



London Friends of Green Spaces Network

On-line Coordinating Meeting held on Monday 21st March 2022

• **Attending: Friends Groups/Forums reps:** Dave Morris (Lordship Rec, Haringey Parks Forum + *LFGN Chair*), Adrian Stannard (Lloyd Park, Waltham Forest + *LFGN Website and Note Taker*), Suzanne Morpugo (Brent Parks Forum), Antonia Savvides (Pinner Village Gardens), Laura Collins (Figge's Marsh + Merton Parks Forum, + *Go Parks / LFGN worker*), Peter Woodward (Chislehurst Common, Bromley), Sharon (Ham Lands, Richmond), Helen Monger (London Gardens Trust), Simon Braidman (Harrow Parks Forum), Roger Chapman (Barnet Parks Forum + *LFGN Planning Group*), Roger Jones (West Ham Park, Newham), Suzanne King (Barnet), Tony Leach (Parks for London), Alona Sheridan (Lewisham Parks Forum + *LFGN Biodiversity Group*), Miriam Ashwell (Islington Parks Forum), Jeff Stafford (Havering), Rob (F o River Crane / FORCE), Larry Herbert (Bromley Parks Forum), Annie (Greenwich Parks Forum), John (St Paul's Gardens, Hammersmith and Fulham)

1. Minutes of Showcase meeting Dec 2021 and General meeting Feb 2022 - were agreed.

2. London Local Elections May 5th

- 2.1. **Lobby Cllrs** – The election is an opportunity to speak up for the protection and improvement of green spaces. The Barnet Forum has prepared an excellent manifesto for open space issues and is asking the candidates to sign up to them. At least 3 borough Forums (Barnet, Havering and Brent) are supporting local 'hustings' events.
- 2.2. **Parks for London** – Tony and Dave drafted a joint LFGN/PfL A4 statement as usual, encouraging local lobbying. It is to be published and all London's Friends Groups will be notified. The More Natural Capital Coalition (including LFGN) have also adapted their previous London Manifesto to the local elections, to be launched on the 4th April.
- 2.3. **CPRE** - have launched a document identifying 50 greenspace sites at risk and will also launch a report on preserving daylight for open spaces.
- 2.4. **Fields in Trust** – is campaigning to give more protection to open spaces in the long term.
- 2.5. **LFGN** – Laura will circulate a special LFGN bulletin with a range of documents relating to the election.

3. Collaboration with other Organisations

- 3.1. **Gardens Trust** – Helen reported there will be Lectures in May – see Gardens Trust web site. Open Gardens Weekend will return for the first time since 2019. Their campaign to protect Victoria Tower Gardens is awaiting appeal decision [Update – successful].
- 3.2. **Parks for London** – Tony reported that their Youth and Health survey has just closed and the results will be announced in the autumn. 160 responses were received. They are launching a litter campaign via twitter. Litter costs £15m per year to clear from London's parks. Safety concerns for women are being looked at. Liaising with Groundworks who have funding to support a green space skills hub.
- 3.3. **Go Parks** – are launching publicity in Ealing/Sutton/Kingston shortly. Now have 30 partner organisations. Croydon and Barnet are planned.

3.4. **London National Park City** – see their web site. Volunteer Rangers being recruited for each borough.

3.5. **National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces** –

3.5.1. Supporting 'Wildlife and Countryside Link' Access for Everyone campaign, right to quality green space. Proper funding needs to be allocated for all greenspace.

3.5.2. The new NFPGS Better Friends report (on the Friends Groups' movement) has been widely circulated.

3.5.3. Dave, as NFPGS Chair, is to attend a special Natural England 'building partnerships' event in Parliament.

3.5.4. Global Congress of the World Urban Parks Forum. Next one in Mexico. NFPGS have proposed to lead a special discussion on developing grassroots community empowerment in greenspace around the world.

4. Borough Forums

4.1. **Haringey** Nearly 60 local groups. Have been working closely with the council for 20 years. Currently collaborating on a new 15 year Open Spaces strategy, attending various specialist discussions. 80 people attended a Parks summit to discuss issues. Following 3-4 years of lobbying by the Haringey Parks Forum, Parks Service staffing levels are to increase this year. Concerns over housebuilding threats to non-designated greenspace sites eg on housing estates.

4.2. **Bromley** 55 groups. Council re-organising Open Spaces/Enforcement/Waste Management teams. New 10 year open space strategy document has been published. Idverde (contractor) have meetings with the Forum. An extra £1m has been allocated to parks.

4.3. **Merton** The Forum have carried out an annual review (including Friends Groups questionnaire) of the contractor Idverde's performance, and have produced a report expressing a number of concerns. A Management Plan is needed for every park, but only 6 have been completed.

4.4. **Islington** Hybrid face-to-face and zoom regular Forum meetings are held in different parks. Normal issues such as BBQs are discussed. Very supportive relationship with the Borough. The Active Health programme of activities has been a success and will continue.

4.5. **Harrow** 21 groups. Forum not very active, partly due to Council officer turnover, no parks department and lack of continuity with the council. Council need a green strategy and to update the biodiversity action plan.

4.6. **Havering** Around 20 groups. Holding first meeting in 2 years. Hoping the Forum will make a comeback as there are over 100 parks in the Borough and only 4 officers. New byelaws and other issues discussed. Consultation is underway about open spaces policies.

4.7. **Barnet** 40 groups. A Forum manifesto for the election is being prepared. The council's policy team and operations team need better connection. They are trying to get Council to support Go Parks publicity. 2 new Friends groups have recently been set up.

4.8. **Lewisham** Forum not met for a while but does have a good email relationship between Forum and council. Need to revive face to face meetings.

- 4.9. **Newham** 4 groups. Council very stretched and say the right thing but need more action. The newly-developing Forum is hoping to use the election to push green issues, eg City of London has a carbon-reduction policy for West Ham Park.
- 4.10. **Greenwich** Borough does not have an Ecology Officer. The Forum needs to get active again, following covid era. 12 people attended recent meeting.
- 4.11. **Richmond and Hounslow** No update
- 4.12. **Brent** – Borough maintenance contract being brought back in house. Good contacts between Forum and Council officers. An election manifesto has been circulated. A rivers alliance exists with Harrow.
- 4.13. **Kingston** Bio-diversity network meet every 2 months. Laura is attending their next meeting. A new parks Forum has been mooted.
- 4.14. **Bexley** No update. A new Forum has been mooted.
- 4.15. **Tower Hamlets** New Forum starting. Considering whether to organise an election hustings.

5. LFGN Working Groups

- 5.1. **Nature and Biodiversity** Alona and Suzanne reported that themes have been suggested by members and notes coordinated: Young People / Biodiversity / Management of Parks / Surveying and updating eg iRecord.
- 5.2. **Planning** Roger reported no recent meeting. Working with CPRE about threats to (and protection of) open space. Friends Groups guide to campaigning effectively here: https://parkscommunity.org.uk/how_to_guide/how-to-campaign-to-save-your-park-or-green-space/ . May need a shorter London version.
- 5.3. **Commercial / Large Events** No update.

6. LFGN issues

- 6.1. **Our Patch** – Laura publishes an excellent news bulletin monthly every 3rd Thursday. She appealed for items for the next edition. An election edition is being prepared.
- 6.2. **Funding** – Laura’s post is funded up to May 2022. CPRE are trying to get further funding.

7. NEXT LFGN MEETINGS (all on zoom):

Greenspace Showcase Meeting - Monday 9th May at 6pm – Topic “Community action to improve small Open Spaces”

General Meeting – Monday 20th June, 6pm

Co-ordination Meeting – Monday 1st August, 6pm