








FRIENDS OF YEADING WALK NEWSLETTER, May 2024

The Community speaks out in a recent Park Survey

While concerns about bins, benches, paths, litter and safety were listed as important, it was noteworthy that two thirds of respondents listed 'wildlife' as a reason for visiting Yeading Walk. New native trees and planting for biodiversity and pollinators were also rated as important, reflecting a focus on environmental issues.

| 7. What actions should we be taking to help the environment (Multiple Answers) | | | | |
|--|---|---|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Choices | | | Response Percent | Response Total |
| 1 | Improve bio-diversity (planting different plants and trees to support insects, birds, bats) |  | 76.92% | 50 |
| 2 | Improve habitat for wildlife (bird & bat boxes, wood piles, leaving nettles & brambles in wild areas, leaving areas of grass uncut) |  | 72.31% | 47 |
| 3 | Promptly report ground and water pollution and contamination incidents |  | 69.23% | 45 |
| 4 | Increase litter picking frequency |  | 23.08% | 15 |
| 5 | Clean the stream |  | 46.15% | 30 |
| 6 | Increase vegetation/aquatic planting in the stream |  | 46.15% | 30 |
| 7 | Leave the wild areas of the park undeveloped |  | 43.08% | 28 |

Park users greatly enjoy the new stepping stones in the Nature Walk but respondents like the wildness and the peace of Yeading Walk and do not want the park to be over-manicured. There was a mixed response to some of the cutting back of vegetation along the stream as part of Harrow's 'Yeading Brook Unbound' project but the objective of improving the health of the river was supported. Thank you to all who completed the FoYW Survey, either online or in-person in the park. Your views are important, and we shall be guided by your priorities.

The full results are posted on our website at www.friendsofyeadingwalk.co.uk.

CONSERVATION & WILDLIFE

Bird nesting boxes set up along the Nature Walk

FoYW's Warden has sited four bird boxes on trees along the Nature Walk, between the large wooden bridge and the stepping stones. There are three small-holed boxes and a box designed for woodpeckers (the one made from a trunk of a silver birch i.e. not square). The nesting boxes have been placed with their entrances facing north/east, to keep them from direct sunlight and most of the prevailing wind and rain. The woodpecker box had to be sited over 3m from the ground, with the others are between 2 and 4m. Woodpeckers don't build a nest inside their boxes/hollow trees, so moss was added to the nest box for them.

They also like to create their own entrance hole, which will be an indication that the nest box is in use. So walk quietly through the Nature Walk, be sure not to wake the baby birds.



Bird box, Nature Walk



Woodpecker Box

If you are interested in putting your own nest boxes up in your garden, see the following:

Build a bird box: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/helping-nature/what-you-can-do/activities/build-a-birdbox>

All about nest boxes for birds: <https://rspb.org.uk/helping-nature/what-you-can-do/activities/all-about-nest-boxes>

FoYW funding award for planting native trees and spring blossom

Recent funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), was allocated to support Friends and nature conservation groups. FoYW was awarded funding for a plan to plant three native trees along the Suffolk Road boundary, as well as three flowering crab apples at the Suffolk Road park entrance. The boundary trees will include a *Populus nigra* (black poplar), a *Fagus sylvatica* Dawyk Purple (purple-leaf beech) and a *Castanea sativa* (sweet chestnut). The flowering crab apples include *Malus Evereste* (white blossom), *Malus Mokum* (rosy-red blossom) and *Malus Rudolph* (deep pink), all of which will provide a welcome spring blossom hit for bees emerging from winter hibernation.

The sites will be prepared later in the summer with planting in autumn. The park has lost a number of trees over recent years, reflecting aging in the current tree stock. Replacement of lost trees is a key element of the FoYW conservation and environmental strategy.

EVENTS – PAST AND FUTURE

The Problem with Plastics: ‘Less Plastic – Fantastic!’ Earth Day Event

On a recent, chilly Saturday afternoon, students from Longfield School and other young eco-warriors gathered to create drawings with coloured chalk on the Suffolk Road entrance path. The theme was the need to reduce single-use plastic (used once, then discarded).



Greenpeace is calling for a 60% reduction in plastics production by 2040 and the elimination of all single use plastic by 2030. It is a complex subject, but it is projected that by 2050 there will be more plastic (by weight) than fish in the oceans- a sobering thought. Meaningful reduction in plastic production requires concerted action from governments and companies, but we were impressed by youngsters' enthusiastic ideas about how we could reduce our own individual use of single use plastic.

Their pictures on the path challenged us all: What will you do to help?

Make Way! Scouts 'Log Rolling' Event, 19th May

Recent Sunday afternoon strollers in the park had to move smartly out the way while the 4th Headstone Scouts energetically 'log rolled' large pieces of the fallen crack willow to their new locations in the park.



Easy with teamwork



A different tactic



And the easiest option

After the tree was felled by an earlier storm, contractors left several pieces of the trunk near the river. The Scouts heaved sections into place as extra seating under the large sycamores and positioned as smaller stumps as 'resting perches' in the Nature Walk. Remaining sections and small branches were used to build the mother-of-all log piles at the Suffolk Road boundary, forming a palatial home for insects and providing a future hibernation retreat in winter weather.

Thank you, and well done, Scouts.

'Tree Walk & Talk', Tuesday 11 June, 10 am, Meet at the Northumberland Road entrance

FoYW are delighted to welcome John Wells, a dendrologist (specialist in woody plants) from Harrow Recreation Ground, a sister Harrow park. John will be leading a 'Walk & Talk' through Yeading Walk, identifying trees of interest, providing planting and care tips for our park tree planting programme, and hopefully, giving advice on how to improve fruit quality in Yeading Walk's Community Orchard, currently beset with little beasts chewing up the apples. Bring along a thermos of coffee/tea (we'll bring the biscuits) and stay to chat and compare tree planting experiences. Do join us.

This event is part of 'Big Green Week', which runs from 8 – 16th June, with a focus on activities to combat climate change.

Aquatic Planting in the River, Saturdays, Volunteering 1st & 15th June

FoYW welcome community volunteers to us help plant a range of attractive aquatic plants in the stream, both to improve river health and provide habitat for river life. This will be a trial exercise to see how the plants survive when the stream rises after heavy rain.

FoYW volunteers recently spent a couple of cheerful, muddy mornings in the stream removing invasive sedge from sunny sections of the river banks, now ready for planting. (Guess who got the muddiest.... the one on the left).



Sedge removal team, task completed

The aquatic plants have been provided by Harrow's Principal Landscape Architect under the Council's 'Green Grid' funding programme. Planting will include yellow flag irises, purple loosestrife, marsh marigolds, flowering rush, water mint and others. Aquatic plants don't like to sit around out of water, so will need prompt attention following delivery by a specialist nursery on 31 May.

But, we need your help!!



Iris pseudocaorus (Yellow Flag Iris)



Lythrum salicaria (Purple loosestrife)

Join the team for an enjoyable volunteering occasion, and to make a difference for our river.

The dates (above) are weather dependent, so please sign up by sending an email to foywgroup@gmail.com, so we can advise if plans change. You will need knee-high wellies, bring gloves, and a drink; we'll provide tools, additional gloves (and the snacks!) There may be other volunteering days during the week, so watch our notice boards for information.

Support FYW at St Alban's Fair, 11 – 3pm, 8th June

This is always a friendly and enjoyable event, and we hope you will come along to support St Alban's Church, North Harrow. The Friends shall have a stall selling plants and good quality 'once loved' children's books. If you have children's books and spare plants (vegetables or ornamentals) and would like to donate these to raise funds for the maintenance of the park, we should be pleased to collect your donations from you prior to the fair.

Please advise us by emailing foywgroup@gmail.com with 'St Alban's Fair donation' in the subject line.

The Streamside Bed is finally planted

After nearly two years delay, while the left riverbank was reinforced and pollution issues with the outfall pipes investigated, planting of the Streamside bed finally began. The bed contains a number of plants for evergreen structure: Choisya 'Aztec Pearl', Pittosporum 'Tom Thumb', phormiums, as well as plants which will bring biodiversity and summer blossom for the bees, such as broom, purple sage, spirea, potentilla, berberis, alliums as well as a number of grasses. The next 2-3 years will see planting establish and fill out, with future focus on adding plants with a more naturalised feel to the streamside. Funding for this area was secured by a FoYW bid to the Post Code Lottery.

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST, SUPPORT YOUR PARK AND BECOME A FRIEND OF YW

Be a Winner with 'Harrow Wins'

This is a local Harrow lottery to benefit good causes in Harrow. Tickets cost only £1, of which 60p goes to your nominated beneficiary, which we hope will be Yeading Walk. Local lottery odds are so much more favourable than the National Lottery, and we have had a number of Yeading Walk winners, so support your park, PLAY TODAY and GOOD LUCK! See details at website harrowwins.co.uk

Looking After the Park

We welcome families and volunteers to help us with projects and ongoing activities at Yeading Walk. We continue to raise funds to support and improve the park, and for specific projects. Just an occasional hour of your time makes a huge difference. Join our friendly group of volunteers for Project Saturdays from 9.30 a.m. until around 12 pm. Visit our website at friendsofyeadingwalk.co.uk, or join our active volunteer WhatsApp group by sending us a request with your mobile number via email. Email: FoYWG@group@gmail.com

We encourage everyone who loves Yeading Walk to support the park. As a Friend of Yeading Walk, **your annual donation of £5 /year works out to 1.4p/day - a bargain in anyone's books.** Please enable the Friends to care for your park by making your annual voluntary donation today. If donating by electronic transfer of funds, kindly give your name or that of your organisation as a reference. Do send us an email when you donate, using email address foywgroup@gmail.com with 'TREASURER – Payment' in the subject line, so that we can thank you for becoming a Friend and keep you updated with all the latest news.

Your contributions, suggestions and comments are welcome and greatly appreciated.

BANK: National Westminster
ACCOUNT NAME: Friends of Yeading Walk
ACCOUNT NUMBER: 21131511
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Sincerely, Committee, Friends of Yeading Walk.

