair), Dries Indesteege (Deputy Chair), Ricky O'Garro (Senior Park Ranger), Susannah Behr (Head of Development and Partnership for North London Open Spaces CoLC), Roger Jones, Ron Innell, Marion Innell, Nicky Brown, Uta Saatz, Eugene Czauderna, Helen and Pat Mossop, Adoja Kwarteng and Lyndsay Jones

### **Apologies**

Charlotte Cook, Jules Maurice-Williams, John Rands, Ciaran O'Keefe (Formal Parks Manager), Lucia Rios-Steel, Pearl Sanders, who joined later after IT problems

---

### **Introduction**

Alan welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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

Uta noted that she does a regular litter pick every week, just not on a fixed day. Dries also does a regular litter pick. Otherwise the minutes from the meeting on 15th January 2026 were agreed as a correct record

### **Treasurer's Report**

We have £2899.86 in hand, no change since the last meeting. Nicky has another £10 from the sales of the photo greeting cards, and Dries has received a full refund from the supplier of the sub-standard box for the children's library. It was agreed a new book box would be purchased to replace the sub-standard one when it inevitably falls apart. The £224.11 refund was transferred back into the Friends' bank account

---

### **Report from Senior Ranger**

Ricky was pleased to report that the refurbishment of the toilets was now complete, as is the work at 1 Margery Lodge. Ranger Peter Brandon has moved in and is happy with the finished result. 2 Margery Lodge will also be refurbished, but with a standard heating system, as it is not part of the CoLC low energy system trial

Ricky thanked those involved for their work in providing the Children's Little Library, which is already proving very popular with a rapid turnover of books

The overspend in the budget of £100,000 to provide Park Guard security services has been covered from a CoLC contingency fund. No arrangements have been made for this year, but CoLC have assured us that staff and public will not be left vulnerable. The problems of summer 2025 seem to have abated

A new biodiversity area is being created in the centre of the running track. This is funded by a carbon renewables project. The area will be a fenced shrubbery, kept appropriately trimmed. It will be planted by local school children and volunteers in the near future

A tree will be planted by the outgoing chair of the WHP Management Committee, Caroline Haines, as is usual

Ricky thanked those volunteers involved with the maintenance and replanting of the orchard, which is now looking much healthier. The work is ongoing, and some more trees will be planted on the next work day, which is Saturday 11 April

A new contractor has been appointed to maintain water play area, and it is hoped that it will be open and in use soon

The hedge around the playground is coming into leaf, most of the plants seem to be growing well. The fence around the hedge is being installed and should be finished soon

---

### **Presentation by Susannah Behr (slide pack attached)**

Susannah explained her role, and her plans to make the Grant Funding model work for WHP. CoLC will still give a substantial grant, and Susannah will look to create relationships with possible donors and seek out grant funding. Her first project is to try for a grant from Veolia, the landfill company, who have a fund for permanent features in public spaces. The grant would be for the replanting of South Meadow. Grants are awarded quarterly and she is hoping to have completed the application for the next submission window in April.

She emphasised the importance in the grant application for volunteer and community involvement in the project as well as public consultation. She had recently circulated a survey to identify park user and volunteer views on the project. The results received to date are shown in the slide pack. A short discussion took place on the Friends Group's views

We agreed to provide some additional text for her to include in the submission on the Friends Group activities and involvement in the project

---

### **Future planning**

#### *ParkFest 26*

The first planning meeting with Ricky and CoLC staff took place on 30th January.

We plan a similar event to last year, with a few more stalls from appropriate local enterprises. Roger reported that good progress was being made with musicians, catering, stall holders as well as the fire service and police attending. Capital Kids Cricket and Tennis Coaching had been confirmed. Su and Lyndsay had agreed a plan for children's craft activities. The event will be opened by the Pearly King and Queen of Forest Gate

Our application for a grant from the Lyle Local Fund: Newham, had not been successful and the grant options were being investigated

The next planning meeting with CoLC will be on 27th March to confirm progress and review the Event documentation

Roger again 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

#### *Green Fair*

This has changed again and will now be held on Sunday 7th June in Stratford Park. We could have a stall to promote ourselves, ParkFest and the photo competition. Please let Alan know if you are available to help at this event

### *World Book Day*

A good event, organised by Thatcha and the Learning Team.  
Signing for the two boxes has been designed and will be put up shortly

### *Grant Applications*

To complete the terms of the grant for planting around the mounds, we need to submit a report on sightings of early pollinators. Lyndsay asked everyone to keep an eye out for insects visiting the areas and let her know. Precise identifications are not needed!

### *Eyes to the Skies*

Unfortunately the weather was complete cloud on both evenings. The birdwatching attracted about 15 people, who all enjoyed the walk around and general chat about birds and nature

---

## **Ongoing Activities**

### *Orchard Maintenance*

As discussed, the next working day will be Saturday 11th April

### *Vegetable Garden*

All going well. The volunteers are also willing to help with other park projects

### *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.  
A record of hours donated is important for grant applications

### *Health Walks*

Adoja, attending our meeting for the first time today, has joined the walking group and is standing for election to Newham Council in the May elections

*Litter picking* is continuing, Uta does a collection every week. 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

---

## **Upcoming Events**

*Food Bank Collection* – 18th April, 13.00-15.00 on the Bandstand

*Newham Green Fair* – 7th June, time TBC, Stratford Park

*ParkFest 26* – 12th July

---

## **Publicity and Media**

Interest continues to be steady

### *Newham Voices*

Ron will write an article, for the May edition, about Admiral John Elliot who owned the park before Dr Fothergill. Head Gardener Peter Henson will be asked to write articles for June, and Roger will write about ParkFest for July. A group visit is being arranged to the London Archives, and this may provide material for another article

---

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

Nothing new to report

## **Newham Local Plan**

Alan attended a meeting on 4th February. The question is whether the Nursery site is to be classified with the park as green space. The Inspector's decision will not be known until later in the Spring. It is then for Newham to finalise the Plan and submit to the Secretary of State for final approval

## **CoLC Grant Funding Model**

We are still awaiting a reply to our letter asking our follow up questions. Alan and Dries will discuss how to take this forward

Dries asked if the replacement benches would be included in the grant application that Susannah is working on. They are not, and Susannah feels that they should come from other funding, possibly local donations as commemorative items. They cost up to £4,000 each. The CoLC Legal Dept are trying to work out a process to enable such donations

---

## **Future Meetings**

All meetings online by Teams, apart from the AGM in July, which will be held on the Bandstand. Everyone welcome to come to our meetings

Thursday 14th May

Thursday 9th July, AGM

Thursday 17th September

Thursday 12th November

---

## **AOB**

Ron asked about holding another food bank donation event. This was agreed by Ricky. See under Upcoming events above

The meeting closed at 20.55