



LVE YOUR **GREEN** SPACE?

Community working together to help shape how our park works, is maintained, & protected

Friends of Firs Farm Park Wetlands & Playing Fields AGM

Thursday 20th April 2017

This report is to highlight the last twelve months achievements and aims of the group 'Friends of Firs Farm (FoFF)'.

We have been working closely with local residents and Enfield Council Parks department to develop a clear improvement plan. In-line with our Constitution and the signed Council Friends Agreement the group is working on five key areas of commitment, which are to:

- 1 Protect & Maintain Firs Farm
- 2 Enhance Biodiversity
- 3 Improve Access & Facilities (For All)
- 4 Fund Raising
- 5 Communication

The Friends of Firs Farm

Firs Lane, Winchmore Hill, London, N21 2PJ

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What we have accomplished in the last twelve months:

1. Launch of wetlands in Summer 2016

Our biggest accomplishment for 2016 was the Wetlands launch festival. A full, fun-packed, community day, held on Saturday 16th July. Opened by the Mayor of Enfield, Bernadette Lappage, and local MP David Burrows, the day was well received by the three thousand local residents who arrived throughout the day. Visitors for the day enjoyed the 50 plus stalls, dog shows and fun fair. Both the music and the dance stages entertained the audiences, along with many children's' activities including pony rides, pond dipping and arts & crafts. With a plethora of food and drink options and available clean well-managed facilities, the day was very successful. Already enquiries are coming in for the next one.

Details of funds raised from this successful day's event are in the enclosed treasurer's report.

The aims of the Wetlands launch were to:

- Increase community awareness of the Wetlands and All it has to offer, both now and for the future.
- It was a community investment whereby Friends of Firs Farm attracted commercial entities and their investment as well as relevant and dedicated charities to a local green space.
- Build trust and loyalty with our partners who have supported the regeneration of this green space e.g. Schools, LBE, Thames water, London Wildlife Trust, Thames 21, University College physics dept. and many more.
- Consolidated our reputation and credibility within the community as a key friends group

The Friends greed that due to popular demand and the success of the above launch, that Friends of Firs Farm and partners will hold an official opening of the transformation of Firs Farm on Saturday 14th July 2018 by which time the changes in the Spinney (Woodland) and adjoining field will have been completed.

2. Firs Farm Transformation Project (Woodland / Wetlands development)

In partnership with LBE, Thames Water and Thames 21, key achievements have been implemented throughout the year which stem from the initial consultation and the Friends management plan. These along with many of our own projects have been:

- **Development of the southern branch of the watercourse** which links the culverted stream that flows beneath Clowes playing fields to Firs Farm wetlands has been completed.
- **Outdoor classroom, Pond dipping platform** and bridges have been completed by LBE's contractors allowing improved access to and around the wetlands areas.
- **DDA compliant/cycling path** stretching from the A10 to the car park, and a path along the eastern side of Firs Farm that links the two east to west paths that support students access to local schools.
- Funds raised by the Friends provided three dedicated **information boards** to support the goals of the green space and communicate information to the local community and a new **welcome board** which has been installed in the car park area.

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- **Planting of 250 plus trees**, ferns and numerous sacks of native bulbs this last winter supported by both corporate and community volunteer days organised and run by the Friends.
- **Wildlife diversity**: Friends volunteers work throughout the year to create and maintain the many woodland walks through the park space. Created one of Enfield's first green space 'Stumperys' (Good stag beetle habitat), built insect hotels, hibernaculum's and planted many wildflower seeds all in an effort to support and attract diverse wildlife e.g. newts, swifts, swallows, bats, owls, dragonflies, frogs, heron, water birds, stag beetles, and solitary bees, to name but a few.
- Raised funds for pond dipping equipment for community use to prevent cross contamination from brining equipment used elsewhere.
- Firs Farm was 'Highly commended' under 'Community Project' category at the '**Utility Awards**' event and awarded a Gold from 'Enfield in Bloom'. We have just heard this week that Firs Farm has now reached the second round of the '**Living Waterways Awards**'. Clearly a much loved and appreciated space.
- Interpretation providing wildlife rubbings, braille names, Q&A for educational fun, designed and developed with LBE , Thames 21 and the Friends has recently been installed around the wetlands
- LBE and partner meetings throughout the year to ensure key milestones in the management plan have been actioned
- Training is ongoing for first aid specifically for group wetlands and leading waterways events. Pond dipping and the all-important water quality testing is still planned as is ladder training.
- Successfully engaging with a variety of community groups including scouts, beavers and cubs who helped support build new habitats, made and painted signposts for adopt the tree programme and also participated in the launch
- Engaging with young offenders who are required to help on community projects and inspiring them to appreciate both the group and the green project. Some gave their own time to support the wetlands launch day.
- We include LD adults as part of our gardening group of volunteers who can be seen regularly joining in to maintain the green space with the Friends.
- Eco-science group from local primary schools have used the outdoor class room and pond dipping platform to engage young students and their minds
- Working with the Local high school, who have been involved in public meetings and also the launch, students have been using the wetlands covering many curriculum subjects e.g. geography, some Duke of Edinburgh Award work, coursework, film studies and science.
- We held the first of many wetlands watercourse clean-up community days in early March 2017.
- Sustainability projects
- Upcycling of plant pots from the wetlands planting, used to create the Friends mascot 'A Dragonfly'
- Upcycling of old discarded tool safes –painted and with new locks these will store our childrens gardening tools and pond dipping equipment once they are cemented in place and bolted down. T
- Bug hotels used old plant pots, wooden pallets from the wetland planting and fly tip materials e.g. bricks, pipes etc.
- Compost heap created to help recycle the brown and green debris which will help future planting.

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- Recycling tree mulch in the wake of the watercourse development in the park
- Implemented hedge laying along the road to discourage fly tipping with the support of the Enfield Conservation Group.

3. Meetings - Committee, Parks, General public

- Presented to local schools and commercial companies to encourage all to participate in launch, volunteering, and other projects in Firs Farm.
- Held 4 public meetings, numerous festival planning and committee meetings.
- Friends attend, wetlands, ward forums, friend's consortium and LBE parks meetings throughout the year.

4. Funding/Donations e.g. investment and time

- £2000 was donated by Enfield Society for the 'Welcome' board for Firs farm
- £8,000 was used for the notice/ information boards and launch event from Tesco 'Bags of help' grant
- Donations of over £2000 made after the launch event, will contribute to a "legacy" for the Friends Community Wetlands Launch. Please let the Friends know what you think this should be.
- Gold award status to be confirmed from LBE and friends funding pot of £800

We are grateful to the many local businesses and individuals helping the Friends in supporting this green space and for the variety of donations ranging from services, peoples time, supplies and materials:-

18 th Edmonton Scouts	Environment Agency	London Borough of	Rock Archive
All Star Appliances Ltd	FastKlean	Barnet	Sainsbury's
AMK JV	Fastsigns	London Borough of	Sarah Doyle
Becky Beach MPC Print Solutions	Gary Moyes Photography	Enfield	Sonia Tonge Zumba
Big and Red Storage	Hazelwood Sports Club	London Fire Brigade	Sony DADC UK Enfield
Buckle and Vaughan	Helen Osman	Lords DIY, Bush Hill Park	SSE Utilities
CamFly Films	Helen Tumbridge	Lynne Yazgan Havilands	Tesco Bags of Help
Clem Cattini	Holtwhites	Martin Jones	Thames 21
Enfield Ward Councillors	Homecare Preferred	Mike Lawn Photography	Thames Water
David Burrowes	HSS Enfield	Metropolitan Police	The Orange Tree N21
Dinah Barry	Ian Russell	Enfield	Travis Perkins
Edmonton Rotary Club	Intertek	N21Online.com	Waitrose
Edmonton cycling club	JBC Protect Security	Nick Mason – Pink Floyd	Winchmore Hill Sports Club
Ellie Storey	John Bryden	On-Broadway	Winchmore School
Enfield Society	Julie Bland	PH	Yasar Halim
Enfield conservation group (ECV)	Ken Waterhouse	Palmers Green Community News	
	Keymakers	Palmers Green Life	
	Kirsty Hall	Lords DIY (BHP)	
	Lee Chamberlain		

So many Volunteers who helped during the lead up to and on the day of the festival. We rely so much on All the volunteering support as we are ourselves a bunch of volunteers who love our green space. We are grateful too for the ongoing support and encouragement of our local councillors Dinah Barry, Sarah Doyle, Lee Chamberlain and Erin Celebi.

5- Communication

- Produced promotional videos and photos of the green space which has encouraged greater exposure and use of the area with You tube and other social media.
- Communications have been delivered primarily through face book, twitter, website and local publications e.g. N21 online and offline (newsletters from Parks Dept.), news flyers in local shops and businesses, banners in the park and posters around the park for people who do not have a computer!

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Summary

In summary, Friends of Firs Farm have a lot to do to beat the achievements of 2016! We remain a 'not for profit' group, dedicated to enhancing, maintaining and protecting the park and wildlife. A 'gold' status group, evidenced by the past 12 month's volunteering projects, commitment to the council agreement and collective volunteer hours in excess of 2000.

There is still '**No membership fee**' charged to members, in order to keep the group 'open to all'. This friends group has involved and worked closely with corporate and community groups e.g. local residents, young offenders, schools and scouts.

It prides itself in giving local businesses the opportunity to be involved in a community green space. Lastly, it has given others in the community a purpose in their 'giving back to the community'.

Some recent quotes from the community:

"I have managed to come off my antidepressant tablets completely now thanks to having Firs Farm." Young man in the park.

"I was pretty lonely before but since all this, I have met so many new people. Every day someone says "Hello" to me. It lifts my spirits. Thank you" An elderly person walking in Firs Farm.

"At last somewhere to get fit and in fabulous surroundings. I am encouraged to walk every day now with a couple of pals." Young woman walking.

"My 2 young children have learnt to ride bikes in this safe environment. I can sit on one of the benches relaxing for a change, while they cycle safely around the wetlands, enjoying the peace and tranquillity. My children are enjoying the exercise (fight against obesity) and I get to have peace of mind". (Great health benefits)

We have to keep the momentum going, as we cannot let local residents and park users down, especially young families who set so much store in what the future holds for them and their children in Firs Farm. We must continue to strive and to deliver all that we promise as a group.

Thank you

Toni Guiver
Chair and founder member 2013

Social Media

Facebook and Twitter continue to be the main social networks used by the Friends to update. We plan to start a campaign to recruit more volunteers over the coming months ready for the next push before the 2018 festival.

The planned website changes are on hold until we are able to find a replacement webmaster due to the current webmaster having to retire for family reasons.

Farewell and Thanks to Outgoing Webmaster and Treasurer

Both Nikesh and Carl have now stepped down from the committee due other commitments. The Friends are grateful for all that they have helped the group to achieve during the past 2½ years and look forward to when you in a position to re-join the Friends

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Election of Officers and other Committee Members

Office	Current	Nomination	Proposer / Seconder
Chair	Toni Guiver	Toni Guiver	Gail Nielsen / Eileen Herlihy
Vice Chair	Vacant	Vacant	
Treasurer	Carl Redondo	Eileen Herlihy	Toni Guiver / Gail Nielsen
Treasurer 2 nd	Eileen Herlihy	Olga Hepburn	Carl Redondo / Toni Guiver
Secretary	Vacant	Vacant	
Secretary (Interim)	Gail Nielsen	Gail Nielsen	Toni Guiver / Eileen Herlihy
Events Coordinator	NEW 2017	Vacant	
Focus Group Facilitator	NEW 2017	Geraldine Cosh	Toni Guiver / Caroline Wilmer
Fundraiser	NEW 2017	Vacant	
History	Vacant	Vacant	
Membership / Volunteers	Vacant	Vacant	
PR / Social Media	Ana Ribeiro	Ana Ribeiro	Toni Guiver / Gail Nielsen
School(WS)	David Miller	David Miller	Gail Nielsen / Toni Guiver
Tasks Coordinator	New 2017	Caroline Wilmer	Jo Attree / John Prior
Webmaster	Nikesh Tailor	Vacant	Gail Nielsen / Toni Guiver
Wetlands Lead	NEW 2017	Vacant	
Committee	Derek Attree	Derek Attree	Annette Nastri / Gail Nielsen
	Alison Sutherland	Alison Sutherland	Gail Nielsen / Toni Guiver
	Jo Attree	Jo Attree	Gail Nielsen / Toni Guiver
	Annette Nastri	Annette Nastri	Gail Nielsen / Toni Guiver
	Paul Nastri	Paul Nastri	Caroline Guiver / Toni Guiver
	Vacant	Vacant	
	Vacant	Vacant	
	Vacant	Vacant	
Independent Examiner	Vacant	Peter Harte	Eileen Herlihy / Toni Guiver

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