**London Friends of Green Spaces Network**

**On-line General Meeting held on Monday 7th June 2021**

**Attending: Friends Groups/Forums reps:** Dave Morris (lordship Rec, Haringey Forum – LFGN Chair), Adrian Stannard – Note Taker (Lloyd Park, Waltham Forest), Alona Sheridan (Mayow Park, and Lewisham Forum) Suzanne (Brent Parks Forum), Symon (Hilly Fields Park, and Lewisham Forum), Larry Herbert (Keston Common, Bromley Forum), Antonia Savvides (Pinner Village Gardens, Harrow Forum), Laura Collins (Go Parks, LFGN and Figge’s Marsh), Peter Woodward (Chislehurst Common), Sharon (Ham Lands), Simon Walton (Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens), Linda Massey (Ealing), Mary-Jane Jeanes (Merton), Rolland (Harrow Weald), Monika Mitchell (Sydenham Wells, Lewisham Parks Forum), John (Woodcock Park, Brent), Alona Sheridan (Mayo Park, Lewisham Forum), Colin Cooper (H & H, Richmond and Hounslow Forums), Pat Gross (Wandsworth Park, Wandsworth Forum), Sarah (Wormhole Park, Hammersmith), Helen Monger (London Gardens trust), Lisa Ridler (Pinner), Roger Chapman (Cherry Tree Woods, Barnet Forum), Rob Crane (River Crane), Steven Boxall (Bexley), Tony leach (Parks for London), Maud (Milkwood Park, Lambeth), Carmel Mcloughlin (Friends of Wormwood Scrubs).

1. **MINUTES** of 15th March 2021 were agreed.
2. **DISCUSSION – HOW CAN WE PROMOTE, PROTECT AND ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY IN OUR GREEN SPACES?**
	1. **Biodiversity Group** report from Alona. Various leaflets and a calendar had been produced and had been circulated to LFGN members. A meeting with Greenspace Info for Greater London (GiGL), who are specialists, was held on the 13th May. Sharon reported they were looking at how the data can be consolidated with iNaturalist which is the more accessible and more widely used system, but if the input data is classified as private no one else can see it. GiGL is mainly for developers and Councils to use when planning applications are submitted and this is how GiGL fund the database.
	2. **Alona -** said her group had planted hedgerows and fruit bushes and an orchard which promoted human interaction and has worked well over time.
	3. **Monika –** a stag beetle loggery had been established as well as a bug hotel which were going well.
	4. **Laura –** had planted copses of trees with children and the children interacted very well.
	5. **Roger –**Has established a pond and an orchard and he felt keeping records was important to see what effect they had.
	6. **Bug Life** had produced Bee Lines [**https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/**](https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/)
	7. **Mary-Jane -**had also planted copses and fruit hedges plus owl and bat boxes, bug hotel plus hay meadow (15 years old) which is mown in August.
	8. **Rob –** carried out survey work and the data put on the web site (FORCE) as part of the Borough’s Biodiversity Action Plan. The data can be downloaded from GiGL who have a contract with 30 London Boroughs. [**https://www.gigl.org.uk/habitat-data/londonsurvey/**](https://www.gigl.org.uk/habitat-data/londonsurvey/)
	9. **Colin** – GiGL info can be accessed via the Borough, but only for use in the Borough for contractual reasons.
	10. **Lisa** – installed bat boxes and whips planted. Information Boards created for the bog garden. Bexley to arrange a Wilder event.
	11. **Peter**–Bromley expects groups to sign for GiGL info. Could not access data about their land as data collecting organisations restrict use. iRecord is more flexible and easier to control the data. He urged members to share good practice.
	12. **Pat** – Creating a meadow and the council brought in Shire Horses to prepare the land and felled trees were kept on site. Swifts have been sighted and a conservation project is underway to install swift boxes (installed by London Roofing on houses) .
	13. **Sharon** – developers are impacting every Borough and if GiGL data limited then the planning process is the poorer.
	14. **Sarah** – Hammersmith have a severe tree policy and bird life reduced due to lack of biodiversity. A successful meadow has been planted. A second meadow was promised, but the council have not mowed the land as promised. They have used a steam process to kill the weeds, but that also kills the bugs.
	15. **Rolland** – Very old trees in a local street in Harrow Weald have to be felled to satisfy the needs of the Insurance companies.
	16. **Dave** – in Haringey, Friends of Queens Wood targeted insurance companies with a petition which created a lot of publicity and they backed down. His group, Lordship Rec, did a powerpoint presentation to a meeting to discuss the Haringey Biodiversity Action Plan – his group runs various natural parts of his park and is trying to get his park upgraded to Site of borough-wide Importance for Nature Conservation.
	17. **Peter** –Forums should try to get involved with their Borough’s Biodiversity Plans.
	18. **Larry** – Bromley Forum has a strong Biodiversity sub group with numerous plantings. Work is in progress about allowing verges to go uncut.
	19. **Simon –** In the Royal Parks their butterfly expert has presented to members.

**In summary:**

- We should monitor, engage and educate, enhance, and protect greenspace biodiversity.

- Features and opportunities include hedgerows, meadows, trees, flora and fauna, orchards and food-bearing species, loggeries, beelines, ponds, bird and bat boxes

1. **LONDON WIDE GROUPS**
	1. **London Gardens Trust – Helen Monger** reported the Trust was organising their annual Open Gardens Squares public and fund raising event on Saturday. Various films of parks and gardens had been made. Private Open Parks can be sold and developed including roof gardens so legislation is needed to protect these spaces. Underbelly wanted to occupy Cavendish Sq. Government consultation is underway about new ‘Permitted Development’ Rights. 5G masts are being put up near Historic Parks and Gardens and action is needed to protect our green spaces.
	2. **National Federation of Parks and Open Spaces** – The LFGN is the London section of the NFPGS. 20 Friends Forums representing nearly 2000 local Friends Groups attended a recent NFPGS ‘share and exchange’ session to help strengthen the movement. The [www.parkscommunity.org.uk](http://www.parkscommunity.org.uk) website is being further developed as a key resource for all Friends Groups, Nearly 200 groups have now filled in the Better Friends strength checker which enables groups to audit and get advice for their own group.
	3. **Parks for London** – Tony Leach reported the GLA updating their green infrastructure strategies - splitting into 3 sections. Consultation expected soon. Boroughs have been asked for latest data for updating the Good Parks annual report on the state of London’s parks.
	4. **Go Parks** – **Laura** – Working with a number of Boroughs to get the GoParks mapping data updated, and to promote parks generally. Positive feedback. Over 250 groups now registered - can all groups register on the site! Contact laura@cprelondon.org.uk
	5. **LFGN** – **Dave -** a coalition of 10 or more london-wide organisations came together to create a coalition to promote a green manifesto for the London Mayoral Election – ‘A More Natural Capital’. 500 people attended its launch/hustings with party candidates. Coalition will meet in 100 days to see what impact it has had.
	6. **Future of Greenspaces** – **Dave** – MPs have set up a new body ‘ All Party Parliamentary Group for Parks’ to promote the needs of parks and pressure Government. Next meeting will discuss recommending the 2017 Public Inquiry into parks be re-convened (as the underfunding situation continues to deteriorate even further) and Dave will be presenting to that meeting on behalf of the NFPGS and friends groups movement.
2. **BOROUGH FORUMS**
	1. **Haringey – Dave –** Continue to meet bi-monthly on zoom. 22 groups and senior Council officers attended the recent one. New groups continue to form (now over 55). Working with the Council to produce a new 15yr Open Spaces Strategy.
	2. **Waltham Forest –** Adrian – no progress yet in getting a Forum set up.
	3. **Ealing – Linda -** a good network exists but not a formal Forum.
	4. **Bromley – Larry** - Bromley Forum was set up in 2005 and have quarterly meetings with the council. Last year just ticked along. 52 groups with 500 volunteers with many issues.
	5. **Merton** – **Mary-Jane** - Attends the Forum meetings. A deal has been done with Merton and the contractor and takes up a lot of time. Lots of buck passing and funds tight.
	6. **Lewisham – Alona/Monika/Symon -** 2023 the grounds maintenance contract gets taken back in-house. Problems with e-scooters and 5G masts. Forum has not met for the last year but coordinator sends out info. More people using the parks.
	7. **Wandsworth –Pat**– Not met for over a year. New contractor but no current interaction. Forum reps are involved with the tendering process.
	8. **Barnet** – **Roger** – Forum meet regularly and had a talk by Tim Gill about play spaces. Welsh Harp clearance issues. 3 new Friends’ Groups formed.
	9. **Richmond and Hounslow** – **Colin**– a. Hounslow Forum meeting coming up in June but restricted budgets. b. Richmond contractor having difficulty recruiting. Planting roadside verges. Litter and anti social behaviour issues. 60 parks supported. Bio Diversity Action Plan being extended to 2025 and water voles may be re-introduced to Hogsmill.
	10. **Brent – Suzanne–** Working withThames 21 trying to protect the Welsh Harp Education centre. Good bee corridor. A lot of Zoom meetings to support groups.
	11. **Harrow [?]-**  last met in February 2020. Quarry site second incinerator an issue.
3. **ANY OTHER MATTERS**
	1. Simon pointed out street trees are pollarded because of subsidence**.** Can be controversial.
	2. LFGN have set up sub groups – Biodiversity, Traffic and Cycling, Planning – volunteers needed to join groups or set up others.
	3. Our Patch – comes out 3rd week of each month. Please forward widely!
4. **NEXT COORDINATION ZOOM MEETING: ZOOM Monday 19th July at 6pm.**