

Engaging People in Green Spaces



**Friends of
West Ham Park**

Caption

Roger and Lyndsay Jones - June 2023

London Borough of Newham

Profile

- Population in 2021 383,000 (9,700 per Sq Km) with forecast increase by 2038 of 100,000. Most ethnically diverse Borough in England & Wales, (31% of population White British - lowest of any London Borough)
- Main ethnic groups are South Asian.
- High levels of poverty (37% - second highest in London) and poor health outcomes.
- Public open space in Borough is 0.71 hectares per 1,000 people - lowest in London. National guideline is 2.0.

West Ham Park

Located in Newham - owned/operated by City of London Corporation



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- 77 acres - biggest park in the Borough and provides 12% of the Borough's green open space. SINC - Local Status with Borough Status now agreed.
- Mix of formal gardens, children's play areas and sports facilities. Green Flag and London in Bloom awards
- Created in 1874 through philanthropy and public subscription on the site of historic botanical garden created by Dr John Fothergill.
- Surrounded by Victorian housing.
- Fully staffed and closed at night.
- Much valued and used by the local community who strongly identify with the park.

Friends of West Ham Park - who are we?

- A group drawn from the local community, originally created as part of the Green Flag awards.
- The park is well maintained and staffed. We decided our role was to add value the local community obtained from the park through events, nature observation, vegetable gardening and highlighting the park's botanical history.
- We work closely with and support park staff. The park provides a lot of support to the Friends Group.
- The group membership is over 200 with a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. The 'core group' is largely white British in contrast local community ethnic profile. We try to be open, friendly, approachable and conscious of the profile of the local community in which we reside.
- With nearly 20 years experience, we have concluded that many of the ethnic groups feel unable/unwilling to help plan/run events but are very willing to participate.

How have we encourage participation ?

- Held free events aimed at families, who are the easiest group to reach.
- Posters at all entrance gates.
- Details on our website well in advance as well as a future programme.
- Emails to membership list
- Social media - Facebook/Twitter frequent posting up to the day and encouraging re-tweeting by others.
- It takes time to build up awareness.



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**Friends of
West Ham Park**



**FREE
BAT WALK**

**Friday 26th August
8.30-9.30pm**

Meet: Parks & Gardens Division Office
(opposite the Playground), West Ham Park
just before the park shuts at 8.30pm

PLEASE NOTE that the Park closes at 8.30pm,
so please arrive promptly to ensure entry, after this
**THERE WILL NOT BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXIT THE PARK
UNTIL THE WALK FINISHES AT APPROXIMATELY 9.30PM.**

The exit will be onto Portway only.

Owing to the nature of this event and light levels in the Park,
it is essential that parents or guardians are fully responsible for any children
accompanying them. Please note that torches/artificial lighting cannot be
used during the walk. **COVID Social distancing rules still apply.**



Keep up to date with our activities — friendsofwesthampark.co.uk
Follow us on Facebook — facebook.com/FriendsOfWestHamPark
And now on Instagram! — www.instagram.com/fwhp_e9
Drop us a line — friendsofwesthampark@outlook.com



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What have we done/tried?

- Events that combine contact with nature and fun - what could we offer which is different and unique
- 'Newham's Biggest Leaf Pile'
- Bat walks and bird watching
- 'Park in the Dark'
- Star gazing and 'build the solar system'
- Nature and food growing based craft events for families
- Park history and botanical history
- Supporting food banks
- Avoid competitions with prizes
- Only use English, including other languages can be problematical. Most family groups have an English speaker.

Not all of our experience is transferable

- Our events are tailored to the park's local community profile.
- We have benefited from City of London resources and support, especially staff and equipment.
- On-site storage space for our equipment and materials.



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What you should think about in planning your own events

- Know your local market and the which group your event is aimed at (eg adults, families, children).
- What can you offer that is different or unique?
- Work with the owner/manager of the green space/park.
- Look for LA small grants.
- Keep it simple.
- Don't over-face your volunteers.

Conclusion and Questions



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