

Friends of Waltham Forest 'Informal Networking Meeting' Agenda

Date: Wednesday 27th October 2021

Time: 18.00 – 21.00

Venue: St Marys Welcome Centre & Welcome Garden

Present: Jonny Joseland (TCV & *facilitator*), (Isabel Lincoln Welcome Garden & *minutes*), Karen Esson (Greenway Avenue Community Garden), Graham Nevill (Greenway Avenue Community Garden), Gabriel Ellenberg (Cambrian Gardens), Sue Burton (William Morris Big Local), Steve Williams (Friends of Leyton Jubilee Park, Friends of St Marys Churchyard, Friends of Abbots Park).

Apologies: John Lawal (Lloyd Park Skate Park Users Group), Gordon Turpin (Highams Park Planning Group), Gabriel (William Morris Big Local), Katie Clare (Friends of Cheney Row Park), Maureen Schipper (Priory Court Community Garden), Caroline Scott (Queens Boundary Community (Thomas Gamuel Park)), Rizwana Ahmed (Bisterne Avenue Park and Surrounds).

18.00 Participants arrive, chance to chat and explore Welcome Garden.

18.30 'Formal' meeting to start.

- Welcome, technical info. (5 mins)
- Round circle: Introductions. (10 mins)
- Discussion: How do we see the future of the Waltham Forest Friends Forum? How do we communicate and learn from each other? (10-15mins)
 - Future of the Friends of Forum eg Haringey as example of what it could be.
Quarterly meetings?
Guest Speakers?
Group learning?
 - "Please can you get feedback on the support TCV provides them (not your performance, but the different aspects of the support).
E.g. do they benefit from the forums, do they only like the informal forum, do they need the training courses, is the more informal support useful, are they a group that doesn't need much support, is there anything else they'd like etc etc."
 - Issue that community gardens and Friends of Parks groups have different needs and require different support – eg disparate nature of groups means that training in past has been good for some groups and not so good for others
 - It's hard to articulate needs when it is unclear what is on offer.
 - Unclear what the benefit is of a forum, especially for small groups.
 - Suggestion: forum meetings offer training, giveaways, practical skill shares – needs to be something of concrete value in the meeting.
 - Fear that contact with TCV will mean more forms and bureaucracy.
 - Suggestion: can council provide pre-completed forms/examples of completed forms to show what is expected of groups?

- Unclear what TCV's contract is – is it capacity building? At what point does TCV hand over to community?
 - Suggestions for training: First Aid, Food Hygiene, Safeguarding, Tree planting, pruning.
 - Groups are unable to contact each other due to GDPR and rely on TCV.
 - Some cannot and do not fill out the booking forms as they are reliant on fundraising and don't want to be dishonest on the forms – community gardens are different to parks.
 - Clarity around contract was asked for and somewhat explained. Further clarity to be sought and communicated.
 - Suggestion: community groups access training through Capital Growth.
 - Suggestion: two forum meetings per year with tangible benefits is enough
 - Suggestion: Friends of Newsletter to be created by TCV (this is already in the pipeline)
 - Lack of clarity over responsibility of who within local authority manages local green assets (eg rain gardens, street planters, etc) – appears to be lots of disputed responsibility between highways and parks for example?
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- Round circle: Updates from groups/spaces. *(15 mins)*
 - Updates for reports have no tangible benefit to Friends of Parks groups at present.
 - Updates already given by some. Any other updates to be shared in newsletter to be sent to TCV.

 - Discussion: What does it mean to improve our parks? What is a Friends of group? *(10-15 mins)*
 - Discussion postponed due to time constraints.

 - Council updates. *(5-10 mins)*
 - Use of new form encouraged. Contact parks officers for support on this or anything else:
Ben – E4 parks (ben.frearson@walthamforest.gov.uk)
Ade – E10/E11 parks (adekunle.bello@walthamforest.gov.uk)
Ellie – E17 parks (ellie.mortimer@walthamforest.gov.uk)
 - As always, any other feedback, please pass on to TCV who can pass on to the necessary people.
 - London Friends of Green Spaces Network (LFGN) meeting on Monday 1st November

~ 19.30 'Formal meeting ends' – fire, food and networking.

21.00 Meeting end - all participants to have left building/garden.