



FRIENDS OF YEADING WALK ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING 29TH SEPT 2024

Held in the North Harrow Community Library

No.	Subject	Action
1.	<p>Attendees</p> <p>FoYW Committee: Mary Wayne (Chair, MW), Jiri Fuchs (Treasurer, JF) Jacob Gloor (Warden, JG), Hilary Scott (Secretary, HS), Marianne Leeson (Amenities, ML), Eddie Oag (Projects, EO)</p> <p>Other attendees: 18 FoYW members & 3 non-members: MR (Community Engagement, Harrow Council)</p>	
2.	<p>Welcome & Apologies</p> <p>3 Apologies were received. The Chair opened the meeting by thanking everyone for their support and also the volunteers for their hard work.</p>	
3.	<p>Chair Update</p> <p>Communications/Contact with Harrow Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Project Manager for Harrow Council's 'Yeading Brook Unbound' has taken up a new appointment outside the Council. There is a new Biodiversity Officer, who will be visiting the parks involved in the project and we expect an update from the parks' representative on the project's board. Areas of concern for Yeading Walk are the removal of the Japanese knotweed, the bamboo – which was cut and is now rapidly regrowing, and the cherry laurel – which was drastically cut back and responsibility for keeping this low must be assigned. • Cllr Janet Mote, former Mayor, is the Portfolio Holder for Community and Culture and this includes the parks. The Council is reviewing the Park Events Strategy and a new policy will be issued tightening rules and requirements for events in the park. Larger events may require security presence and a doctor on site. New guidelines will be issued • Green Grid Funding: Yeading Walk will be the recipient of Green Grid funding for the third year. This will fund creation of a woodland area with British woodland plants and wildflowers near the fallen log close to Northumberland Road. Work is expected to be undertaken Oct – Feb. Green Grid projects are part of the FoYW strategic plans <p>Harrow Parks Forum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Friends Groups are affiliated to HPF but not controlled by it. Each Friends Group is a fully independent, self-governing group, responsible to the Council for their actions and projects in the parks. HPF provide policies, arrange volunteers' insurance, act as a conduit between the Council and the Friends groups, support new park user groups. • Green Flag Parks: 6 parks currently have green flag status (Cannons, Harrow Rec, Kenton, Pinner Memorial, Roxeth, Headstone Manor). Three additional parks have been proposed - (Hatch End Riverside, 	



		<p>Chandos, West Harrow). Green flag status is viewed as desirable by the Council, but requires additional maintenance and attention, which may detract from services offered to all other parks. The issue of whether this focus is misplaced was raised at HPF AGM, and it was suggested that a focus on the environment, biodiversity and climate change was more relevant</p> <p>FoYW vision for next 12 months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee focus on the river, planting for biodiversity and support for wildlife would continue. There will be emphasis on conservation and sustainability for park improvements this year, with a programme encouraging wider volunteering and community involvement. 	
4.	Wardens Report	<p>JG outlined the role of a park warden, including the FoYW 5-year plan that the committee submits to Harrow Council. This incorporates planting and increasing biodiversity. There will also be a grass cutting plan to allow for some wild areas throughout the park. The group will be planting seven new trees in the park, following a successful funding bid.</p> <p>JG explained that some bramble control is required but this will be replaced with other grasses and plants to encourage wildlife. Yeading Walk is designated a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) which requires good management and stewardship.</p> <p>Speaking for the committee, JG feels that it is important to listen to park users and strike a balance between encouraging wildlife and making Yeading Walk a space for park users to enjoy.</p>	
5.	Harrow Council Community Engagement	<p>MW introduced MR, a member of the Harrow Council Community Engagement team. She explained that there is a new Nature Recovery Officer as well as Biodiversity Ranger. She underpinned the need to ensure that a balance is struck between trying to increase biodiversity by leaving areas wild and ensuring that park users can safely enjoy the park.</p> <p>MW commented that 25 % of the park remains wild and that the committee had made an earlier decision to restrict the extent of the Nature Walk, recognising that wild areas in the park are important for wildlife.</p>	
6.	Questions, Comments & Answers	<p>Q. DW felt that balance is the key issue and feels that the cutting of the cherry laurel was a step too far and asked why there had been no consultation over the Yeading Brook Unbound Project</p> <p>A. A discussion took place about whose responsibility it is to inform residents about council run projects. The committee accepts that they can help disseminate information but it is ultimately the council's responsibility to consult and inform the public of Council-led major projects.</p> <p>C. HO agreed that it was important to keep a balance and thanked the FoYW committee for all their work. She explained that she is a regular user of the park and noted the significant increase in people using it. She also stated that she had never felt safer in Yeading Walk than she does now and feels that it is great for families particularly with the introduction of the stepping stones.</p>	

		<p>C. GG also felt that there had been a great improvement in the park and that the committee had done a great job.</p> <p>C. GR agreed that the park feels much safer and now feels able to use the park. She said that it is an absolute joy to walk through and feels that it is great for her mental well-being. She agrees that we need to respect biodiversity but also strike the correct balance.</p> <p>C. MO has enjoyed using the bench to sit on and bring her grandchildren to the park. She feels that it is a glorious area and enjoys listening to the birdsong.</p> <p>Q. AS felt that there was misinformation about the park which has been a SINC for 40 years. She felt that it was important to stop calling it a park and that we should use the correct language so that park users are aware that it is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. She also felt that wildlife had decreased since the group started their work. AS stated, that the committee should take direction from the council Biodiversity Officer.</p> <p>A. JG pointed out that the Committee has received considerable input /in-person guidance from the Biodiversity Officer. The group generally disagreed that wildlife has declined in the park with sightings of muntjac deer, badgers, bats and many different species of birds.</p> <p>Q. AS also raised the issue of the cleared area and hide with log seating behind the allotments which attracted some park users to sit in the hide and play music (on two occasions).</p> <p>A. MW explained that this area had been created for children and families to enjoy. The committee removed the log seating when this issue was first raised by the allotment users and also the second time later after some logs were brought back by persons unknown. The allotment holders are able to speak to the park users themselves if necessary. Satisfactory outcome can usually be achieved by little effort at the time of the disturbance.</p> <p>Q. AS also raised the issue of the trees that had been planted in the football field which are supported by canes which she feels are a safety hazard.</p> <p>A. It was generally felt that this was not an issue and that the continuing spread of brambles were more of a concern than the saplings.</p> <p>Q. JR raised the issue of the lack of bins in the park which have never been replaced following damage.</p> <p>A. MW explained that the committee have been asking for the bins to be replaced for the last 2 years. MR said that she would raise the issue of bin replacement with the relevant council department.</p> <p>C. MR emphasised the fact that it is important to focus positively on what we can achieve together moving forward and work collaboratively rather than being aggressive. She also pointed out that it is inappropriate behaviour to use social media and other online forums to air grievances or for personal attacks.</p> <p>C. HS commented that she thought that the Harrow Council Green Team did a great job and that the committee enjoyed a good relationship with the council.</p>	MR
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