



Friends of West Ham Park

Friends of West Ham Park Meeting

Thursday 9th July 2026 at 7.00pm

Meeting on The Bandstand, West Ham Park

Attendees

Alan Cooper (Chair), Dries Indesteege (Deputy Chair), Ricky O'Garro (Senior Park Ranger), Joel Farrell, Nicky Brown, Roger Jones, Ron Innell, Marion Innell, Helen Mossop, Pat Mossop, Eugene Czauderna, Uta Saatz, Charlotte Cook, Su Leever, Lucia Rios-Steele, Pearl Saunders, John Rands, Ian McDondald, Des Blake, and Lyndsay Jones

Apologies

Jules Maurice-Williams, Adoja Kwarteng, newly elected Newham Councillor

Introduction

Alan welcomed everyone to the meeting. He mentioned how the current heatwave has demonstrated, again, the value of the park to the local population

Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes from the meeting on 14 May 2026 were agreed as a correct record.

Treasurer's Report

We have £2756.50 in hand, with one further bill to pay in relation to ParkFest. Steven Innell has dealt with the renewal of our website etc, and has kindly donated the fees due. We are very grateful to him for his help and his generosity

Report from Senior Park Ranger

The London in Bloom judging took place on 23 June. Ricky thought that the judge was impressed, especially by the volunteer work in the vegetable garden. Results will be announced at an event in October which also marks 30 years of the Green Flag scheme

The park will open at 6am on 19 July for the start of the annual London to Southend cycle ride. About 1000 cyclists will take part

Our trees are again under a lot of stress caused by the heatwaves and lack of rain. There has been some limb drop, and some of the older trees are coming to the natural end of their lives and will have to be felled. Some of the Sycamores have succumbed to the Sooty Bark Fungus, which can cause respiratory problems for humans, and these will have to be felled and removed. We are waiting for advice on which species to plant to replace these trees. There is ongoing research into suitable hybrids to try to retain the traditional appearance of the park

The planting around the mounds and playground is doing well. Ricky thanked FWHP volunteers for the ongoing weeding of the playground hedgerow

The Orchard has been greatly improved, thanks to those who join the monthly working parties under the guidance of Ranger Chris

The area fenced off in the middle of the running track will be planted with shrubs beneficial to wildlife, once the cooler weather comes. There will be school and public involvement in the planting

A sink hole has appeared at South Gate. It is being remedied and the gate will reopen as soon as possible. The cause is expected to be loss of ground water in the drought and heatwave

Publicity and Media

Newham Voices

Charlotte will write about the bands performing at ParkFest for the August edition. Lyndsay and Lucia will write about the background of FWHP as it is our 20th anniversary year linked to the Green Flag judging and award, for September

Articles need to be with Nicky by 15th of the previous month

ParkFest –12th July 2026

Roger thanked everyone for all their help in planning this event, especially Nicky for all the publicity work, and Charlotte, and Andy from the Funk Crawl band, for coordinating the music. Roger has issued detailed plans of how it will work, and it was agreed that everyone knew what to do on the day. He asked everyone to be on the lookout for any possible problems or trouble, and to alert the rangers or Park Guard immediately. Hopefully this will not be necessary

Ongoing Activities

- *Vegetable Garden.* All continues to be well in the garden and new volunteers continue to join the group. Eugene will have the garden open for ParkFest
 - *Health Walks and Litter Picking* are ongoing. Park Primary will be sending each year group out once this term. The Brownies have also done a litter pick
 - *The Bird Survey* is continuing, but Lyndsay has been unsuccessful in finding any suitable new volunteers. It was agreed that she would arrange an introductory session to explain the technique, and Dries and Uta expressed willingness to help after some training
 - *The Exchange Library* and reading bench continue to be popular, and the Children's Book Box is getting a lot of business. If the boxes are full, please leave the books in the Park Office, and Dries will add them when there is room
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Links and Affiliations with other Environmental Groups

The Newham Green Fair was moved to Forest Lane Park. Uta reported that there had been a good amount of interest in FWHP and ParkFest

The upgrade of the Park's SINC status to Borough, rather than Local importance, still rests with LB Newham. We await their updated Local Plan

Nicky has made contact with Transition Newham, a user group who may want to work with us. She will follow up on this

John Rands urged everyone to sign the petition for traffic calming on Portway, following another recent accident. Most people had already done this

Grant Applications

We have no grant applications pending at the moment. We need to seek grants to enable next year's ParkFest to go ahead if no help can be provided by CoLC

The proposed replanting to South Meadow does not yet have a fully developed scheme which could be used to seek grant funding

Future Events

Dries suggested a Christmas Market, but it was generally felt that there are lots of these now stall holders would be unlikely to make enough sales in the park

- ParkFest - 12th July
 - Bat Walks - Fridays 28th August and 25th September
 - Leaf Pile - Sunday 15th November - leaves permitting!
 - Park in the Dark - Friday 4th December.
 - The Learning Team will hold the Spooky Trail on Halloween. Entry fee will be one item for the Food Bank. Other Food Bank collection dates will be decided after Christmas
 - FWHP are 20 years old! A social event is suggested, possibly at the Red House. A provisional date of 24th September was agreed
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Future Meeting Dates in 2024

Second Thursday every other month.

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

Thursday 17th September

Thursday 12th November

Thursday 14th January

Thursday 11th March

Thursday 13th May

Thursday 8th July (AGM)

AOB

Des Blake talked about Plaistow Eco Hub, and his wish to promote a local history project. He was asked to come back to us with a more detailed proposal

Ricky repeated his thanks to us all for our help and support, and Roger thanked the park staff on our behalf, as none of us could do what we do without each other

Annual General Meeting

Alan said that his first year as Chair had been less daunting than he had feared, because we all work together as a team. He thanked everyone, and especially the park staff and Stella, for facilitating the use of their Teams system for our online meetings. He observed that all our activities are well attended. The visit to the London Archive had been very informative, and worth repeating. He expressed support and sympathy for the unfortunate events that the Rangers have had to deal with, including a sudden death and some serious vandalism. It is good to have the support of Park Guard. We still do not know whether CoLC will fund this service, and other projects, including replacement of the seat-less benches, is delayed until the funding situation is known.

We have been involved in the consultation for the Newham Local Plan, and have responded to the latest proposed version, which still does not make the classification of the Nursery Site clear.

Alan then handed over to the Meetings Secretary.

Lyndsay read out the list of current roles, and asked whether anyone wanted any changes. Everyone agreed to continue as before.

Current roles are:

Chair, Alan; Deputy Chair, Dries; Treasurer, Marion; Events and Education, Lucia; Communications, Nicky; Nursery Site Coordinator, Jules; External Liaison, Roger and Alan; Membership Secretary, Ron; Meetings Secretary, Lyndsay.

The minutes of the AGM held in 2025 were agreed as a correct account.

The meeting closed at 20.55.