



Friends of West Ham Park

Friends of West Ham Park Meeting

**Thursday 14th May 2026 at 7.30pm
Meeting by Video Conference**

Attendees

Alan Cooper (Chair), Dries Indesteege (Deputy Chair), Ricky O'Garro (Senior Park Ranger), Ciaran O'Keefe (Formal Parks Manager), David Humphreys (CoLC Arboricultural Manager North London Open Spaces), Roger Jones, Ron Innell, Marion Innell, Nicky Brown, Uta Saatz, Eugene Czauderna, Pearl Sanders Lucia Rios-Steele and Lyndsay Jones.

Apologies

None

Introduction

Alan welcomed everyone to the meeting, and Introduced David Humphreys, who gave us a very interesting update on the condition of the park's trees. This is attached as a separate document

Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes from the meeting on 12th March 2026 were agreed to be correct.

Treasurer's Report

The charge for renewal of our website and domain name is £357 for the next two years. This leaves £2776.68 in hand. Our estimated costs for ParkFest is approx. £1500 - £2000, the largest cost being the soft play area. So far we have not been successful in obtaining any grants, although several applications have been made.

Report from Senior Ranger

Ricky reported that Lee Matthews has transferred from the Gardeners team to the Rangers, and has moved into one of the lodges. A new Gardener is being recruited.

Unusually dry wether has meant that all staff have spent a lot of time on watering.

Park Guard are now employing one person from 7am until 3pm and two from 11am until closing time. This is the most cost effective combination. Their presence is essential as problems with vandalism, drug use, and anti social behaviour are increasing. This is a district wide problem, not confined to WHP, and many other unstaffed parks are having greater problems. Ciaran reported that CoLC had been persuaded to cover the cost of Park Guard last year, and assurance is being sought for the costs for this year. The fact that Park Guard are uniformed and have body cams is an effective deterrent, and their support is reassuring for the Park Rangers.

Outgoing committee chair, Caroline Haines, planted a Silver-leaved Lime tree on Margery Field. This is a species resilient to climate change .

The replacement of the benches has stalled while the funding of Park Guard is decided.

ParkFest 26

Roger thanked Alan, Nicky and Joel for their help whilst he was away.

Preparations for the event are going well at present. There has been some late interest in taking a stall. We can now only accommodate suitable stalls who can bring their own gazebos.

Ron reported that the Pearly King and Queen of Stonebridge Park (North London) are to join the Pearlies from Forest Gate to open the event.

The Photo Competition is launched and there are 32 entries so far. Nicky held a low-key trial photo workshop.

We will need to get larger supply of leaflets printed. Rob and his staff are giving them out from the ice cream van, and there is a lot of interest.

Banners, and lighter coloured backdrops for the bandstand are in hand. Last year it was difficult to get good photos of the bands against the current dark coloured backdrop.

The formal invitation list was agreed. Guests will be made aware that there will not be any kind of formal reception. The formal invites will come from Alan. He and Roger will agree arrangements. Next meeting with CoLC will be 1st June.

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. However, the organisers have asked for stalls to have activities. We agreed that we already plan two children's activities for ParkFest and did not want to duplicate these. It may be possible to share a stall with other groups Alan will look into this. Alan noted who would be available to help on the day, thanks to all.

Book Box

The children's box is proving enormously popular. Dries has had to repair it already.

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 for one more month. Thanks to those who have submitted sightings. Ciaran was asked whether Susannah had had any success obtaining a grant from Veolia for work on South Meadow. Unfortunately not, but she is looking for other sources of grants.

Ongoing Activities

Orchard Maintenance

This is keeping the Orchard looking much healthier and more attractive. Thanks to Ranger Chris and volunteer Chris.

Vegetable Garden

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

Bird Survey

Lucia and her school class had been very excited to hear a Blackcap singing. These small warblers are fairly frequent visitors to the park

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

Continuing as normal.

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

SINC status

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

Several Friends went on a guided visit to the London Archive. This was very interesting

Upcoming Events

Newham Green Fair – 7th June, time TBC, Forest Lane Park

ParkFest 26 – 12th July

Publicity and Media

Interest continues to be steady

Newham Voices

Ron wrote an article, for the June edition, about Admiral Sir John Elliot who owned the park before Dr Fothergill.

Alan wrote an article about the visit to the London Archives for the May edition.

Roger will write about ParkFest for July.

Head Gardener Peter Henson will be asked to write an article for later in the year.

Links and Affiliations with other Environmental Groups

The LFGN Group has been re-organised following the withdrawal of support by CPRE due to funding limitations. The next meeting is on 26th May.

Otherwise, nothing new to report.

CoLC Grant Funding Model

Alan has received a response to our questions, which has been circulated.

No guarantees of funding have been given, but it seems that there is no intention to allow the park to get into financial difficulty

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 9th July, AGM

Thursday 17th September

Thursday 12th November

AOB

Ciaran thanked those who attended the World Book Day event and made it an enjoyable event.

The meeting closed at 20.55.