

# London Friends of Green Spaces Network [www.lfgn.org.uk](http://www.lfgn.org.uk)

## MINUTES OF LFGN GENERAL MEETING MONDAY 15.03.2021

**List of Attendees:** 29 reps from Friends Groups/Forums/Organisations: Dave Morris – *LFGN Chair* (Lordship Rec, Haringey Forum), Adrian Stannard – (Lloyd Park, Waltham Forest), Alona Sheridan – *LFGN Biodiversity* (Mayow Park, and Lewisham Forum), Suzanne Morpurgo (Brent Parks Forum and Tenterden and John Billam Sports Ground), Alice Roberts (Campaign to Protect Rural England [London] and Hackney Downs), Larry Herbert (Bromley Parks Forum and Keston Common), Laura Collins – *LFGN Support* (Go Parks, and Figge’s Marsh [Merton]), Monika Sudek (Sydenham Parks and Lewisham Forum), Peter Woodward (Chislehurst Common, Bromley), Simon Braidman – *took minutes* (Harrow Groups Forum), Pasquali, Mark (White Webbs, Enfield), Peter Remell (Tooting Common), Miriam (Caledonian Park Friends Group), Lucy Chancellor (Ruskin Park, Lambeth), Sharon (Richmond Biodiversity Project and Ham Lands), Roger and Lindsay (West Ham Park, Stratford), Tim Webb (London Gardens Trust and London National Park City), Jenny Chan (Islington Forum and Paradise Park), Catriona (Burgess Park and Southwark Forum), Pamela (Meadow Orchard and Haringey Parks Forum), Roger Chapman – *LFGN Planning Policies* (Barnet Green Spaces Forum and Cherry Tree Wood), Helen Monger (London Gardens Trust), Nick Lister (Wandsworth Common), Pam Lewis (Woodcock Park), Joanna Nim-Heung Yeung (Weir Hall Rd OS, Haringey), Antonia Savvides (Harrow Parks Forum and Pinner Village Gardens), Simon Walton (Friends of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens)

## AGENDA

- [Minutes](#) of last meeting
- KEY DISCUSSION: TRAFFIC IN OUR GREEN SPACES - how can we address issues regarding [cars](#) (see also [here](#)), [bikes](#) and walking? Please check out the linked draft reports.
- Collaboration with other London and national organisations - very brief updates (eg. May 2020 Elections Manifesto Coalition / GoParksLondon / Parks for London / National Park City / London Gardens Trust / CPRE London / National Federation (NFPGS))
- Other very brief LFGN updates - Quick Projects (eg biodiversity/planning/cycling/recycling/protection etc), Our Patch, Funding, Website/twitter/fb
- AOB, including date of next meetings (Coordination on 26 April, General/Discussion on 7 June)

**ITEM 1 Minutes of Meeting from last meeting December 2020** - accepted.

**ITEM 2 A general discussion of the issues of Cars and Bicycles in Parks** Alice and Dave introduced the issue, noting that some useful documents had been drafted and circulated beforehand by Alice and Tim (see our website).

**Cycling:** – increasing and generally actively encouraged. Challenge: Safety for all users, Straight paths on shared paths for pedestrian/cyclists encourage speeding. Constant disturbance can effect biodiversity. Motorbike/peds and scooters in parks can be hard to prevent access.

Potential Solutions: Cyclists considering alternative routes, sharing space, dropping pace, use of lights but LED lights at night can be too bright for pedestrians. Speed restriction (London-wide?) on shared paths, of maybe 5 or 10mph for everything on wheels. This is very doable especially for experienced cyclists and so could be included in cyclist proficiency training, designing paths to

discourage cut throughs. Signage to encourage cyclists to use bells. Many modern bikes do not have bells. Borough-wide bylaws do exist but not enforced. Having Bylaws and enforcing them only for problem users.

Notes: Shared use tended to reduce poor behaviour. Path needs to be wide enough to have shared use. Even staffed parks cannot easily enforce bylaws. Parents teach their children to ride bikes in a safe space. Signage not always respected on permissive paths.

**Cars:** – Generally recognised that any current access needs to be reduced or mitigated. Challenge: pollution, noise, parked cars and engines left running, fear and potential casualties. Considerations - public buildings and cafes within parks often need deliveries and temporary parking

Potential Solutions: Reducing car parking spaces, closure or partial closure of roads (Hyde Park has agreed to close another road this month), calming measures especially roads adjacent to parks (33% of parks severely effected by adjacent roads). Ask cars to switch off, should not have to say it eg wear a NO IDLING LOGO / NO IDLING CAMPAIGN has been run in Brent .

**Next steps** What policies and practices do boroughs actually have re traffic in parks, and consideration of the respectful use of Green Space. It was suggested that Brent may have a good approach. We agreed we could ask Parks for London who work with senior Officers from all park services all over London. Parks For London could contact the Benchmarking Group to get a range of active policies across boroughs. Dave to contact.

Alice to discuss cycling issues with Sustrans and London Cycling Campaign. She will redraft the Cycling protocol. Then we could see if we can develop an agreed, pragmatic and flexible approach to the issues, drawing on good practice. Dave said it's a fundamental point to include that we need to ensure adequate resources and staffing for parks if we are to be able to address these issues (better paths and design, good monitoring and supervision etc), especially with the current increase of use.

**ITEM 3 May Elections – Mayor of London and Local Assembly Members** Opportunity to raise the importance of London's green spaces to candidates, party, media and public, that parks need to be properly resourced and managed. LFGN part of a coalition called "A More Natural Capital Coalition" (AMNCC) – it is a collective of a dozen or so London organisations producing a joint Manifesto and statements on environmental matters. Big section on parks – candidates and parties are asked to support the Parks Charter which sets the minimum standards for parks and green spaces, including statutory recognition. So all urged to forward AMNCC social media blogs widely, esp twitter, including calls to attend a major online public hustings event with the Mayoral candidates on April 12<sup>th</sup> – public are invited (hopefully 100s will attend). LFGN also issued our traditional joint statement with Parks for London calling for Friends Groups to speak up for parks during the election for more resources and a properly funded statutory service. All such info will be circulated to Friends Groups.

**ITEM 4 GoParks London** Goparks.london is a special website/map/platform where each Friends Group can create a page for a park. 4000+ public green spaces are being mapped. Will include links to biodiversity info (via GiGL – see below), and historical info (via London Gardens Trust). And a page for each borough listing all the sites in that borough and details of all the Friends Forums and Council pages. Now GoParks London is creating adverts/images/posters for

individual boroughs to encourage people to visit the parks of a borough, promoting a series of borough events/drives which will include developing a walk or cycle route through the parks of the borough. All individual friends groups are strongly urged to register on the site with GoParks London and Friends Forums should encourage their groups to visit the website and register. Check site first. If any queries contact: [laura.collins@cprelondon.org.uk](mailto:laura.collins@cprelondon.org.uk).

**ITEM 5 National Park City** – still recruiting Rangers <https://www.nationalparkcity.london/join-our-team>

**ITEM 6 CPRE: 10 New Parks Campaign** – areas of land which are derelict, disused or could be threatened by developers have been identified and local campaigns are growing to turn them into public greenspace. It has generated a lot of interest with groups and individuals and people are putting more sites forward and naming and pre-designing them. Appeared in our last “Our Patch” monthly bulletin - on LFGN website.

**ITEM 7 National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces (NFPGS) Resources** - In a week's time the new Parks Management Forum has called a meeting of reps for national greenspace organisations to scope out a promotional/lobbying campaign for proper resources for parks. **UK Forums** – A very useful ‘share and exchange’ meeting for all Friends Groups’ Area Forums took place 2 weeks ago - 20 Forums and regional networks representing around 2000 Friends Groups took part. [There are currently 67 forums representing around 3500 of the UK's 7000 Friends groups]. A lot of Friends groups are still isolated and need to link up with neighbouring groups in every borough, town and area of the UK. There is a national email list to exchange news and good practice. A top priority for LFGN is to encourage Friends groups to come together to form an active Forum in every borough where one does not exist. [www.parkscommunity.org.uk](http://www.parkscommunity.org.uk) website is a mine of information written by Friends Groups for Friends Groups – please check it out! **The NFPGS**, the democratic umbrella organisation for our movement, is currently unfunded and entirely voluntary. It needs to have proper resources and staffing, like other national greenspace bodies.

**ITEM 8 LFGN Biodiversity working group** – Alona reported that the group's new **calendar of event days** is now on the website - it is available for groups to peruse and adapt as they see fit. It has the dates of the LFGN meetings on it. The new **Biodiversity leaflet** - One side is how to start a biodiversity project (designed by Mark). The reverse side- things one can do to put wildlife in parks and open spaces (by Simon). It appeared in an “Our Patch” bulletin. A reminder could also go on some future ones. Dave aims to put both on parkscommunity site too. A meeting is proposed between the LFGN Biodiversity group and **Green Space Information for Greater London (GIGL)**. Sharon raised the point that GIGL information is not easily accessible to all plus there are issues over the verification of records. Sharon (Richmond), Peter Woodward and Simon Braidman also want to attend this meeting. Alona and Dave to set up with GIGL.

**ITEM 9 LFGN Planning Policies working group** – no formalised group yet exists. Roger has coordinated recent efforts. Wants feedback from local groups about what they would find helpful for the group to focus on. LFGN Planning <roger.chapman99@btinternet.com> See here for up to date campaigning advice: <https://parkscommunity.org.uk/how-to/how-to-campaign-to-save-your-park-or-green-space/> CPRE and London Gardens Trust (LGT) already lead on planning application responses – we don't want to and cannot replicate their expertise. Planning Aid for London (PAFL) are available again to help advise community groups about legal actions. LFGN could have info that PAFL is active again, especially in the “Our Patch” bulletin this Thursday which could include 2-3

lines noting the role of CPRE and LGT in planning issues. Could put in an ask for contact details for FG reps who want to join the working group.

**ITEM 10 Potential new LFGN working groups** - 2 new groups could potentially form one on greenspace waste and recycling including composting, and the other is protection of greenspace (linked to planning issues). This is something that can be further canvassed and discussed.

**ITEM 11 Our Patch** - Comes out monthly. Laura co-ordinates it and is full of information and much appreciated. Important for us all to forward to our contacts in each borough.

**ITEM 12 Funding** - Laura is funded to provide support for LFGN network, linked to the GoParks project. Her hours are limited. More funding is needed to support LFGN. Anyone who knows of a potential funding stream should contact Dave.

**ITEM 13 Website and Social Media** - Adrian and Kerry do a great job looking after our website. Includes adding minutes of LFGN meetings, key documents, Our Patch bulletins and news items. Laura and Alice are trying to build Facebook (120 members now) and twitter. They don't have much time and need help from LFGN members. Anyone interested contact Laura.

**AOB** Suzanne stated that Brent Parks Forum and Brent Friends of the Earth are having a ***Hustings*** on the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> April. She urges groups to do what they can in their boroughs, working with other local community organisations.

Peter Woodward proposed a ***thank you*** to Dave Morris for chairing the meeting. It was agreed. Dave thanked everyone for their efforts to champion their local green spaces.

***Next LFGN Meetings*** [All reps invited]: Co-ordination Meeting, 26<sup>th</sup> April; General Meeting, 7<sup>th</sup> June