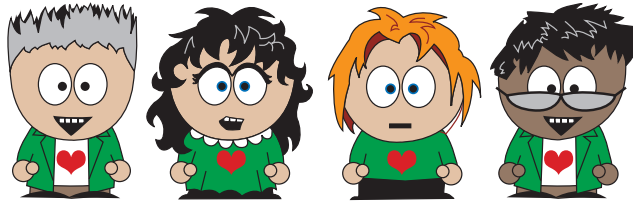


FRIENDS of WEST HAM PARK



WE ♥ WEST HAM PARK

Thursday 17th September
Scout Hut, Evesham Road

Attendees

Roger Jones (Vice Chairman), Lucy Murphy (Park Manager), Paul Thompson (Support Officer Outreach, Sustainability and Biodiversity), Nicky Brown, Jan Kearsey, Khadiza Choudhury, Pat Mossop, Helen Mossop, Lyndsay Jones, Jo Barker, Nikki Fowler, Ron Smith, Christopher Owens, Dini Patel

Apologies

Ron Innell, Joel Farrell, Marlene Sidaway

Introduction

Roger Jones, in the chair, welcomed everyone.

Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes from the AGM, 4th June 2015 had been circulated previously by email, but were not available at this meeting. It was agreed that they mostly concerned planning for the summer event, and would be formally agreed at our next meeting.

Park Update

Lucy reported that cricket has been very popular over the summer, and the park had also hosted 30 school sports days. Football pitch charges have changed, and we now have two adult teams playing regularly and a junior coaching scheme operating. A grant from the Lawn Tennis Association will allow the remaining tennis courts resurfaced to the standard of those recently improved, and more coaching courses will be offered.

Summer concerts held at the bandstand included Brazilian music and Jazz, both of which proved more popular than the traditional brass bands.

Our long serving gardener, Liam, is retiring and his post will be filled as soon as possible. The Friends all wish him well for the future.

Lucy thanked the Friends for our help in organising events, bat walks and the wildlife garden visits having been very popular.

Recent Events

Summer Event. This had been quite successful in spite of poor weather. The Wildlife charities who attended were happy with the numbers of people who visited their stalls. We felt that the stalls should all have been closer together and that our usual site by the playground worked better. Visits to the Wildlife Garden for pond dipping and mini-beast hunting were very popular.

Bat Walks. These were well attended as always, and the bats turned up on cue. We note that walks should be held towards the end of the month, when sunset and Park closing times are closer

together, to avoid people having to wait around for the bats to arrive.

Paul thanked everyone who had helped with the “60 Second Survey”.

Future Events

Roles and Responsibilities

We need to reduce WHP staff costs at our events where possible. One option is to have our own qualified First Aider. Several people would be happy to do this. Lucy will look into arranging a course. Staff from Hampstead Heath could run this for her.

Cub Scouts Bat Walk, Friday 18th September.

This is all organised, with an experienced leader from Hampstead Heath coming along, as well as Friends members. Six helpers were needed, identified as Paul, Roger, Nicky, Pat, Helen and Lyndsay.

Leaf Pile, Sunday 15th November.

At the Cubs' suggestion, we are holding the event on a Sunday rather than our usual Saturday. We will make one big pile this year rather than make the event a competition. Lyndsay, Jo and Nicky will sort out a craft activity, “Autumn Aliens”. Following discussion it was agreed not to consider refreshments for this event. The team of Keepers on duty on the day will already know how this event works.

Park in the Dark, Friday 4th November

Lyndsay will check supplies for this event, to allow plenty of time for more to be ordered.

Lucy and Paul explained that Park By-Laws do allow the Friends to raise funds for the group or for specific uses in the Park. They suggested that we could sell drinks and snacks. Friends, Jan especially, felt that charging for refreshments at Park in the Dark was neither practical nor desirable. Dini suggested that we could ask for voluntary contributions, as this works well at the running events held in the Park. A discussion about fundraising followed, with Nikki explaining various options which we could adopt. Everyone agreed to look at these ideas and have a further discussion at our next meeting.

Future role of the Friends group

We need to consider recruiting more active members, and we all welcomed the input from new members present at the meeting. We should also consider what our target market is, and what we can learn from other groups, as well as considering what the Park management would like us to provide or help with.

Nikki introduced the “Yonder” Forum, started in E20, which would be a useful place to promote our events.

Lucy and Paul would like us to identify people who can take a leading role in specific areas, e.g. sports, fundraising, so that they are able to pass information to the right person. They would also like us to consider working more closely with other groups of Park users, e.g. the health walkers and community gardeners, to try and relieve staff of some of these duties. It was agreed that we would discuss our ideas at the next meeting. Lucy also suggested that we make contact with the Friends of the City Gardens. She will find the date of their AGM.

Dates for the diary

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

Park in the Dark will be Friday 4th December

Summer events are still to be decided.

Dates of future meetings

It was decided to try and vary the day of our meetings, which might make it possible for some other

interested people to come along. So the next meetings are:

Thursday 26th November 2015

Tuesday 16 February 2016

Thursday 21 April 2016

Tuesday 21 June 2016

Thursday 22 September 2106

Tuesday 22 November 2016

Options for creating a more sustainable West Ham Park

Lucy explained that the City funding is solely from interest on assets, so has been hit by the current low interest rates. West Ham Park has some extra protection, as it serves a deprived area. However, all aspects of the organisation are under scrutiny for possible savings.

The Nursery is no longer sustainable and is losing money. There has been a reduction in demand for floral displays at Guildhall functions. It has been decided that the Nursery will close after 2016 summer bedding season. The site is six acres, and is classified as brownfield land. As yet no decision has been made as to its future, except that it needs to generate an income for the park. There will be a full consultation process, and the views of the Friends are actively sought. We are also asked to reassure anyone who asks that no immediate building work is not about to commence, and that consultation will be started soon.

Roger thanked Lucy for being so open with the Friends about possible options.

AOB

There was no other business.

Roger thanked everyone for their input, reminding us about the matters to be considered for our next meeting, and closed the meeting at 8.30pm