

Trustees Meeting Minutes

Zoom Meeting

**Wednesday 1 May 2024****Present:**

Dave Morris (Chair, NFPGS)	London Friends of Green Spaces Network (LFGN) + Haringey Friends of Parks Forum
Paul Ely (Research, NFPGS)	
Sarah Royal (CEO, NFPGS)	Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF)
Shelly Quinton-Hulme (Interim Treasurer & Organisational Development, NFPGS)	Friends of Trafford's Parks and Green Spaces
Michelle Furtado (Network Coordinator, NFPGS)	Green Tides (Adur & Green Spaces Worthing P/ship)

Apologies:

Nigel Sharp (Secretary, NFPGS)	NW Parks Friends Forum
Susanne Morpugo	Brent Parks Forum

- **Note:** The meeting was recorded to enable sharing with those unable to attend. NS comment is included as an addendum to the mins.

Minutes of Previous Meeting (6.3.24) and Matters Arising	
Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed ¹ .	
MF has updated the website and will check the latest mins are included.	MF
NS has reviewed and updated membership/ contact lists and shared with DM for further input.	DM/NS
DM intends to phone around potential new trustees – specifically reps from established, active Forums in key regions to encourage wider NFPGS trustee representation to include these areas. This could include Yorkshire/ NE England, Scotland and Wales.	DM
PE has approached Nicola Dempsey (Sheffield Green Spaces Forum) to provide comment re. a survey and awaits further contact.	PE
NFPGS Update	
Pre-election campaigning DM has circulated election-related docs from the London Friends of Green Spaces Network and links to campaigns by Fields in Trust, Association of Play Industries (re playgrounds), and the Horticultural Trades Association (re horticulture). FIT etails at: https://fieldsintrust.org/insights/policy-hub/park-protectors .	DM

¹ See Future Meetings item

<p>Partnerships</p> <p>DM has spoken to the Horticultural Trades Assoc. who are lobbying for a Government Office for Parks since the sector is so important to the 1400 SMEs the Assoc. represents and they are thus keen to see LAs properly funded. DM has suggested a MoU and awaits a reply.</p> <p>The London Green Party has agreed to the Parks Charter, included in their manifesto. DM is keen to see this taken up nationally.</p>	<p>DM</p>
<p>Finance/ administration</p>	
<p>Funding proposals</p> <p>PE is reviewing the current draft of our application for Lottery funding (for NFPGS infrastructure) in the context of the new National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) Strategy. He circulated details ahead of the meeting based on a NLHF presentation to the East Midlands Parks Forum. PE summarized and highlighted key areas which will impact on a revised funding bid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - bids are for £10K - £250K. - grant payment includes some in arrears. - this could be covered with additional fundraising. - the process is easier – one stage after an initial expression of interest (EOI). <p>The key themes include ‘Saving Heritage’ and ‘Protecting the Environment’ but PE noted the best fit with NFPGS activity covers ‘Inclusion, Access and Participation’. ‘Organisation Sustainability’ is also a significant area relevant to the role of NFPGS building skills, capacity and strong leadership and governance.</p> <p>There are 9 Lottery-priority areas identified which PE suggested NFPGS could and should also contribute to and target: Glasgow; County Durham N; Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon (NI); NE Lincs; Stoke on Trent; Leicester; Neath-Port Talbot; Medway and Torbay.</p> <p>PE suggested NFPGS could contact any groups/Forums in these areas to explore input to an NFPGS bid.</p> <p>NLHF also highlights the Future Parks Accelerator (FPA) as a source of good practice. We agreed that this should also be an area for NFPGS input with existing links, despite the the lack of reference to community empowerment. But the FPA does at least note the need to ‘ensure greenspace is central to local community life’.</p> <p>It was noted that the parks community movement is very varied, with some aspects inevitably needing improvement. It may be important to ensure any funding bid supports the NFPGS capacity-building needs, and is inclusive – a general commitment to empowerment should aim to cover all.</p> <p>DM noted the need for infrastructure funds – SR stressed that although the funding is place based it is not limited to capital works and a NFPGS project could fit. PE highlighted the need to show how NFPGS services would support the wider community movement to deliver organisational sustainability.</p> <p>Provisionally this would comprise at minimum a national coordinator post supported by a communications/ promotions role and a financial sustainability/ fundraiser position, ideally</p>	

<p>for a min 3yrs with fulltime and part-time roles, subject to budget.</p> <p>It was agreed that PE draft the EOI ideally as the basis for preliminary discussion with Lottery ciontacts to ensure the proposal fits and amend as necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: NS comment included in an addendum. <p>There has been no further comment following the NFPGS meeting with The Lund Trust, MF agreed to contact for any feedback.</p> <p>DM has approached the Morrisons Foundation for a small grant and awaits a reply.</p> <p>NFPGS finances Green Net fees have been paid and DM has revived his signatory. Others are required. SQ-H reported that the current balance is £9236.10 with no outstanding items. SQ-H will now prepare the charity accounts for the next reporting cycle.</p>	<p>PE/ DM</p> <p>MF</p> <p>DM</p> <p>NS SQ-H</p>
<p>Future meetings</p>	
<p>As agreed, a general meeting to sustain momentum and communication with all of the UK's area forums will be held in early summer: provisionally 7.30-9.00pm, Tuesday 11 June (note change from previous mins). The theme will be biodiversity. Discussion followed about the need to provide some structure for groups to encourage groups to participate, prepare and input.</p> <p>PE has prepared a brief for UCL research which could provide the basis for group input to the meeting, i.e.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the status of nature recovery networks in your area? - Are Friends/ community groups included? - How are these groups supported? <p>PE agreed to share with MF to include in the meeting promotion.</p> <p>The meeting will include time for updates on local issues and discussion, followed by an NFPGS update.</p> <p>The AGM will be in November.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: NS comment included in an addendum. 	<p>PE/ MF</p> <p>All</p>
<p>Date of Next Meeting</p>	
<p>General members meeting: 7.30pm, Tuesday 11 June (by zoom)</p> <p>Join Zoom Meeting https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9213929960?pwd=Y1QyYi9iK2ZjY2VrdFk3RVh2Qm5Sdz09 Meeting ID: 921 392 9960 Password: FOVPS</p>	<p>All</p>

Addendum – NS comment

Sector events – APSE parks seminar (Manchester)

Although subtitled ‘Diversity in Nature’ the event covered much broader topics. Brief summary follows:

- **The ‘State of the Market in Parks’**
 - Matt Ellis (APSE) provided a summary of the latest APSE park sector report.
 - press release at: <https://apse.org.uk/index.cfm/apse/news/articles/2024/three-quarters-of-local-councils-expect-the-level-of-funding-in-their-budgets-to-decrease-by-more-than-5-in-the-next-five-years/>
 - although much of this will be as expected (i.e. loss of budget, maintenance, staff and training reductions), a particular concern was a reported 41% drop in community activity, attributed to post covid fallout.
 - I wonder if another factor could relate to loss of LA support staff. I asked if APSE has data on the staff roles affected by budget cuts but it seems they have may not have recorded this level of detail. I suggest loss of community development / ranger and other frontline roles could be significant in terms of impact on community engagement and activity.

- **Environmental protection and improvement through effective governance**
 - Natalie Prosser outlined the HM Gov Environmental Improvement Plan 2023.
 - Noted that there are targets not being met.
 - Notable that the plan acknowledges ‘Improving people’s connection with the environment and their understanding of the importance of the environment to the economy and society is fundamental to building societal support for actions to improve nature.’
 - Implications for a NFPGS Lottery Heritage bid?

- **Better Place Bradford**
 - Saira Ali provided a summary of community development work using place and green spaces to address health inequalities.
 - highlighted partnerships and supported with community engagement.
 - Funding through public health, links with other regeneration projects to ensure environmental improvements to benefit environment/ community health.
 - Evaluation to provide evidence to support works.
 - I asked if there is a Friends Forum in Bradford but apparently not (there was an initial well-attended launch in Feb 2020 but this was undermined by the covid pandemic). This type of project may provide scope for follow up on Area Forum development.

- **The purpose of the Urban Green Spaces inquiry**
 - Ian Byrne MP provided intro to EFRA and Levelling Up committee and referenced a letter sent that day (14.3.24) to HM Gov.
 - Needs include:
 - consistent, sustainable funding.
 - increased sector capacity and guidance, embedded in planning.
 - a champion within HM Gov.
 - ensure developers / planning prioritise green space infrastructure and maintenance.
 - his personal view that parks should be covered by NHS.

- Letter is available at:
<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/43847/documents/217487/default/>
- **How can LAs better understand the environmental justice they achieve for their residents?**
 - Humera Sultan highlighted how the parks sector may be disadvantaged by a lack of data to highlight impact and value.
 - 'Environmental Justice Index' (EJI) supported by GIS team to include values based on access to greenspace, deprivation, flood risk, urban heat island effect and public health data.
 - Able to quantify for comparison, map areas, help prioritise areas.
 - Provided a focus for Birmingham's 'City of Nature' proposals.
 - Supporting a 25yr plan to improve quality and quantity of green space.
 - Initially prioritising 6 wards (40 sites) in East Birmingham.
 - Using Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds.
 - Involve communities to devise basic improvements.
 - EJI provided crucial evidence of need.
 - Need to capture impact data – identify outcomes working with public health team – e.g. mental health / wellbeing data.
- **Safer Parks – improving access for women and girls**
 - Helen Forman highlighted that safety was a key barrier for girls/ young women to benefit from parks.
 - Significant gender inequality, legacy of design, lack of facilities to meet need.
 - Ten core principles identified based on three themes:
 - Eyes on the park
 - Awareness
 - Inclusion
 - Link with Green Flag, case studies and guidance at:
 - <https://www.greenflagaward.org/resources/safer-parks-for-women-and-girls/safer-parks-for-women-and-girls/>

The closing items covered more practical parks management considerations:

- Managing increased flood risks in urban areas
- Glyphosate and the alternatives
- Responding to tree pests and diseases in urban green spaces

Other meeting comment (NS)

Funding:

- Important to note that the NLHF considers social, cultural, landscape and natural heritage – all themes which are relevant to parks, green spaces and their communities.
- Can a draft EOI be shared for comment ahead of any discussion with NLHF?

Next meeting

- This date could link with the 'Great Big Green Week' and a theme of 'biodiversity' – what are you doing? More details at: <https://greatbiggreenweek.com>
- Need to think how this meeting could help inform the NLHF EOI/ bid. Certainly the link to natural heritage, protection and community involvement will be key items.
- Next AGM is provisionally arranged for 16th November (see mins for Trustees mtg 6.3.24).