



# London Friends of Green Spaces Network

On-line Coordinating Meeting held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021

**Attending:** Friends Groups/Forums/Organisations reps: Dave Morris – *LFGN Chair* (Lordship Rec, Haringey Forum), Adrian Stannard – *Note Taker* (Lloyd Park, Waltham Forest), Alona Sheridan – *LFGN Biodiversity* (Mayow Park, and Lewisham Forum), Suzanne Morpurgo (Brent Parks Forum), Symon Knightswood (Hilly Fields Park, and Lewisham Forum), Alice Roberts (Campaign to Protect Rural England [London] and Hackney Downs), Tony Leach (Parks for London), Larry Herbert (Bromley Parks Forum), Antonia Savvides (Harrow Parks Forum), Laura Collins – *LFGN Support* (Go Parks, and Figge’s Marsh [Merton]), Monika Sudek (Sydenham Parks and Lewisham Forum), Stephen Mills (Harrow Parks Forum), Peter Woodward (Chislehurst Common, Bromley), Pasquali, Mark (White Webbs, Enfield), Julie Covill (Bromley). **Apols:** Msc

1. **Minutes** of 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020 general meeting were agreed.

## 2. Working Groups / issues

- 2.1. **Nature and Biodiversity** – Alona reported that a leaflet with on one side Pathway to Biodiversity, and Simon Braidman had created Biodiversity Improvements on the other. Mark had done the visuals for the leaflet and it will be put on our website. A calendar of key annual event days had been produced. The calendar was designed in Word and circulated to Forums around the UK so each Forum could add if they wish their own dates to those already listed – to be added to [www.parkscommunity.org.uk](http://www.parkscommunity.org.uk). Others helped too and all involved were congratulated on their contributions.
- 2.2. **GIGL** [Greenspace Information for Greater London] monitors and compiles the official records about biodiversity across the capital. Dave spoke with them and is trying to arrange an initial meeting with our biodiversity group.
- 2.3. **Tony** reported a GLA-backed London Urban Forest Tree Strategy which is work being done by the Forestry Commission, GLA, TCV and Trees for Cities. They hope to increase tree planting in London. Have asked LFGN to support – Dave to liaise. Rolland reported Nature Heroes for Trees in Harrow have planted over 500 trees.
- 2.4. **Traffic in Parks** The Royal Parks are carrying out a consultation re removing roads through their parks. Tim (LGT and Go Parks) had drafted a leaflet/statement re cycling/cars etc in parks – Dave to check and circulate. Alice investigating cycling issues.
- 2.5. **Planning policy** – Roger (Barnet Forum) had drafted a document for the LFGN relating to national planning policies. Also one re protecting public access to open space i.e. around City Hall the open space is privately owned. A charter has been drafted by the Mayor of London. Alona and Suzanne volunteered to join planning working group.

## 3. Collaboration with other Organisations

- 3.1. **CPRE** – Is campaigning for 10 new parks to be created in London to stop neglected land being developed i.e. underused and fenced off land. A positive vision for the land will be put forward. More sites needed - let Alice [alice@cprelondon.org.uk](mailto:alice@cprelondon.org.uk) know and groups close to neglected space encouraged to start local campaigns to support the idea!
- 3.2. **GoParks** – The web site with all the London parks is now fully up and running. Every Friends group is urged to register and to add or update their details. Borough pages are being

created too, so every Borough Forum should get involved. GiGL is adding its biodiversity data, London Gardens Trust is adding its historical data. The GoParks team is liaising with local Borough Forums and Authorities to promote special walking and cycling links/events through their green spaces.

- 3.3. **London National Park City** – The concept is spreading over the world and it will encourage the greening of cities. Its latest initiative is to set up a Wiki site for London. It will have page authorisers. Dave has liaised. They are also recruiting for 50 more City Rangers.
- 3.4. **Mayoral Election** – the election is scheduled for May 6th (now confirmed). Groups should lobby candidates and get publicity using the A More Natural Capital manifesto which has been developed by a range of London organisations including us. Dave has been liaising for LFGN as part of that new alliance.
- 3.5. **London Plan** – The London Plan has at last been signed off by the Secretary of State and a guidance about green strategies will be published shortly. Boroughs will have to publish plans for Nature recovery and Urban Forest Plan.
- 3.6. **Financial crisis for parks services** - Boroughs are being forced to make even further budget cuts due to lack of Government support (failing to even reimburse in full for the extra covid-era responsibilities) and some parks staff are being made redundant. Statutory recognition and funding is needed to protect parks. A major report by Friends of the Earth last year called for an extra £5bn per year investment into parks across the UK. A new Park Manager's Forum has been created to act as a professional association to represent their views and call for more resources for parks. Dave is liaising with them as NFPGS chair. MPs have created a new All-Party Parliamentary Group for Parks and Green Spaces – they are keen to push for better recognition at Govt level. We ourselves need to lobby for more resources for parks. Councils will be looking to sell land or over-commercialise green spaces to make up short fall in their revenue. Groups need to be ever vigilant.

#### 4. Any Other Business

- 4.1. **Our Patch** – Laura stated she is publishing every 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the month. It is excellent – big thanks to Laura and those contributing. Each bulletin will feature a Borough Forum. Please can every Forum ensure they forward it to all groups in their borough.
- 4.2. **Social Media** – Mark updated our logo. Adrian reported he had amended the logos on TW, FB, Mailchimp and the Website. Laura activating our facebook page.
- 4.3. **National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces** – Dave reported that lottery funding had been applied for to ensure the vital work of the NFPGS and their [www.parkscommunity.org.uk](http://www.parkscommunity.org.uk) website (newly-transferred to come under the NFPGS umbrella) continues to grow to support the grassroots groups and activists. They want to set up a cohort of Forum/Regional reps from each region to promote better digital connectivity and collaboration throughout the movement. Rolland may be able to contribute. All local groups are encouraged to check out the website, and to fill in the new Better Friends Strength Checker - <https://parkscommunity.org.uk/betterfriends/> 160 groups have done so already and received a free special Report unique to their needs and issues. A meeting of UK area Friends Groups Forums was scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> Feb. [Update: 24 Forums and Networks representing up to 2000 local groups took part – minutes to be circulated].

5. **NEXT LFGN MEETINGS: Provisional dates [Mondays 6pm by zoom]:** 15<sup>th</sup> March [General]; 26<sup>th</sup> April [Coordination]; 7<sup>th</sup> June [General]; 19<sup>th</sup> July [Coordination]; 13<sup>th</sup> September [General]; 1<sup>st</sup> November [Coordination]. + Poss social on 13<sup>th</sup> December.