

LFGN Special General Meeting 26th May 2026

Attendance

25 representatives from Friends Groups around London.

Key Outcomes

The network celebrated nearly 20 years as a loose network supporting, representing and promoting the movement of around 1,000 local greenspace Friends groups. It formally adopted a constitution and established a governance structure to continue operations following the end of CPRE London's funding support over the last 5 years. The existing LFGN coordination group was elected as the new Co-ordination Committee, with Dave Morris as Chair, Laura Collins as Secretary, and Adrian Stannard as Treasurer, enabling the network to continue to function independently and efficiently, and to pursue future funding opportunities.

Decisions Made

- **Constitution adopted:** Members approved the proposed constitution to formalise the network's structure and enable funding applications
- **Committee elected:** The existing 10-member coordination group was elected as the Co-ordination Committee until the next AGM
- **Officers elected:** Dave Morris (Chair), Laura Collins (Secretary), and Adrian Stannard (Treasurer) were elected to officer roles
- **AGM scheduled:** First annual general meeting planned for early next year to review progress, strengthen the organisation and its Committee, and discuss any proposed constitutional amendments

Background Context

Laura has over the last 5-6 years been contributing 10-15 hours per week to the 'GoParks' project - including providing LFGN with administrative and coordination support. This was funded by grants obtained by CPRE London. This, along with the voluntary contributions from other members of the LFGN Coordination Group, included helping manage the LFGN emailing lists; the regular LFGN general and coordination meetings; the extensive programme of showcase and themed webinars; producing monthly newsletters; supporting themed LFGN Working Groups; supporting the development of individual local groups and of borough-based Friends Groups' Forums; and maintaining the Go Parks London map. This funding and support had enabled the LFGN to become more effective in fulfilling its role to support, promote, coordinate and strengthen the movement at the grassroots. CPRE London's 'GoParks' funding ended, requiring the LFGN to return to being self-sustaining. The GoParks map continues to be maintained by CPRE London, who are considering its future.

Network Activities

Continuing priority operations:

- Regular email updates and seasonal newsletters (initially approximately quarterly) [Dave and Laura]
- Regular general meetings for Friends Groups, and coordination meetings with borough reports [Dave and Laura]
- Webinars on topics - some of the recent ones have been about safeguarding policies, community engagement, citizen science, admin for friends groups, starting new groups, and community gardens. Most are archived on the LFGN YouTube channel.
<https://www.youtube.com/@lfgngreenspaces4122>
- Website hosting - meeting minutes, resources, and general information [Adrian]
- Facebook page for cross-London group updates [Suzanne]
- Email lists / Database maintenance [Dave and Laura]
- GoParks website [Managed by CPRE - LFGN will continue to support as our resources and priorities allow]

Working groups:

- Climate resilience and future planting [Roger]
- Other groups no longer active have included biodiversity, dogs, major commercial events.

Borough Forum Development

Approximately 20 of 33 London boroughs have Friends Forums (of varying strengths) where groups meet, support each other, and develop common strategies. One of the LFGN's most fundamental roles is helping groups form or strengthen such borough-level forums for local coordination and partnership with council park services in every borough.

Pending

- **Treasurer / Bank account:** Vital for LFGN funding applications and financial management.
- **Internal policies:** May need to develop a suite of operational policies.
- **Constitutional amendments:** Any proposals would need to be discussed at the first full AGM.
- **Funding models:** Grant sources? Annual donations appeal? Membership fees? Under discussion..

Some key issues raised in the discussion

Funding and resources:

- Lack of Government funding for local authority parks services (for maintenance, management and improvements) identified as major national issue requiring ongoing advocacy and pressure.
- LFGN need at least a part time worker to operate at a reasonable level of effectiveness. But we need to avoid dependency on grant funding while pursuing opportunities.
- Voluntary membership fee or annual donation appeal proposed to generate sustainable income

Threats to green spaces:

- Development pressure from cash-strapped councils from developers seeking cheap land
- WhiteWebbs Park in Enfield: Following local election campaigning 70% of voters supported parties opposing the lease of a massive area of the park to Tottenham Hotspur for a training ground.
- Wimbledon Park and other spaces across London under threat
- Increasing inappropriate commercialisation
- The CPRE 'Green Defenders network' and the Fields In Trust covenants were praised - and also efforts to get Parliament to legislate for adequate protection for all public green spaces.
- Noted a National Day of Action in April - over 220 local events across UK raising green space funding and protection issues in build-up to elections, helping put green spaces on the political map.

Biodiversity and climate resilience:

- Long-term climate resilience in parks requires significant investment for tree and plant replacement and maintenance, access to water, and so on
- Need to measure canopy cover rather than just trees planted, as many fail within first 5 years without adequate care and maintenance
- Community growing spaces, orchards, and food growing projects in public parks identified as potential future webinar topic

Proposed Future Activities

- **Webinars:** Community gardening and food growing in public spaces; biodiversity enhancement
- **Borough forum support:** Assist groups to link up in boroughs without functioning forums
- **Noted:** the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces is completing a major report on a UK-wide survey of Friends Groups and their needs. 938 groups responded to the survey.
- **Network links and potential expansion:** Reach out to hundreds of self-managed community gardens on Right to Grow map not yet contacted
- **Green Defenders Network:** CPRE continuing initiative to support groups threatened by inappropriate development or sale

Collaboration Partners

London-wide organizations, as always, are invited to attend our general and coordination meetings. Attendees have often included: Parks for London (borough Parks Services), CPRE London (advocacy and campaigning), London Parks and Gardens Trust (protection of historic landscapes and the annual Open Gardens and Squares weekend), food-growing networks.

Action Items

- **Committee:** Discuss treasurer role and bank account opening at first meeting
- **Committee:** Review any proposals for constitutional improvements to be put to 2027 AGM
- **Committee:** Consider webinar topics on community growing and biodiversity
- **Ilona (Lewisham):** Connect Paul from Telegraph Hill with Lewisham Forum WhatsApp group
- **Adrian (W. Forest):** Approach Waltham Forest green majority council about establishing forum
- **Interested volunteers:** Check the chat re any contact details for newsletter coordination, working groups, or borough forum development etc.