

Making our groups stronger and more diverse

What does a strong and diverse Friends group look like and why is it important?

This will be different for each green space, each group and what we are trying to achieve. Broadly though, the principles are the same – having a diverse membership means we can more easily share the work, incorporate a range of interests, and engage and represent the wider community.

Different sections of our communities to engage might include:

- **Young people:** normally a big section of our park users with loads of energy and ideas. Try reaching out to local schools, scout or guide associations or holding specific events, such as sports activities and bug hunts to encourage more participation. Depends on the age group.
- **Minority ethnic communities:** sometimes, despite a diverse local community, it can be a challenge to engage a wide range of cultures in your group and vice versa. There might be language issues, or might be more transient populations or faith groups, which might use the park but prefer to get involved in other issues. Some Friends groups have created signs or posters in different languages, and reached out to local faith leaders and specialist associations. The latter can be the beginning of long-running partnerships and can lead to some amazing park events.
- **Working people and families:** making volunteering opportunities flexible, without need for commitment to full sessions (or having to attend meetings) can often encourage people who wouldn't normally feel they have time. Jobs can be broken down into bite-size pieces and presented as small tasks which people can help with without getting overwhelmed. They might be able to do some things from home (eg deliver flyers, update a webpage, or apply for funding)
- **Sports groups:** build relationships with the people in charge of the football, or tennis, or bowls, or running, or whatever sport. It can help to improve maintenance and facilities, grow our supporter network and understand where issues might occur between different users.
- **Park users generally:** who uses our park, when and why? When we're spending time in our park, let's speak to people about our projects and ideas – they might have thoughts to share. Ask them specifically if they have thought about getting involved – often people don't realise how easy it can be. We can build up our membership and

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contacts lists and keep people updated. We can also have reps from our members to lead on certain issues, interests, or under-represented sections of the community,

- **Other often under-represented groups:** eg people with mental or physical disabilities, people with specialist interests, people on a particular nearby estate, certain age groups (eg older teenagers).

Some groups have helped strengthen and diversify community involvement through the setting up of stakeholder forums for all the key user groups using a green space, eg the local school, Residents Association, sports club, dog owners, parent and toddler group, cafe manager, etc. Such forums can help build mutual support, relationships and partnerships, in which such groups share news and views, help with general publicity, and ensure good maintenance and management. There will also be opportunities to encourage new user groups to form, and projects and initiatives that engage people with specific interests who use the park.

The more we can reach out to, and interact with, a wide range of users, the better able we will be to understand our site and its surrounding communities, to engage and involve more people, to know what improvements and activities people want, and to effectively represent park users in our efforts to protect and enhance our green space.



The National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces is the umbrella organisation for the movement of over 7,000 local Friends Groups for public green spaces throughout the UK, and their local area forums and networks. We are calling for the setting up of Friends groups for every green space, and Forums of such groups for every area and town. Together we can work for the resources, standards and management all the UK's green spaces deserve!

Visit our websites to find more information:

Friends Groups' issues, case studies, How To guides, and more:

www.parkscommunity.org.uk

About the Federation and strategic issues: www.natfedparks.org.uk

You can also contact Michelle at networks@natfedparks.org.uk



Recruiting and Managing Volunteers

Traditional routes to volunteering are changing and groups are competing for volunteers. Those who donate time want to know it is well spent, that work is well organised and their contribution is valued.

It is important volunteers are clear about their roles and the support they can expect from a group. It is recommended that groups have simple systems and procedures in place to ensure their volunteers have a great experience.

Role Descriptions

Provide written outlines, or descriptions, of volunteer roles to:

- give more information to the volunteer than is possible to convey at an initial meeting
- allow you to show where the volunteer's work fits in with the work of the group
- offer a list of tasks/activities so the volunteer can compare these with their skills and expectations
- describe the intended outcome of the work
- help others understand how the voluntary role applies to their own
- could include: title of role; objective(s) of role; a broad outline of tasks and activities to be undertaken; targets or measurements of performance; the name of the person who the volunteer reports to; location and work hours; how the role fits in with the work of the group; any skills and qualifications – essential and desirable

Recruitment

Posters

Leaflets

Your Website, Facebook Page, Twitter, Instagram account

Local Press

Through local Volunteer Centres

Other specialist volunteer recruitment "services" – Do-It.org, Team London etc

Volunteer Policy

A volunteering policy is a framework for a volunteer programme. It helps define the role of volunteers within the group, and how they can expect to be treated. It can help to:

- demonstrate your group's commitment to its volunteer programme and its individual volunteers. By having such a document in place you are showing that care and thought have gone into the volunteer programme.
- ensure consistency and that all volunteers are treated equally and fairly. Being able to refer to a written policy ensures that decisions do not have to be made on an ad hoc basis.
- allow volunteers to know where they stand; it offers some security, in that they know how they can expect to be treated, and where they can turn to if they feel that things are going wrong.

It might cover:

- Recruitment of volunteers, including equality and diversity
- Induction and training
- Expenses
- Supervision and support
- Health and safety
- Confidentiality and data protection
- Problem solving and complaint procedures for volunteers.

Volunteer agreements can be used to set out both a group's commitment to its volunteers and what it hopes for from its volunteers. They act as a reference point for volunteers and a reminder to the group that it should meet the standards of good practice that it has set. Typically an agreement might commit:

- to provide a full induction and any training necessary for the volunteer role
- to provide regular support to the volunteer in their role and a named contact for the volunteer who will support them in the role

- to treat volunteers in line with its equal opportunities policy
- to reimburse out-of-pocket expenses
- to provide insurance cover for the volunteers
- to implement good health and safety practice.
- follow policies and procedures relevant to volunteers and the role the volunteer is undertaking, eg equal opportunities, health and safety, and confidentiality
- meet mutually agreed expectations around the role, such as the amount of time the role is expected to take.

Induction

About the group

- its objectives and aims
- the kind of work done and why
- structure of the group
- importance of volunteers to the group

The Site/Base

- site layout, toilets. Parking etc
- site health and safety guidelines

The Role

- outline the volunteer role, tasks involved, confirm agreed commitment day/time
- Boundaries of role and expected conduct
- The process to follow if difficult situations arise
- Insurance cover
- Health and safety

Managing and retention

Managing your volunteers effectively and providing them with adequate support will help you retain them, so it is important to really get to know your volunteers. This means taking time for engagement, to understand what they find satisfying about volunteering and any concerns they may have about the role or the group. Volunteers do get bored; they have other things going on in their lives

Ensuring volunteers are given opportunities for engagement, giving and receiving feedback on their work is essential. Effective engagement ensures:

- Volunteers are committed to the project goals/process and are clear on what is required of them.
- Volunteers are genuinely representative of the target group.
- The activity is managed at, or very close to, full capacity.
- Increased value for money
- Builds a virtuous cycle that will enable future engagement.

Exit interviews are particularly helpful in this respect.

Getting feedback from volunteers can be either formal or informal the decision on which would depend on the volunteer and the environment in which they feel comfortable.

Examples could include:

Structured supervision meetings

Informal chats over tea and biscuits

Telephone meeting

If you follow the structures highlighted above you will significantly improve the likelihood that volunteers would feel valued, understand the importance of their contribution and feel satisfied in their roles. Therefore they are more likely to stay.

Further reading

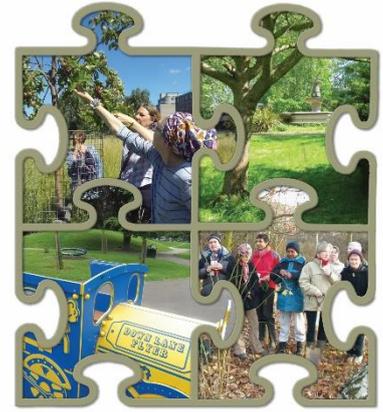
<https://www.tcv.org.uk/volunteering>

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering>

Partnership Working with Landowners and Managers

Effective partnerships – between on one hand Friends and community groups and on the other hand site landowners and managers - ensure that both parties understand and try to meet each other's needs. This is not always easy! It can take several years of working together before a good partnership can be created. But Friends Groups and parks service teams have proved to be an excellent and inspirational example of what can be achieved all over the UK.

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Here are some top tips to help when you're building partnerships

- **Understand the partners' viewpoints.** Sometimes a partnership can begin at a point of conflict, for example a group concerned about a proposed sale of public land or its neglect. Understanding the reason behind the cause of conflict can help both parties to find shared values and regardless of the outcome, build on this shared energy.
- **Build relationships.** Relationships take time to develop, including developing not only the levels of understanding and of trust, but also working out the range of practical mechanisms for communication, co-operation and joint decision-making. At a site level, there are many examples of this in action – see the Community Empowerment documents attached.
- **Help where you can.** Good partners make sure they work for each other as well as themselves. If you can help your partner, with or without any specific return, they will be more open to supporting you in future.
- **Find champions.** Reach out to different people within the relevant bodies, in many cases a local authority. If you can get a key councillor or other department outside of the parks team interested in your work, they can help create different support options for your group.
- **Work together with other Friends and community volunteer groups in your area.** By pooling resources and sharing information, knowledge and ideas between volunteer groups through a local greenspace forum, both the groups and the landowners/managers can ensure effective working across the whole area. In times of austerity, this can be especially useful if the land managers are stretched in terms of capacity, time and ability to engage. Also the parties can develop common ground and common cause in seeking the long term resources, policies and protection their public green spaces need.

What can you do if the partnership can't get going, or is now struggling?

- **Ask for a meeting.** Face-to-face meetings work well when trying to build or rebuild partnerships.
- **Express your concerns.** Keep the list of concerns short and succinct. Is this problem just related to you or does it affect a wider area? If you know other green space volunteer groups, do they have similar concerns? Focus on solutions – how can you overcome challenges?
- **Be patient.** Landowners might not be able to tackle everything in one go – especially in the current austerity context. And community groups have their own challenges and ups and downs, dependant as they are on the capacity and enthusiasm of their own volunteers/activists – not to be taken for granted!

What to do when the partnership is great

- **Praise your partner!** Make sure to thank partners when things are working well.
- **Think long term.** Try to meet partners regularly, including to discuss what each other are aiming to achieve in future – can you align your activities to theirs, and vice versa?
- **Empower the community.** Increase the level of active community engagement, involvement and empowerment at your site, and across your area.



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What does empowerment in green spaces look like?

Some of the possibilities and potential!

- Regular 'Friends of' meetings
- Regular coordination/co-management/partnership meetings.
- Management Plan, complemented with other smaller area Management Plans for various facilities/areas/activities/services at the site (and helping to, or writing, these)
- A range of user groups and good co-operation etc.
- Running park noticeboards ourselves
- Walkabouts with maintenance staff
- Meetings with contractors when on site
- Full consultation at the earliest stage
- Running projects ourselves
- Running or part-running various parts of the site
- Free access to, or running of, key buildings etc
- Storage space
- Memorandum of Understanding / Service Level Agreements with owner
- Vision for the future (plus helping to create it)
- Ability to take initiatives, or get quick 'sign off' as needed
- Free use of site for Friends-related community events/activities
- Good communications with relevant workers and officers
- Good communications with relevant stakeholders
- Resisting/seeing off inappropriate proposals/threats
- ... and add more examples yourself!

Some key success factors which help make it happen

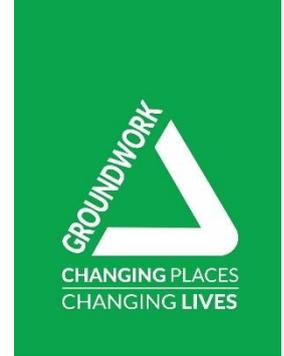
- The presence of a small number of key individuals with the vision, commitment and stamina to contribute to long term development and improvement.
- A welcoming approach which can attract a very broad range of local residents to become involved in a variety of roles
- A sympathetic local authority / parks management that views the Friends and other user groups as critical partners and is prepared/able to invest time in partnership-working.
- building up a track record of securing funding and then delivering projects successfully
- Strong values-driven approach: inclusive, welcoming, non-judgemental, secure, encouraging of involvement and sending out a message that the site is a resource for everyone
- Strong and inclusive 'leadership' asserting the above values and showing by example
- Consistency of approach with people able to rely on the involvement of key individuals and regular meetings always taking place as scheduled
- Being open and transparent in the approach taken with written documents and news being made widely available
- Having a physical focal point on the site
- Focusing on the positive and building on successes
- Having a long-term vision for the site and its various facilities/areas which those involved can buy into and work towards
- The encouragement, development and support of a range of autonomous and semi-autonomous user groups taking up specific issues or interests, with regular good communications and coordination among these
- Do It Yourself culture

LADDER OF INVOLVEMENT

for a Friends of the Park Group at a site, or part of site

In Control	You run your site, or the parts of it you want to.
Key partner	You are fully informed about all matters you want to know about. Involved in all the decision-making you are interested in.
A partner	Regularly informed about some key issues. Involved in some of the decision-making
Consulted Regularly	Informed about some things. Consulted sometimes.
Consulted occasionally	Only contacted when it suits the management, maybe on one issue. Your emails and phone calls are replied to.
Existence noted	Your activities and views are noted but carry little weight.
Ignored	Your efforts and views are ignored.

Fundraising Guide for Community Groups



1. Before you apply

Writing funding applications is much easier, and you are more likely to be successful, if you have prepared well with your group.

Funders require very specific information about what you want their money for, how it will be spent, and what this will help you to achieve.

The person or people writing the application may not be the same people running the activities. By involving as many people as possible from your group in the planning stage, you can make sure you describe the activities accurately and have a clear idea about what you will need to ask for money for.

Different funders fund different things. Having a good idea about what you need funding for will help you apply to funders that are more likely to give you funding.

Below is a list of planning activities that will maximise your chances of a fundraising bid being successful.

Do you have all the documents you need?

Most funders will want to see evidence that your group has:

- A committee
- A bank account
- A statement of your accounts for the last financial year (unless you are a new group).
- A governing document (e.g. constitution, trust deed, memos and articles)

Some funders will also ask for evidence of:

- Insurance
- A health and safety policy and/or risk assessment
- An equal opportunities policy
- A child protection or safeguarding policy if you work with children or vulnerable adults

Do you know exactly what you want money for?

Plan your work carefully so you know what you need money for. Before you start to write an application, you should be able to answer these key questions:

- What do you want to do?
- How much will it cost?
- Why is your work important?
- How will you know if you are doing a good job?

Each funder has their own priorities Key things to think about are:

- Does the project meet the funder's criteria?
- Will the project meet an identified need or address a gap in service provision?
- Can you deliver the outcomes – do you have access to the right specialisms or expertise?
- Do you have robust financial and project management systems?
- Is the budget realistic, cost effective and good value for money
- How will the project benefits be sustained? Who will maintain the project? Before you can apply for money for an event or activity, you need to know *exactly* what the activity is going to be.
- How often will it take place, what will it involve and how long will it last?
- Who is the activity for? Families? Children? Unemployed people? People who share a particular identity or experience?
- Who will organise and run the activity?
- Where will the activity take place and how will it be promoted?

How much do you need?

Funders will want to know exactly what you want to spend their money on. Make a budget for your project or activities. Include:

- A list of everything you will have to pay for, and how much each item will cost. This might include, for example, venue hire, equipment, transport, paying workers, volunteer expenses, publicity, and insurance.
- A list of any income you are already expecting (for example, from membership fees, donations, grants you've already received etc.).

Budget tips

- **Be accurate.** Get quotes for each item in your budget. Funders may come back and ask you what you have based your budget on, and you need to be able to show them that you have found out how much everything will really cost.
- **Don't underestimate.** Trying to make the budget look less than you really need could lead to financial problems that affect the other activities your group is involved in, and funders will be concerned if they think you are not being realistic.
- **Prepare a budget for your whole organisation for a year.** It's useful to do this, even if you are only applying for funding for a few things or a specific project. It will help you work out whether there is anything you need that you haven't already thought of.

Why is your work important?

Funders want to know that the money they give to groups and projects will make a difference to people's lives. They want to know what change will happen as a result of your activities. Many funders refer to this as the outcomes of your project.

Ask people who are involved in your group what the group means to them, what they get out of it, and why it is important in their lives. This could help you show that you are meeting people's needs.

You could also use statistical information to show the needs of the communities you are supporting. Contact your local authority, police and health authority, or look on their websites, to try to find information about deprivation, crime and health problems in your community. They may have this from the national census survey, or from their own local surveys. You can also use the [Index of Multiple Deprivation](#), which provides detailed information about a range of problems faced by different neighbourhoods.

Be sure to source information from reputable sources e.g. office of national statistics, council websites, Government reports etc.

There are a number of ways that you can evidence community need, which can be included in your funding application, such as:

- A community consultation report
- Letters of support from voluntary and community groups, local Councillors, Police, local schools, youth groups etc.
- Research on the geographical location, population, project theme
- Quotes from the community or intended beneficiaries of the project
- Links with local and regional government strategies and initiatives
- Statements from recognised professional institutions e.g. University research on the benefits your project will make to your target group.

How will a funder know you will do a good job?

Funders will want you to demonstrate you will be able to make your project a success. There are a number of ways that you can evidence your track record and organisational sustainability such as:

- A profile of the qualified and experienced people within your organisation and level of volunteer support
- Case studies of similar projects delivered by your group and what they achieved
- Evidence of long-term support from local institutions such as the local authority.

2. Writing a good application– top tips

1. Have a clear outline of the project – know exactly what you want to do.
2. Assume the funder knows nothing about your organisation or the subject matter.
3. Do not use jargon, use plain, succinct and simple language.
4. Pick out key words in questions the funder wants to see in each answer - use the funder's language.
5. Stick to the question, do not deviate.
6. Use positive statements, not weak / negative words ('We will try ...' is weak, 'We will...' is strong).
7. Think of your audience - use headlines, bullet points etc to make it easy for the funder to read.
8. Use visual aids – photographs which will pull on the emotions and show a difference.
9. Don't waffle - remove any redundant words.
10. Draft a detailed budget based on real figures. Don't apply for the maximum amount if you don't need to.
11. Read it aloud to someone else to see if they understand what you are asking for.
12. Allow time to proof read – attention to detail is important.

3. Why do applications fail?

Ten common reasons reported by funders are as follows.

1. The applicant is not eligible because of its legal form, lack of charity status, size or geographical remit.
2. Projects appear poorly planned.
3. Applicants do not present their project clearly and concisely on the application form.
4. The applicant fails to demonstrate that they meet the criteria.
5. Applications are made without monitoring and evaluation processes in place.
6. The budget is problematic and/or unconvincing
7. The applicant misses the deadline.
8. The form is incomplete.
9. The supporting documents are incomplete, inaccurate, out-of-date, contradict the application form or are simply not enclosed.
10. The applicant is asking for too much.

4. Fundraiser's checklist

Be prepared
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organisation's aims and objectives, annual accounts, bank details, constitution• Organisation track record, policies and procedures• Staff and volunteer profiles, how the organisation is managed
Be clear
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a project brief which should include: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, HOW, WHEN• Aims and objectives, activities, target audience, project duration• Delivery staff, key volunteers, project partners• The need the project addresses, the difference the project will make• Project milestones• Sustainability or maintenance plan• Total costs – revenue and capital
Evidence need
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation reports, letters of support from tenants and community groups• Quotes from community questionnaires• Expert testimonial (eg advocates for play, wildlife etc)• Demographic/statistical data, ward information, Government reports about your neighbourhood
Know your funder
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure the project fits the criteria, always read the guidelines and check your group is eligible• Find out who they funded before and to what level

- Make sure you are asking for eligible expenditure
- Is there a grants officer to contact for queries?
- Do you need to identify match funding?

Leave enough time

- Review the application form and the application process, assess whether you need further information and check whether the funder will answer questions
- Proof read and edit
- Double check the budget
- Make sure the right people have signed the form – including partners

5. Funding sources

- **Funding Central** This is a free resource for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises. It lists thousands of funding and finance opportunities, plus a wealth of tools and information to support and develop a sustainable income strategy. www.fundingcentral.org.uk
- **The National Lottery Community Fund** Responsible for distributing money raised for good causes by the National Lottery. This totals around £6 billion since 2004. <https://www.nlcommunityfund.org.uk/>
- **The National Lottery Heritage Fund** Sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage through innovative investment in projects with a lasting impact on people and places. With around £375million a year to invest in new projects and a considerable body of knowledge, they are a leading advocate for the value of heritage to modern life. <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/>
- **The People's Postcode Lottery** Offers funding of between £500 and £250,000 for good causes in England, Scotland and Wales. www.postcodetrust.org.uk
- **Comic Relief** Funds work that aims to achieve at least one of its five themes – better futures, healthier finances, safer lives, stronger communities, fairer society. <http://www.comicrelief.com/funding/funding-opportunities>
- **UKCF** This is the umbrella organisation for all community foundations, providing philanthropic advice to clients and delivering UK-wide grant-making programmes. ukcommunityfoundations.org/
- **The Landfill Communities Fund** This fund enables operators of landfill sites to contribute money to enrolled Environmental Bodies to carry out projects that meet environmental objectives contained in the Landfill Tax Regulations. <https://www.entrust.org.uk/landfill-community-fund/>
- **Housing associations** Many housing associations have charitable foundations that support projects that will benefit the people and places close to properties they manage. Examples include: <https://www.myclarionhousing.com/advice-and-support/clarion-futures-communities/grants/>
<https://www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk/about-the-grand-ideas-fund>
- **The Community Shares Unit** Community shares are sold to finance enterprises serving a community purpose. They have been used to finance shops, pubs, community buildings, renewable energy initiatives, and local food schemes, along with other community-based ventures. communityshares.org.uk/
- **Major banks** All have charitable foundations that fund local and national charities. One example is the Lloyds TSB Foundation, which supports organisations that are working to tackle disadvantage across England and Wales. <https://www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk/>
- **KnowHowNonProfit** This is the place for non-profit people to learn and share what they have learnt with others. Whether you work in a large charity, are setting up your own social enterprise or are helping out your local community group, this site is for you. knowhownonprofit.org/funding
- **Crowdfunding** A system in which an organisation makes a pitch and, hopefully, people become interested and enthused enough to make a financial pledge but this is only redeemed if the total is achieved. It probably works best for fairly small (capital) projects eg up to £25,000. www.spacehive.com
- **Natural Flood Management** This fund is available for community projects to help fund natural flood management schemes across England. Projects that aim to reduce flood risk, improve wildlife habitats and biodiversity and support the development of partnership working in communities are invited to apply. Funding can also be used as match funding alongside other grant programmes. <http://www.catchmentbasedapproach.org/resources/tools-and-casestudies/deliver/nfm>

How are park friends promoting their groups and their parks?

Here are some methods friends groups are using to promote their groups and their parks [based on a discussion held by London Friends Groups]: General / Projects and partnering with local groups / Email lists / Social media / Events / Notice Boards / Petitions / Leafleting / Posters / Banners / Estate Agents Boards / Word of Mouth

General

- What works often depends on the demographic / local community – there's no one size fits all
- Talk to people! ... and make it easy for them to sign up e.g. with stalls at events
- The Borough Health and Well-Being Board can fund publicity – check your council's funding schemes
- New Members don't necessarily translate into new volunteers – or this may take time. Build up lists / contacts and over time and eventually this may help to recruit volunteers.

Projects and partnering with local groups

- Partnering e.g. with schools, sports clubs, runners, dog-walkers is a great way to gain members. You support them, they support you. Co-opt user groups onto your friends group!
- One group in Lewisham created raised beds for a local disabled school and other beds for another school so those children all know about the park and friends group. Then schools can publicise the group to parents too.
- Projects are great way to engage people, either getting people to help or talking to them while you are doing some activity or project in the park.
- One group had worked with a school to create a digital nature trail, with the kids talking and recording the information for each point on the trail and also taking the pictures.

Email lists

- These are usually built up over years through proactive work at events and word of mouth. Lordship Rec have built theirs up over 5 years to 1,400 members
- They can be easily managed with Mailchimp.

Social media

- Try all the main channels because different ones work for different groups. Possibly allocate someone to manage the social media and just do that.
- Facebook can be great. Harrow Parks have a single Facebook page which promotes all events in all Harrow Parks. They now promoted 78 events – each of the borough's friends groups can post events or they can send them to Harrow Parks Forum who make a lively banner and post it. They have steadily built up Likes on the Harrow Parks page to 1,100. Other User Groups like running groups are now coming to them to advertise their activities and events. They can share this with e.g. the local health forum and other interested providers and 'Harrow Parks' is now a real brand in Harrow which helps them gain access to the council and others.
<https://www.facebook.com/pg/harrowparks/events/>
- Harrow Parks Forum feel Facebook is good because they capture a key demographic – women aged 35-44. They feel this is helpful because this demographic has children, partners, older parents and their own local friends networks who can all also benefit from knowing about what's going on in parks.
- Twitter / Instagram – Sometimes Facebook doesn't work. Twitter and Insta work better for other groups. On Twitter you can directly engage groups around the park by using the @xxx function in your tweet. Twitter is often used by local councillors and is a good way to engage them. It can be a quick and effective way to engage the council.
- Whatsapp Group – some park user groups use a Whatsapp group e.g. dog walkers groups.

Events

- Gather contacts at your own events BUT ALSO have a stall at other organisations' events.
- Litter picking works for some but not others: these engage lots of people in some parts of London – but in other parts they are the least popular means of engaging people.
- Tree walks, bat and bird walks, Autumn and Spring Walks, history walks – these can all be very popular as well.
- Health and Wellbeing Walks: Lewisham run Health Walks on a borough wide basis. These are a good way to raise awareness of all the different friends groups in the borough e.g. if you go on the walk and get people's emails or hand out leaflets. There are walks every day of the week, usually more than one walk per day – some

targeted at particular groups of society. Health walks can be for specific issues like dementia or bereavement. <https://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/walkfinder/lewisham-healthy-walks>

- The Haringey Parks Forum has produced a Walking Tours booklet with routes which take in different parks and also a 'Tottenham café trail'.
- Broomfield Park in Enfield hold Blues in the Park during August on Sundays and have a stall there.
- Harrow Parks Forum use the events they publicise via their Harrow Parks facebook page to gain more members.
- Harrow Parks Forum run events in parks called Harrow Nature Heroes to engage young people more and promote volunteering.
- Southwark Park have organised events around the 150 years anniversary. They had a local well-known author do an event, for example. This helps to engage a wider range of people.
- Doing walks for specific groups e.g. for deaf people, can help to encourage people to enjoy the park who might not otherwise.
- Jubilee Country Park had their first 'Meadow Day' and Wildflower Walk with guest like Friends of the Earth.

It was stressed that events don't necessarily translate into increased membership for your group and it's important to be proactive at events and get people to sign up to e-lists or join Facebook groups etc., for example by having a stall signing people up there and then, or handing out leaflets etc..

Notice Boards

- These are a good way of letting people know you exist, where they can find out more, to advertise events etc.
- Some friends groups have the key to the boards and help with keeping them tidy and fresh.
- Be careful that they are weather protected, if you're going to be putting leaflets up, but also beware that some boards suffer with condensation which makes it very hard to see what's inside.

Petitions

- Petitions can be a great way to engage a LOT of people and usually you have access to them i.e. you can email them for around a year after the petition is set up.
- In Barnet they are petitioning against the opening of parks at night, for example. They have slowly built signatures up to 1,300. They then went back to them and now have 16 people who would like to set up a borough forum.

Leafletting

- Direct leaflet drops – Lordship Rec do this for events – they drop to 2,000 households door to door at any one time -but then move to a different set of households next time. They recognise that not all people respond to leaflets and they need to do more on social media.
- One group did a leaflet drop for the Big Lunch.

Posters

- Whether on-line or on paper, keep them bright and clear!
- One group reported that they continue to put posters up around the park but these are reducing in effectiveness – and feel they might need to do more on social media instead.

Banners

- Large waterproof banners which can be placed at park entrances, for example, are relatively cheap now and can be used at events or to advertise events (though ideally would be reusable).

Estate Agents Boards

- Estate agents in some areas have been happy to put up board to advertise events in parks and have even given out leaflets about the park friends group in their welcome pack for buyers.

Word of mouth!