

Minutes of Coordination Meeting, 12.09.2022

List of Attendees:

Friends Groups/Forums/Organisations reps: Dave Morris – *LFGN Chair* (Lordship Rec + Haringey Forum), Joe Bartrum (The Conservation Volunteers, Waltham Forest), Alona Sheridan – *LFGN Biodiversity Group* (Mayow Park + Lewisham Forum), Laura Collins – *LFGN Support Worker* (Go Parks + Figge's Marsh + Merton Forum), Peter Woodward (Chislehurst Common + Bromley Forum), Simon Braidman – *took minutes* (Harrow Forum), Roger (Friends of West Ham Park + Newham Forum in development), Simon (Friends of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens), Tony Leach (Parks for London), Richard Fox (Wandsworth Common + Wandsworth Forum), Suzanne King (Finchley Way Open Space + Barnet Forum), Louise (Friars Farm, Enfield), Laurence (Keston Park + Bromley Forum), Michelle (Southwark), Roger Heath (Pinner Recreation Ground Woodmeadow Project, Harrow), Sandy (Monken Hadley Common + Barnet Forum), Colin (Hampstead Heath, Camden/Barnet/Haringey), Roger Chapman – *LFGN Planning group* (Cherry Tree Wood + Barnet Forum), Chris Thornton (Horn Park + Greenwich Forum), John Poole (Brook Way Biodiversity Project + Brent Forum), Tina Smith (Doctor Harold Moody and Consort Parks, Southwark), Antonia Savvides (Harrow), Julia and Richard (Wandsworth Common + Wandsworth Forum), Tricia Moxey (Epping Forest, Redbridge). Ann (Lambeth Forum). Plus possibly one or two others.

INTRODUCTIONS

- 1. MINUTES** Minutes of last meeting – accepted
- 2. BOROUGH-WIDE FORUMS: UPDATES**
 - Haringey – established 2001. 55 groups. Working with Council to draft new 15 year park strategy. After 2 years is now ready for public consultation. There is some new investment in parks with new staff but Parks Service / Friends Groups communications and collaboration still need improving. Forum is setting up a new diversity working group to help promote good practice on strengthening and diversifying groups (esp re youth and ethnic minority involvement).
 - Harrow – the Forum is well established but is recovering after low ebb. Staff changes within Council have hampered the development of a proper relationship. The Council have changed politically and are making positive noises.
 - Barnet –there is a new Green Space Strategy and a new Borough Ecologist who seems proactive – the Council is reaching out to the friends groups. The party which won the election had signed up to the Friends Forum's Parks Manifesto – so the effort now is to get parks and friends groups a higher priority.
 - Newham – a new Greenspace Forum is forming. Laura and Dave supporting Roger, who is aiming to invite local groups for a zoom in early October. Newham is part of the strategic Great Eastern Parks Route which crosses multiple boroughs and there is to be a walk along the route. West Ham Park is trying to get recognised as a strategically important park.
 - Bromley – there is a new portfolio holder for parks, the environment post has been split between waste/recycling and Parks and Carbon neutrality. 54 Friends groups. Forum meeting for groups every 2 months, and Forum officers meeting with the Park Service contractor IdVerde every 3 months.
 - Brent – no update available.
 - Lewisham – Forum has not met since the start of the pandemic, but Council Officers are now keen to meet with Friends Groups. Soon. The Forum needs a new chair.
 - Lambeth – the Forum meets 4 x a year. Good relationship with Operational staff, having a Forum has benefited the parks hugely. There are a lot of new councillors and a new cabinet member for

parks and biodiversity plus another member for sports and events. There are big issues in the borough over large commercial events in some parks particularly Brockwell and Clapham Common. There are approximately 40 friends groups.

9. Southwark – there used to be a parks forum over 5 years back, with just a loose email list since. Dave and Laura happy to support any efforts to re-launch it.
10. Wandsworth – change of party running the Council. A social event has recently been held. The Forum has met once since the election. A plan for climate resilience has been drawn up. A recycling pilot scheme is successfully running on Wandsworth Common and is now spreading across the borough. The waste goes to Lewisham. Three other initiatives are in development including Dog control and littering.
11. Enfield – There is an Enfield Consortium of Friends Groups but not met for 3-4 years. Relations between the Council and Friends groups need improving, as does consultation. Again, Dave and Laura happy to support any efforts to revive the Consortium.
12. Camden – Chairs of Friends Groups do meet with Parks Service. No update.
13. Islington – Forum is very active. No update.
14. Merton – there is a Forum meeting in 2 weeks. There is a new Parks director who is keen to meet Friends groups. The drive is to produce management plans for all the parks and to increase the number of parks with Green Flag status especially in the less affluent east end of the borough. Forum does its own Annual Report on the service.
15. Redbridge – No update available.
16. Greenwich – possibly has the longest established Forum. Tony Leach (Pfl) addressed their last meeting. Greenwich Forum coordinates grants for parks events, called PARKFEST.

3. REPORTS FROM LFGN WORKING GROUPS

Planning Policy - LFGN responded to the Mayor's consultation about promoting wildlife. No other update. If you'd like to get involved contact LFGN Planning c/o roger.chapman99@btinternet.com

Biodiversity - A meeting of the Biodiversity group is being considered. There is to be a meeting with Green Space Information for Greater London (GIGL) at 9am on 06.10.2022 to try to create a closer relationship with the London Friends of the Green Spaces Network. A number of reps present asked to be added to the Biodiversity Working Group participants – Alona (Lewisham) is the convenor.

Events – Focus on issues relating to large commercial events, but has not met for over a year. There is a new report based on research on Commercialisation of Parks and the trends over time - <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0308518x20951814> Laura has the details of the membership and their discussions – a new chair is needed. Volunteers sought! Contact laura@cprelondon.org.uk

Others - There is interest in forming working groups on **dogs in parks** (convenor sought), and **climate resilience** (for which Roger in Newham is willing to be the contact person). A number of people expressed interest in both groups.

4. LFGN MEDIA

'Our Patch' LFGN monthly news bulletins - Some great recent issues (but last month missed out). Any potential copy to Laura laura@cprelondon.org.uk.

LFGN Fb page – slowly building up numbers and posts

LFGN Website – Adrian continues to update, including all copies of Our Patch and minutes of LFGN meetings

5. OTHER LONDON ORGANISATIONS

Parks for London - Tony Leach reported that Thames Water, after lobbying by PFL on behalf of London's parks services, have agreed the following exemption to the current hosepipe ban - young trees can be watered by hose up to 3 years after planting and this can be done by Councils, Friends Groups, Community Groups and individuals.

The latest 'Good Parks for London 2022' report on Borough Parks Services performance is due out. Boroughs are rated on 10 criteria. There is to be a Teams launch meeting about this on 29th Sept (after which it will be available online).

There is a campaign called Clean Parks for London where the public are encouraged to take their litter (especially picnic litter) home. 19 London Boroughs are taking part in the initiative.

A new Women's Safety in Parks initiative has been started with a wide range of stake holders including London Boroughs, GLA, TFL, and others. This group will consider interventions to make parks safer for women.

Parks for London are also looking into the effect, following the relaxation of Covid restrictions, on anti-social behaviour in Parks - has it got better? Stayed the same? Or got worse?

GoParks London - role to encourage Londoners to go out and engage with London's Green and Blue spaces, and have coordinated local walks and publicity campaigns alongside many local authorities and Friends Forums. They have logged 4,000 of London's Green and Blue spaces on their interactive map. So far there are 300 Friends Groups with pages on the website and another 170 groups in process. Can all groups check it out and register?! They also produce a monthly newsletter supporting Friends Groups, encouraging volunteering, and sending out information on funding opportunities.

They have volunteering opportunities offered by corporate groups. So if there is a task or tasks that need doing please contact laura@cprelondon.org.uk.

A US university has got students running studies into volunteering around climate resilience. These students want to interview individuals and groups who are doing such tasks and the students want to be involved by working alongside. Contact laura@cprelondon.org.uk

The Conservation Volunteers – they are recruiting for a role to assist community groups in the planting and maintaining of trees. They are helping bring together Friends Groups in Waltham Forest, and have a new food growing space in Enfield and 3 new green Gyms in Hounslow.

Metropolitan Public Gardens Association – Jenni to attend their AGM on behalf of LFGN.

National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces – the NFPGS is the umbrella organisation for the UK's Friends Groups movement. The LFGN is the London region. Dave, as NFPGS chair, was asked to give evidence to the parliamentary Housing and Communities Select Committee of MPs about the ongoing underfunding crisis for the greenspace sector – despite a damning report issued by the Committee 5 years ago the Government had failed to ensure any meaningful progress on the matter despite recognising the need for action. Dave's powerful evidence can be viewed or read here (second session starting at 10.50am): [HTTPS://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/10633/pdf](https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/10633/pdf). Meanwhile Wildlife and Countryside Link is running a year long 'Access for Everyone' campaign, backed by 80 organisations, to call for effective access, funding and protection for public greenspace.

The NFPGS has been collaborating on a research project on efforts by Friends Groups to increase ethnic diversity and involvement in their groups and sites. A report and a possible checklist for action may be made available soon.

6. FUTURE LFGN MEETINGS

We agreed to move from meetings every 6 weeks to every 2 months. We usually have 3 alternating types, open to all Friends Groups: **Greenspace Showcase** (1 hour ish, focused on presentations by one or two Friends Groups on a key issue), **Coordination Meetings** (such as today's, dealing with borough updates and strategic reports), and **General Meetings** (with a general discussion on a key issue).

Showcase - We agreed the next theme, on November 14th, will be 'Tree planting and Friends Groups – what are the challenges and issues?' with large and small scale examples. People came forward to contribute, including a massive planting effort in Enfield, plus John (Brent) and Annie (Friends of Hervey Road Sports Field, Greenwich).

This will be followed by a special **End-of-year celebration/social** on Dec 12th. Followed by a **general meeting** in the new year, probably early February.