



# Friends of Firs Farm

Registered Charity 1177069

## 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 - 5<sup>th</sup> June 2025

This report is to highlight the achievements and the aims of the group 'Friends of Firs Farm (FOFF)' for the twelve-month period to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

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#### Message from the Trustees – Thank you for your continued support with this special blue-green space!

It has been another busy year at Firs Farm.

#### Firs Farm Community Hub

During the first year, since opening end of February 2024, the hub interior and exterior areas have undergone quite a transformation, with works completed in the sensory room, the additions of a baby change unit, bike/buggy shelter, some signage, hard & soft landscaping, planters, planting and removal of the graffiti from the area.

All to create a more welcoming look and feel to our Community Hub. Enjoy! 😊

#### Events

In July, we held our 'Official Launch of Firs Farm Community Hub' and ribbon cutting by local celebrity, Melvin O'Doom. It was a fun family event with lots going on and visitors, who after years of waiting, were glad to finally have the much-needed facilities on site to make their visits to Firs Farm more enjoyable. We were grateful to the many local bands, singers and musicians who came along to entertain the crowds.

The Hub has made a significant difference to our popular annual events, that were all well attended, and included: Tree planting, Easter trail & quiz, pond activities, Spooky walk, and fabulous Winter walk, complete with Santa's Grotto and a large Firs Farm Rudolph with sleigh. He was a very popular attraction for visiting families over the festive season. Our thanks to Homecare Preferred Social Enterprise, Leons, PH Tennis and The Boys Brigade for all their support with Firs Farm events in the last year and not forgetting all the 'elpful elves 😊

#### Thank you again to all the Firs Farm Volunteers

This much valued team of dedicated people have, since before 2014 given up their own time for free to help make a difference to this much-loved blue & green community space. Firs Farm would not be what it is today without them. A hard-working team who also run events bringing the community together, welcoming visitors, help with access and tours, spend time improving the green & blue space all for the benefit of the community, wildlife and biodiversity.

**Duke of Edinburgh** – We continue to see more and more young people joining us each year and for them to get to know and understand more about volunteering in their local wetlands and how they can contribute.

Thank you

The FOFF Trustees

Becky Beach, Chris Ferrari, Paul Guiver, Simon Jarosch & Toni Guiver



# Friends of Firs Farm Park

Firs Farm Wetlands and Playing Fields and its unique position in the borough of Enfield brings a diverse community of people together. One of the borough's earliest and largest flood alleviation schemes has in under ten years, evolved into an important blue/green space, a diverse habitat for hundreds more species; enriching the lives of local residents. An award-winning site, visited by scientific institutions, ecological groups and local authorities from across the country to study both the environmental and amenity and social benefits in creating an amazing sustainable urban drainage system (SUDs).

## Our Trustees and members

We currently have more than 500 members, 5 of which are trustees, with around approximately 25 active volunteers. As a charity we are only as good as our Trustees and members and so we thank all members who got involved in the last year's work for the Friends of Firs Farm and we encourage others who feel that protecting a green & blue space is important for the community to come forward.

We are keen to involve more people with an interest in history, wildlife, education and environment. If you are interested or have skills in administration, volunteer leadership, or events to support our charity, please contact us.

## Volunteers

Together, volunteers and community have planted on excess of 3500 trees / whips to date with around 70% survival rate. As always, the tree planting events were a huge success, but it was a sad day when 80 of the newly planted trees to create a hedge habitat by the A10 were all removed in early 2025 – Where did the go! We will replant this next time and keep an eye on it. Many of the native trees planted included English oak, hornbeam, hawthorn, blackthorn, white birch, rowan, hazel, silver birch, beech, and several large fruiting trees.

The Cornus mass (Cornelian Cherry -planted December 2022) and the Japanese Sakura project Cherry Trees (planted 2021) were a wonderful sight when in full blossom. Tasks to water, weed and mulch these, continue to be carried out by regular volunteers with local residents supporting (we always need more help with watering). This important planting and care of our trees, supports mitigating some of the climate change, attracts and supports further wildlife.

## Get out & Get Active in Firs Farm

There is so much more at Firs Farm and it has been a great year with activities increasing and more visitors enjoying the 4 Tennis courts, table tennis, walking, jogging, just enjoying the nature and wildlife along with so many new activities & classes taking place in/out of the Hub.

We have seen a big increase in local schools/ families meeting up for extracurricular activities after school and in nursery groups due to the facilities being available. What a difference handwashing and toilets can make to a blue green space, especially with the added bonus of 'Changing Places Toilet' and sensory room.



The long-term project of the multi-sport pitch is unfortunately still in limbo with the council. Sadly, this project would have made a difference to the local hockey and football teams and we continue to encourage the council to now progress this project to no avail. The councils Enfield Sports strategy (adopted April 2018) has yet to be progressed by the council!

## Wildlife

The terrapins are back. Thankfully we now have a Duck feed station to hopefully deter people from spreading loaves of bread everywhere. It is good to see protected species are still thriving e.g.: water voles, slow worms, and stag beetles to name but a few. Please remember to use GIGL for recording Sightings of birds/ wildlife. <https://www.gigl.org.uk/submit-records/>

**LOVE YOUR GREEN SPACE**

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# Friends of Firs Farm Park

**Council matters.** Gates and bins, fly-tip, litter, benches and other issues

The annual 'Walkabout' with the council parks officers, councillors and the FOFF last took place in 2022 – we are expecting these to resume in 2025. We are also made aware by the new park teams, that a number of other changes are afoot in terms of future governance for Friends groups and volunteering in parks in general!

Public meetings with the Friends are an opportunity to discuss concerns and aspirations for the park.

We are continuing discussions with the council in relation to paths, vegetation, benches for access all-round the 1 mile circuit, and entrance to the car park including DDA parking. Gating and fencing for better site security is still something that we have to carry forward due to the time spent on the Hub Building. We will share updates of future maintenance / improvements / changes as and when we are in a position to do so. Please join us and help make a difference for the next 12 months in Firs Farm.

## **Social Media / Google maps / website**

Our website is still under review. We continue to use Facebook and Instagram with healthy follower numbers. But are looking for support with social media. Anyone? .

Our rating on Googles maps remains at a healthy 4.5.Star rating (580 good reviews).

Google reports that the average time spent at Firs Farm by visitors has doubled from 45 minutes in 2024 to 1.5 hours since we installed Firs Farm Community Hub.

## **Funding/donations**

Funds/pledges all help us to continue to develop, protect and maintain this space for our communities.

Please refer to the Finance report for further information.

## **Summary**

In summary, FOFF, a registered Charity, dedicated to maintaining and protecting the park and wildlife for public benefit. The friends are an active group which is evidenced by volunteer hours since inception of **more than 31,500**.

There is currently **no membership fee** in order to keep the group 'open to all'. Donations are always welcome.😊

Come and join us and show that you **L♥ve your Green Space**.

Thank you

**The Trustees of Friends of Firs Farm**

**Registered Charity 1177069**

*Please also refer to the following: 1 Treasurers Report, 2 Elections of Trustees & Committee, 3 Membership Form*

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