

# **Friends of West Ham Park**

## **Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015**

### **The Scout Hut, Evesham Road**

#### **Attendees:**

Ron Innell (Chairman), Roger Jones (Vice Chairman), Martin Rodman (Parks and Gardens Superintendent), Lucy Murphy (Park Manager), Paul Thompson (Support Officer Outreach, Sustainability and Biodiversity), Nicky Brown, Jan Kearsley, Khadiza Choudhury, Pat Mossop, Helen Mossop, Lyndsay Jones

#### **Apologies:**

Joel Farrell, Jo Barker, Mary Edmondson

#### **Introduction:**

Ron welcomed everyone, and introduced Lucy and Paul to the Friends. We welcome them both and hope they will enjoy their new jobs.

We all send our best wishes to Sue Banks, who's baby girl, Olivia Elizabeth, arrived safely at the end of January.

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

Minutes from 27<sup>th</sup> November 2014 had been circulated previously by email and were agreed to be correct.

#### **Park Update**

Martin reported that the Committee had examined all the options for creating a café in one of the park buildings, or in a "pop-up" kiosk, but all had been found unable to provide an adequate return on the investment. The lease for the current provider, Frank with his ice-cream van, is due for renewal in November, and an extended mobile service will be tendered for. Frank may well be keen to take this on.

There are a number of projects in the pipeline, connected with the "Active Newham" campaign, which could see the park become a sporting hub for the borough. Other partners include the Lawn Tennis Association and West Ham Cricket Club. This will see the remaining tennis courts resurfaced to the standard of those recently improved, and provision of quality sports coaching for all, especially disadvantaged children. Details and funding available should be known by mid-summer.

There is also a "learning offer" project involving all the City's open spaces, of which more news to follow.

#### **Recent Events**

Park in the Dark. The event went well, but the choir failed to turn up. However, an offer has been received for next year from the choir of Park Primary school, so we shall give them a try.

RSPB Big Birdwatch event. 23 people turned up for this event, held the week before the RSPB event, and took home the forms to take part in the Big Birdwatch. A group of redwings, chaffinches and goldfinches, and a lone fieldfare, obligingly hung around near the leaf yard, and everyone got a good look at them.

Second Stargazing Event. Unfortunately the night was cloudy, but most people who had booked turned up and seemed interested in the indoor presentation. Pete Day from NuSound Radio came along, and did a feature for the following week's Community Hour slot on the radio, which gave the Park and the Friends some good publicity.

### **Working with the 11<sup>th</sup> Newham West Scout Group**

Roger had been along to a meeting of the Cub Scouts (7 – 10 year olds), and presented a summary of the discussion. This had proved very useful. We were joined by Samantha Starling-Fletcher the Cub leader, and the ideas were discussed in detail.

Sam would also like us to hold a bat walk for all the Cubs in the County, and the practicalities of this were discussed and a date of 18 September was proposed, to be confirmed.

### **Future Events**

There were lots of ideas for future events, and Lucy and Paul were very enthusiastic and had many suggestions. There is a lot of interest in featuring both our wild and "domesticated" bees, and in a variety of sporting events, including Conker Matches. A decision was deferred until the next meeting, and it was agreed that the Friends would follow up some ideas in an email discussion before the next meeting.

### **Bird Survey**

The bird survey team is still working well.

Lyndsay is preparing the annual report for 2014 and hopes to have it ready soon.

### **Dates for the diary:**

Following the Cubs' suggestions, our Leaf Pile Day will be Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

Park in the Dark will be Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December

Summer events are still to be decided.

### **Dates of future meetings**

Thursday April 30<sup>th</sup> – to decide about summer events.

The following dates are provisional and will be confirmed in April:

AGM Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November

### **AOB**

Pat asked for an update on the recent tree survey and consequent work carried out, which

Martin provided. It was agreed that the Friends would be updated on the new tree strategy when it is completed.

Sam offered the help of the Cubs and Scouts with any suitable outdoor tasks.

In response to Ron's request for more opportunity to do "hands-on" work, Paul discussed the possibility of Friends helping with a general tidy of the wildlife garden by East Lodge, and all present were keen to help. It was agreed that numbers would need to be restricted as it is a small site and has a pond.

Ron thanked everyone for their input, and closed the meeting at 8.30pm