



Friends of West Ham Park

Friends of West Ham Park Meeting

**Thursday 14th May 2026 at 7.30pm
Additional Tree Report**

Presentation by David Humphrys, Arboricultural Manager North London Open Spaces, CoLC to the Friends of West Ham Park May 2026

There are around 30,000 trees on the North London data base, monitored for general health, which is enabling an assessment of how the various species are dealing with climate change. This also helps to decide on the choice of species when any new trees are to be planted.

West Ham Park has many old and particularly special trees, both unusual species and commemorative planting. The condition of many of them is a cause for concern, especially as they get older. We have been aware of the problems for our park trees for some time now: soil compaction; warmer weather; more erratic rainfall causing run off and water not being able to reach the roots.

The London Plane, one of the most abundant trees in WHP, has always been considered to be a species able to cope with climate change quite well. It is a hybrid between the Oriental and American Planes (*Platanis orientalis* x *P. occidentalis*) which generally gives it hybrid vigour in a variety of climates. The Planes in WHP, however, are not doing well. Massaria disease affects weaker trees and causes limb loss. Increasing numbers of infected limbs are being found. Three trees have been selected for monitoring, with sensors placed around the roots and in the tree tops. Two have had soil improvement work around the roots and the third is left untreated as a control.

Specialists from Kew Gardens have looked at the present and possible London Treescape for the next 100 years, and compiled a list of species most likely to do well, which include the Limes (*Tilaria* genus). The Maples (*Acer* genus), are less able to cope. WHP has many of these around the bandstand and in the avenues, some of which are really struggling now. Large leaved trees are increasingly important for shade as the climate warms and it is important to find a way to help these species.

Alan asked what management measures can be used to help the trees. David suggested spreading composted leaves back around the trees, taking measures to relieve compaction, which can be challenging, and more soil sampling to identify any specific lack of nutrients. He also highlighted the importance of keeping dead wood on site, and everyone agreed that the fallen logs and dead hedges around the park added to the interest as well as benefitting wildlife.