



L♥VE YOUR GREEN SPACE

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

Friends of Firs Farm

Wetlands Park & Playing Fields

AGM

24th April 2019

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



Friends of Firs Farm Park

Message from the Trustees

Firs Farm Wetlands for many is a quiet little nature reserve in suburbia. However, this is deceptive as the development in Enfield has attracted international interest and even been included this year in a Canadian documentary on climate change. The Wetlands is instrumental in helping London combat flooding (protecting hundreds of homes) and being an early warning system on pollution incidents infecting the waterways such as the river Lee.

Not only does Firs Farm link up with the waterways around London and is making a difference to the quality of that water for wildlife but we are linked to an International initiative to educate the importance of Wetlands and what they stand for.

The year of 2018-2019 is a momentous year for Friends of Firs farm. We have completed our first year as a registered charity (Charity number: 1177069). This has helped with attracting funds, increased interest in the group with new Trustees and volunteers.

Events that have been contributing to the success of FOFF this year have been: Halloween – A Spooky Walk in the Woods, Community Festival, National Children’s day UK, Quiz night and a number of corporate events. All of these events attract a wealth of community users, as many are free to enter, and enable people to enjoy the Wetlands. As a result, many help with giving donations to the FOFF and volunteer their time to support the charity.

Community hub developments: The Friends continue to work with the London Borough of Enfield council on finding an ideal solution to bringing this project home. The longer term aim is still to have a permanent community hub fit for all the community. Further details on this project will be made public during the year. The previous AGM presentation (2018) covered the hub and also the sports facilities that we were encouraging the council to develop and this included a Multi Sports Pitch which is ongoing. As many of you are aware, the tennis courts were launched autumn of 2018 by collaborative working between the Friends, LTA and LBE. In addition, the Friends have brought in two robust outdoor table tennis tables which are well used already. In summary, exciting sports initiatives for Firs Farm.

Strategically, we are working with LBE on an overall action plan and this is crucial to ensure that FOFF are future proofing the charity for the benefit of the community.

As always we must end being by saying a big ‘THANK YOU’ to all the volunteers and supporters for their hard work over the last 12 months. Stewart Griffin was voted as our volunteer of the year 2018.

The Friends recorded 3019 hours of volunteering during the year 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 and in excess of 11,800 hours since we began the group. In spite of not having on-site facilities!

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Friends of Firs Farm Park

How our Charitable objectives & purposes benefit the public:-

In essence we bring the community together for events, interests, and sporting / other in/outdoor activities can, as well as providing volunteer opportunities, reduce loneliness and encourage healthier lifestyles.

Some of the benefits that the Friends bring to the community are:

Environmental protection/improvement benefits. Friend's volunteers support the management, maintenance, conservation and protection of the park for all the community and wildlife to enjoy and benefit.

Wildlife, domestic animals & their owners benefit from a diversified park. Habitat management increases wildlife and this can encourage inspiring new hobbies & interest.

Health Benefits to the local community – A mindfulness space contributes towards improved mental health and promotes wellbeing activities. A mile circuit pathway encourages people to get outside and get active whilst cyclists, wheelchairs, buggies and school children have smooth safe access around the park.

Community development/ ownership - community clean-up/wetlands, festival/seasonal event days all help bring together a varied community from all walks of life to engage with each other and help reduce social isolation, encourages ownership and volunteering for the benefit of all the community.

Amateur sport - tennis courts, outdoor tennis tables, football pitches, cycle paths provide opportunities that will encourage physical fitness but also supports bringing together different groups and, once again, prevents social isolation, encourages people to get out and get active.

Education / heritage – Improved public awareness, promoting the park history, links to education, Science of SUDS and accolades. All community groups benefit from the outdoor classroom/pond. The park 'brings to life' the role of SUDS how it has helped the environment, attracted new wildlife, improved overall awareness of wetlands management, biodiversity & flood relief.

Thank you

The FOFF Trustees



Friends of Firs Farm Park

What has been accomplished during the past twelve months?

In addition to the usual business of the Friends to ensure we further our purposes and encourage all to participate in the park (refer to the 2018 AGM report), we have the following to share with you:

1. **1st year as an established registered charity with the Charities Commission (No. 1177069)**

FoFF having been set up as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) held an AGM and re-elected the initial members: Chair, Toni Guiver, Treasurer, Eileen Herlihy, Secretary, Gail Nielen.

So policies have been established include constitution, safe guarding, privacy, trustee and member recruitment and finance.

In 2019, FOFF will be looking for trustees who are excited about continuing the good work seen in the wetlands and park.

2. **Bringing diverse communities together through our exciting events in Firs Farm**

Alongside the extremely useful corporate events which pull in much needed volunteers to maintain the wetlands, FOFF also focuses on pulling in different types of park users:

1. Promoting mental well-being, 'Get Out & Get Active', sessions on Monday & Saturday mornings to work in the park e.g. conservation works
2. Encouraging schools and youth groups to use the pond dipping platform and outdoor classroom
3. Hosting fun activities and games throughout the year that bring communities together.
4. FOFF community festival (summer)

This event was successful despite the heat and clash with the World cup football. This event was sponsored by the Big Lottery Grant and supported by the funfair, Coggers National Amusements and a multitude of stands including the entertaining sheep show and reptile handling. Funds raised were contributed to the community hub/café which is an ongoing project.

5. Walking group – taking advantage of the mile circuit in the park to help with health and well-being and the woodland trail to encourage more to Get out & Get Active in Firs Farm.

3. **Firs Farm (FF) Transformation Project / improvements/ maintenance...**

Key improvements that have been implemented throughout the year from the initial consultation and the FoFF management plan:

- **Table tennis tables installed: well used and funded through the FOFF**
- **Four beautiful flood-lit tennis courts launched in October 2018 by LBE/LTA and FOFF**
- **Installation of new lighting from A10 to Firs lane by LBE to improve safety for walkers and cyclists**
- **Tree planting:** across the year, FOFF has planted a further 100+ new, young trees taking the overall to over 550 planted since 2014 in Firs Farm.
Picnic Table: these have been donated and well used throughout the year.
- **Improved Beds (Wetlands/pond areas):** this includes the stumpery and has attracted funding from Enfield in bloom.

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Friends of Firs Farm Park

- **Wildlife:** increased spotting of wider variety of birds and water fowl. Including red data species House Sparrows, sparrow hawk, grebe, and egret. FOFF plan to carry out surveys to monitor the increase in wildlife.
- **Signage** –Welcome board map should be in place by the end of March. Missing finger path sign has been revamped and reinstalled after vandalism.
- **Interpretation** - New Interpretation by the Stumpery is due to be installed early May 2019.
- **Brown Signs** - The Friends have applied to LBE for Brown Signage due to Firs Farm being a tourist attraction in LBE.
- **Signs in the park** –Temporary signs e.g to advise visitors ‘Do not feed bread to the wildlife’ etc.

Accolades

- **Enfield in Bloom:** Gold winner 2018 ‘Best Highway/open space planting’ (third consecutive year)
- **Ann Tott Memorial cup:** winner 2018 (second consecutive year)

Working with third parties/stakeholders/business.

- FOFF continue work with Enfield council to review the key milestones for Firs Farm transformation.
- Work with schools has included pond dipping, wetlands tour, planting, and habitat improvement. In 2018, FOFF supported the local Latymer school to complete the 6th form fieldwork needed for A level Biology, making savings along the way for the school and students.
- Corporate Volunteer Events hosted by the Friends totalled more than 100 hours in the last year.
- Setting the standard as a pilot community Wetlands project, international stakeholders from 6 EU countries visited FOFF as part of the ‘Blue Green Infrastructures through Social Innovation’ (BEGIN)
- Expecting another International visit, later this year, in collaboration with Thames 21 and LBE, to showcase what has been achieved with FOFF.

4. Membership / Volunteers

Despite GDPR, our current membership stands at 210 which has increased from 2017. For FOFF, there are still no fees charged for membership although donations are always welcome.

5. Social Media / Google maps

We currently have 947 facebook followers, 614 on Twitter and 326 on Instagram. O

Our rating on Googles maps stands at a healthy 4.5

We have received 145 reviews the latest comment being just 4 days ago

“I love going for walks around Firs Farm wetlands with my family. It’s beautifully landscaped and the volunteers do such a great job with new planting / initiatives. I would love part of the area to have a playground too so my son can play there as well as see all the wildlife and flowers!”



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6. Funding/donations

The Friends raised funds at a number of events including the community 2018 Festival, 'Spooky Walk in the Woods' for Halloween, 'National Children's day' (reference treasurer's report), World wetlands day (Feb), Quiz night with over a hundred quizzers (April) and many others.

We are grateful to have received a number of donations from local companies, supporting this green space including materials and time. FOFF work closely with businesses that supported the festival and Halloween e.g On Broadway, Hunters, Travis Perkins, Homecare Preferred, Zumba with Sonia, Sainsbury's, Waitrose,

The Friends applied for a number of funds and kindly refer to the Treasurers report for the complete list of all donations received during the past year. Started to raise funds for the first changing places toilet in Enfield green space.

What does the Future hold for Firs Farm and our much loved green space?

- Community hub development which includes the sports facilities is an ongoing project.

Summary- In summary, FOFF is now a registered Charity, dedicated to maintaining and protecting the park and wildlife for public benefit. The friends are a gold status group which is evidenced by the past 12 month's volunteer hours in excess of 3019. There is **no membership fee** in order to keep the group 'open to all'. Come and join us and show that you L♥ve your Green Space.

Thank you

The Trustees of Friends of Firs Farm

Please find attached the following:

- *Elections of Trustees & Committee*
- *Treasurers Report*
- *Membership Form*

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