



The Friends of West Ham Park

Newsletter ❁ May 2020

Hello Firstly we hope that you are all keeping well and coping with the restrictions and confinement caused by the Covid 19 pandemic.

The park is a vital open space for our area and we are grateful that the management team have been able to keep the park open almost as much as usual. We hope that you are all enjoying the beauty of the park and garden as much as possible within the social distancing rules.



No one will be surprised to hear that we were not able to hold our meeting planned for 7th May. We have had to put all our planned activities on hold, but don't worry, they will be back once it is safe to be together again.

We have no more idea than anyone as to when community events will be permitted again, but if there is any chance of holding our annual "Newham's Biggest Leaf Pile", you can be sure that both FWHP and the park staff will be keen to make it happen. This is also true of our other big winter event "Park in the Dark".

We are also hoping to hold our annual Bat Walks in August and September. Full details of dates and times of these will be published once we can be certain they will be able to go ahead. Watch our website for details as well as Facebook and Twitter.



In Memory of Abdul Karim Sheikh

We were shocked and saddened to hear of the loss of Abdul. He was a true friend and supporter of the park. He was always both inquisitive and very supportive and has supported the Group through his tireless attendance at meetings and supporting events. Even with so many other calls on his time he always attended meetings and took an active interest in the Group's work, which was so appreciated by everyone involved.

The Park is a valuable, and much loved, resource for the community it serves, especially in the current pandemic position. His support will be greatly missed.

He will be truly missed by all those whose lives he touched and by the wider community in Newham.

West Ham Park Vegetable Garden

At the end of February and beginning of March 2020 the West Ham Park vegetable garden was thriving. There were five regulars at our Tuesday afternoon sessions. We were working in close co-operation with Andrea, a park employee, who had drawn up an outline-planting plan, so there was some idea of what we wished to put and where. Lucy, the park manager had asked us to set up a Saturday session in the garden for 7th March. This we did and all our regulars came along. We had a number of visitors including several mothers with young children; we were very pleased to be able to explain what we were doing and show off the garden. Then, of course the lockdown was announced. As several of our number are vulnerable to the virus, or live with people who are, it was inevitable that they would decide that the risk was too great to spend any



time in the garden. Others of us found that the garden was actually a convenient place to self-isolate, as there was much less chance of a random encounter with a member of the public. And so we managed to sow virtually all of what we had planned to sow. A number of plants had been pre grown in pots and so had a head start. One of the challenges was the lack of rain in the last half of April which necessitated frequent watering. Fortunately since we now had a tap on site this was made easier for us. We also found ourselves answering various queries including how to set up a wormery and looking after a baby squirrel!

Thanks to Lucy and Andrea and all the other staff in the park for planning and encouragement and to Pat and Helen, Su and Alan, Jan and Dawn for all their hard work both before and after the lockdown. Here's to a successful vegetable garden when things get back to whatever normality will be afterwards!



Doctor Fothergill

We have received a grant from the City of London to make a permanent exhibition of our project "The Legacy of Dr Fothergill", and this will be installed in the Rose Garden, probably next summer. It includes historical information, maps and beautiful Eighteenth Century botanical drawings. We will hold an event to launch the exhibition and show you where to see the plants and flowers in today's garden.

Wildlife Gardens

The schools programme, which FWHP assist the Park's education officer to deliver, will also be back when it is safe. FWHP take care of the Wildlife Garden near to Main Gate. It may be a bit too wild when we are able to work there together again, but it will be interesting to see what nature has done with it!





West Ham Park

Registered Charity

Park update

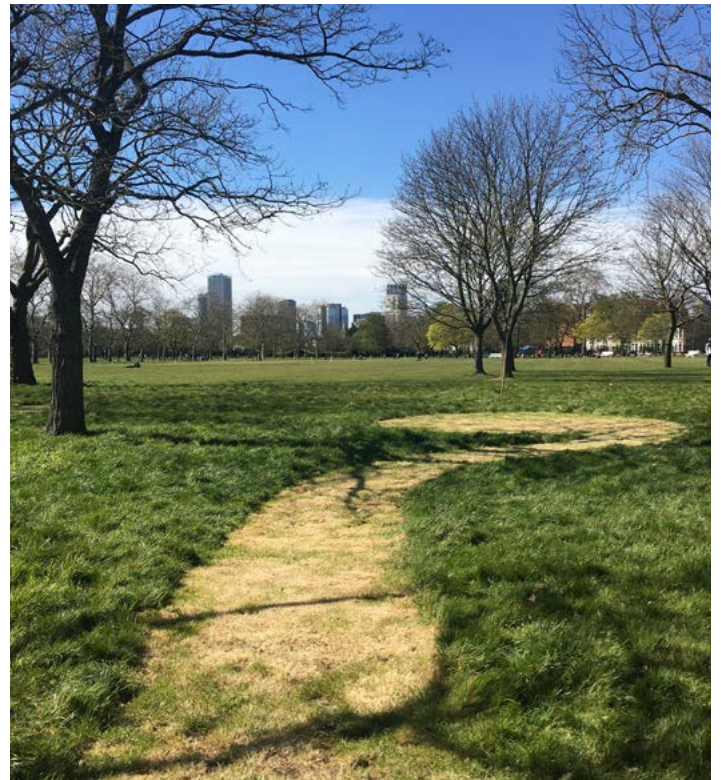
Firstly a big thank you to everyone who has been following government guidance, using the park for their daily exercise, being kind and smiling! The children that drew a colourful rainbow

in chalk by the office

thanking staff for keeping the park open brightened our day, well month really. It has been an interesting challenge to manage the park during a global pandemic - we have closed facilities as instructed and created new walking routes around the gardens to direct the flow of people who visit daily to see the gardens as they come alive with blossom and summer flowers.

Closing time has been maintained at 6:30pm due to a reduced number of staff working because of the virus. The park becomes busier in the afternoon and we were having issues with visitors not following government guidance. The Safer Neighbourhood teams and Met Police have been a brilliant support and have been regularly patrolling the park on sunny afternoons to enforce government guidelines to move people on, keep numbers within the park manageable and enable us to stay open.

Our office is closed but our team are working away behind the scenes... before lockdown began we consulted on the detailed design for the playground refurbishment project. Comments regarding gate entrances, provision of shade, fence height, bin provision were all incorporated



into the design which is due to be submitted to Newham Council for planning approval in June. Funding applications have also been submitted. We are doing our best to keep the project on track and hope to still be able to this winter and have a new playground ready for opening in 2021, but will keep you updated as things progress.

We were also intending on holding engagement sessions regarding the future of the nursery site between March and May, however this has obviously not been possible. We are hoping to be in a position to carry this out later this autumn. Other events and activities that we had planned for spring and early summer have also been cancelled.

Following on from Mondays announcement by the Prime Minister we have been looking into reopening some of our sporting facilities, following guidance from the Government as well as our sporting partners such as the Law Tennis Association. We will hopefully have the tennis courts open and some one-on-one coaching from TennisCome True happening from **Saturday 16th May**. Courts can be booked via clubspark.lta.org.uk/WestHamPark. All other facilities are currently closed.

Twitter is the best way to keep up to speed with what's happening in the park on a daily basis, you can also find updates on the website or contact us via email park.gardens@cityoflondon.gov.uk.

Once again thank you for your support. Keep safe.



Keep up to date with the latest news from the Friends of West Ham Park
friendsofwesthampark.btck.co.uk

