

Annual General Meeting Minutes

Zoom Meeting



Saturday 27 September 2025

Present:

Dave Morris (Chair, NFPGS)	London Friends of Green Spaces Network (LFGN) + Haringey Friends of Parks Forum
Shelly Quinton-Hulme (Treasurer, NFPGS)	Friends of Trafford's Parks and Green Spaces
Michelle Furtado (Trustee, NFPGS)	Network Coordinator, NFPGS
Nicola Dempsey (Trustee, NFPGS)	Sheffield Green Spaces Forum
Nikki Iyayi	NFPGS Administrator
Nigel Sharp (Secretary, NFPGS)	NW Parks Friends Forum
Barry Johnson	Association of Manchester Open Space Societies (AMOSS)
Suzanne Morpurgo	Brent Residents and Parks Forum
Cliff Munn	Brighton & Hove Green Spaces Forum
Len Wyatt	Bristol Parks Forum
Andy Wallace	Edinburgh Green Space Forum
Wendy Blythe	Federation of Cambridge Residents Associations (FeCRA) & Cambridge Green Space Groups
Sally Sanderson	Friends of Horsham Park, Horsham
Alison Brown	Glasgow Friends of Parks and Green Spaces Forum
Jenni Chan	Islington Parks Forum
Lynda Kitching	Leeds Parks & Green Spaces Forum
Roberta Peak	Liverpool Parks Friends Forum
John Mardle	Luton Friends of Parks, Green and Blue Spaces
Chris Libby	Newcastle Parks Forum
Judie Collins	Friends of Trafford Parks & Green Spaces

Apologies:

These included:

Sarah Royal (Trustee NFPGS)	Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF)
Paul Ely (Trustee, NFPGS)	Parks Community UK
Margaret Forbes-Hamilton	Torbay Greenspace Forum
Chris Blythe	Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF)
Rosie Norris	Basildon Parks & Countryside Volunteers Network
Wasył Strutyński	Association of Manchester Open Space Societies (AMOSS)
Diane Ward	Friends of Saltwell Park, Gateshead

Welcome and Introduction

DM welcomed all and outlined the Agenda as an introduction to the meeting. He noted that links to the meeting papers had been circulated in advance of the meeting with details available at the NFPGS website: <https://natfedparks.org.uk/resources/>.

Minutes of previous AGM (16.11.24)	
These were approved.	
Annual Report April 2024-March 2025 and Officers' Updates	
<p>A link to the NFPGS Annual Report was circulated prior to the AGM. The report is also available with the Charity Commission at: https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/en/charity-search/-/charity-details/5139519?uk_gov_ccew_onereg_charitydetails_web_portlet_CharityDetailsPortlet_organisationNumber=5139519</p> <p>Chair update (DM)</p> <p>DM provided a brief summary of the report and the sector since the previous AGM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NFPGS continues to provide support to the grassroots movement with resources on the Parks Community UK website https://parkscommunity.org.uk. - This includes the 'Better Friends' self-audit tool which has been used by 600+ Park Friends and community groups. - Area Forums are the principal members, supported with an e-mail-list parksforumsuk@lists.riseup.net. - Discussions have included banking charges, development threats, lottery funding and free access to tennis. - NFPGS also hosts/ promotes sector research with important new surveys due to be launched soon in particular to determine Area Forum and group needs, and how best these can be supported. - In addition to on line discussion DM noted that it has been suggested general seminars could be hosted online by NFPGS for groups and agreed to review this option which would be subject to capacity. - NFPGS has also set up several working groups to focus Trustees and other co-opted members on specific themes or activity: Research; Funding; and Campaigning/ Advocacy. Any Area Forum reps interested in becoming involved in these groups should contact secretary@natfedparks.org.uk. - NFPGS is an active member of the Government's 'Parks Working Group' – DM chairs its Community Empowerment working group, - with concern to address the worsening funding and staffing crisis throughout the sector. - A challenge for NFPGS is that it is a voluntary organization with no core funding. DM welcomed Nikki Iyayi, who had just started a 2yr part-time role as an administrator to support the charity following a successful Lottery bid. <p>Secretary update (NS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NS advised that in addition to parkforumsuk mailbox, NFPGS receives a wide range of enquiries annually – from individuals, Friends groups and Forums including queries relating to membership, which are supported with signposting to relevant local area forums or encouraged to explore local networking options. NFPGS can support with advice and guidance on new area forum development. - Requests for more specific support include local authorities and sector organisations seeking links to promote new initiatives or research, and those seeking to engage with parks communities. 	Trustees

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group enquiries also include communities seeking advice or support with campaigns – such as in response to development threats. Resources are available at: https://parkscommunity.org.uk and with other sector partners whom NFPGS can share links. - In addition NFPGS has developed strong links with other sector organisations, including APSE¹ - NS has recently attended online seminars to provide an introduction to NFPGS to APSE members – local authority parks officers – to promote our movement. This link has also enabled NFPGS to attend sector events organized by APSE. <p>Treasurer update (SQ-H)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SQ-H summarized the accounts. At close 2024/25 there was around £7K unrestricted funds. - NFPGS continues to operate frugally with minimal outgoings, largely comprising in fees associated with website hosting and bank charges, these are offset by funds raised from presentations and supporting/ promoting surveys. - Full details are shown in the annual report (see earlier link). <p>Member comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - although the Better Friends tool incurs an administration fee, this is considered a necessary outgoing since the audit tool both helps support grassroots groups, and provides data and a significant insight to parks voluntary sector issues to help inform the work of NFPGS. - Two reports for the Better Friends tool have been prepared (2021, 2023) with a further update due. DM noted that the resource is still reaching new groups and thus considered a worthwhile operational expense for NFPGS. - The wider issue of funding was discussed. SQ-H noted that although NFPGS does not have an ‘ethical funding policy’ there are examples available². <p>The Annual Report and Financial Report (2024/ 2025) were adopted by those attending.</p>	
<p>Motions / Proposed Constitution Changes</p>	
<p>Several changes to the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) constitution (2019) were proposed for approval. Details had been circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>These changes were all approved, along with an additional change to the heading for item13, which is to be amended to include reference to officers and read:</p> <p>Item 13. Appointment of charity trustees and officers</p> <p>The constitution changes are shown highlighted in Appendix 1.</p>	<p>All note</p>
<p>Election of Officers and Trustees</p>	
<p>NFPGS officers formally stood down and following a nomination and election process:</p>	

¹ Association for Public Service Excellence

² <https://www.culturehive.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Creating-ethical-guidelines.pdf>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DM was re-elected as Chair - SQ-H re-elected as Treasurer - NS re-elected as Secretary <p>ND, SR, MF and PE are to continue as trustees.</p> <p>DM extended the invitation to other Area Forum reps to become Trustees, particularly with a view to extending representation from across the regions and home nations. WB accepted the offer and was duly elected as a Trustee.</p>	<p>All note</p>
<p>Discussion:</p> <p>What difference are we making?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What impact are we having as local Area Forums and the Federation? - How can we improve how we measure this (e.g. via surveys and audits, use of internal e-mail lists, case studies, etc)? 	
<p>DM outlined a range of possible indicators to show change and impact.</p> <p><u>Haringey (DM)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forum activity over the last 20 years has helped grow the number of local Friends groups from 25 → 65. Other measures may include the number of volunteers; the hours they put in; numbers attending meetings or events; indication of influence such as the number of issues raised. Their bi-monthly general meetings last 3 hours and include an hour of updates from each local group. <p><u>Horsham (SS)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project work has development 'wild-ways' supporting pollinators and details of trails have been promoted on the website have been. No. of website hits, download data provides evidence showing impact to the local authority (LA) and others. - Details at: https://www.horshamgreenspaces.org/wildways <p><u>Trafford (JC)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support for wider initiatives e.g. 'ageing well' has led to community engagement and co-production, helping promote the Forum and also change attitudes with a more inclusive approach hence ageing well → 'living well'. - Partnership work can help raise the profile of the Forum and bring in additional resources, including funding. <p><u>Cambridge (WB)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forum has been influential at a public enquiry re. heritage but difficult to quantify more qualitative impact. - Notable that collective impact of Friends groups can be more significant – synergy from Forum amplifying voice. <p><u>Leeds (LK)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forum was established with LA support and continues to provide admin help. Impact has included development of Love Leeds Parks charity and new groups sharing good practice, tips to protect sites from development, etc. - Value of collective voice for campaigning, raising awareness of park issues. - No. of local groups has increased, provides basis for more effective campaigns, e.g. Safer Spaces 	

for Women & Girls initiative <https://futureofparks.leeds.ac.uk/safer-parks/>

Birmingham³

- an update was provided on the Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF) approach which aims to capture information from Friends groups to inform their work, show impact and protect BOSF funding.
- BOSF encourage member groups to submit data with a small fee paid. This enables the preparation of a quarterly 'infographic' to clearly illustrate collective impact of the groups' activity (see below for an annual summary).



- the infographic provides compelling evidence which has both helped support BOSF core funding bids (including a successful Lottery Reaching Communities award) and even protect parks service funding cuts.

³ unable to attend the AGM owing to a BOSF Conference event the same day.

Leeds (LK)

- although unlike BOSF Leeds are unable to fund staff or fees for gathering of volunteer data, the Forum does raise funds with a regular raffle at meetings.
- Profile and promotion of the Forum is helped by rotating meetings to different member park group locations and including a site walk, etc.
- Also noted the importance of referencing health benefits from the Forum and its activity, with potential links to Corporate Social Responsibility too to bring in donations.
- NS added that important to note the health benefits to volunteers⁴ too, in addition to recording volunteer time and contributions. Others added that such measures should also include preparation time, i.e. prior to an event or activity.

Brighton & Hove (CM)

- agreed that it can be difficult to collect volunteer data but noted the scope to at least record an average, perhaps as evidenced by the Better Friends data.
- The Forum has been successful in influencing LA decisions based on the budget calculator, and similarly, lobbying to protect cuts to rangers and their vital support for volunteer activity.
- The Forum is relatively flexible and responsive with a small committee meeting as necessary and annual general meetings featuring a speaker.
- Meetings/ events enable valuable networking and sharing of good practice and support.
- E-mail lists enable regular communication between groups [comment: the level of correspondence, etc. could be another output to measure Forum impact].

Sheffield (ND)

- the Forum includes a member who is a journalist, helping with campaigns and promoting impact.

Edinburgh (AW)

- Forum provides contacts to support local groups to work together, helped by mapping of location, help matching groups ('Buddying' approach).
- Work to measure social return – help to show impact of loss of rangers with return on investment.

Glasgow (AB)

- successful use of iNaturalist⁵ to engage volunteers and record / improve biodiversity of sites.
- Led to specific 'biodiversity volunteers'.
- Activity and results promoted on social media [comment: as earlier, more evidence from no. of hits, etc].
- Local groups have organized walks with local councilors, creating supportive links.
- No.s of species captured help promote activity and value of sites (and volunteers).

Leeds (LK)

- Forum meetings include 'just a minute' updates from member groups – helps involve members and share good news, encourage joint working and highlight impact.

Brent (SM)

- Forum has been involved with consortium work and commented on local Tree Strategy.
- Forum keeps in touch through on line, in person and phone links.

⁴ Details at: https://parkscommunity.org.uk/how_to_guide/volunteering/

⁵ Details at: <https://www.inaturalist.org>

General comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NS noted that Friends groups, and thus collectively, each Forum will bring an impact to places, people (members volunteering benefits) and the wider community through their work. - Concern that Park Management Trusts may marginalize work of Friends groups/ Forums, with loss of service/staff links. - NS noted the need to promote the guidance that Forums benefit both community groups and the local council.⁶ - DM stressed that Forums work with whoever is responsible for park management, whether LAs or Trusts. 	
AOB / Additional comment [chat]	
DM thanked all for attending and reminded all that there is additional opportunities to share information or seek peer support through the network e-mail: parksforumsuk@lists.riseup.net Additional comment - from Zoom Chat (see Appendix 2 – below)	All
Date of Next Meeting	
Date to be confirmed.	All

⁶ These details summarized at: https://parkscommunity.org.uk/how_to_guide/setting-up-a-forum-of-friends-groups/

Appendix 1: Constitution Changes

NFPGS Constitution 2019

<https://natfedparks.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/NFPGS-Constitution-revised-november-2019.pdf>

Extracts from Constitution below. Proposed amendments in **BOLDED CAPITALS**. Affected sections highlighted.

Page 15 of 24

13. Appointment of charity trustees AND OFFICERS

(1) Elected charity trustees

(a) At the first annual general meeting of the members of the NFPGS all the elected charity trustees shall retire from office;

(b) All elected [CUT trustees] **OFFICERS** shall be from organisations which are members of the NFPGS and shall be elected for a term of one year at an annual general meeting.

(c) A Chair, Deputy Chair, Treasurer and Honorary Secretary of the trustees shall be elected by members of the NFPGS at annual general meeting;

(d) Regional representatives will be invited to stand for election as trustees at the AGM.

(e) Any vacancies not filled at the annual general meeting may be filled as provided in sub-clause (f) of this clause;

(f) The members or the charity trustees may at any time decide to appoint a new charity trustee, whether in place of a charity trustee who has retired or been removed in accordance with clause [15] (Retirement and removal of charity trustees), or as an additional charity trustee, provided that the limit specified in clause [12 (3)] on the number of charity trustees would not as a result be exceeded; **THE NUMBER OF ELECTED TRUSTEES SHALL BE GREATER THAN THE NUMBER OF APPOINTEES.**

(g) A person so appointed by the members of the NFPGS shall serve until the following annual general meeting when they may be re-appointed by election of the members

16. Reappointment of charity trustees

Any trustee who has completed their term of office following election at a general meeting or by giving notice to the NFPGS is eligible for reappointment by election at an annual general meeting. They can serve for up to a maximum period of [CUT five] **TEN** years in succession in the same specific post.

21. Advisory Committee

(a) The NFPGS [CUT shall] **MAY** have an advisory committee of which all the trustees, and regional Delegates from affiliated regional and sub-regional Networks (or co-opted regional representative from a member Forum or hub where no regional network yet exists), and co-opted advisors, shall be members.

(b) Members shall be elected to the committee from member regional organisations.

(c) No member organisation may have more than one voting place on the committee

(d) The advisory committee may from time to time appoint sub-groups or co-opt additional committee members where they offer specific skills or experience, for such purposes and with such powers as it thinks fit.

(e) The advisory committee may advise the trustees on the management of the NFPGS, but decisions by the trustees are final.

(f) The Advisory Committee may co-opt non-voting Committee members.

(g) Decisions of the Advisory Committee shall be by majority show of hands. Quorum shall be 3 members.

Appendix 2: Zoom Chat

NFPGS Annual Report and Update

Andy (Edinburgh)

this is what I have been doing in Edinburgh and happy to help others. All free!

<https://edinburghgreenspacesforum.wordpress.com/2025/03/15/website-management/>

Michelle Furtado, Trustee NFPGS

parksforumsuk-request@lists.riseup.net - this is the Forum email list

Andy (Edinburgh)

did anything come of "banking charges" introduction. is there a free banking option for groups who are not charities

Len Bristol PF

Bristol (who are not a charity) eventually went from Lloyds to Nat West, but it seems options are very limited - and probably will change over time. As I understand it options are different if you are a charity, but it is worth checking whether I am right in saying that.

Jenni Chan, Islington

Am interested in campaign and advocacy but |I don't have much spare time!

Wendy Blythe Cambridge

Would be very happy to join Campaign Advocacy Green Space Group

John Mardle Luton

May I suggest people could be looking at parts of the Local Authority that directly impact your green space namely:

- Planning
- Highways,
- Local access Forums,
- Flood management.

Shelly Quinton-Hulme - Trafford / NFPGS Trustee

Template for Ethical Fundraising Policy template from Charity Excellence

Ethical Fundraising Policy.docx

Lynda Kitching Leeds P&GS Forum

re Advisory committee - could the research group be included as part of this, so it fulfils the Constitution.

Sally Sanderson - Horsham Green Spaces to Everyone:

Thank you all for all your hard work!

Shelly Quinton-Hulme - Trafford / NFPGS Trustee

Replying to "re Advisory committee - could the research group b...":

- The research group is one of our sub committees rather than an advisory committee and is dealt with in section 18 - delegation by charity trustees

Discussion

Len Bristol PF

Could someone distribute the BOSF poster on the screen?

- Included in the minutes

Andy (Edinburgh)

that was really interesting from Horsham . Thanks <https://www.horshamgreenspaces.org/wildways>

Wendy Blythe Cambridge

Dave I just wanted to add that as a result of hearing about my involvement in this Forum - Officers from Cambridge City Council have contacted me (NB this may be positive but the approach may also have a downside... because have been informed by reps from North East Cambridge amenity groups that citing local designated green spaces and Friends Groups has meant these green spaces are in the framework for offsetting development. All the councils in the Cambs area have their own housing development companies and partnerships)

Shelly Quinton-Hulme - Trafford / NFPGS Trustee

Thanks Lynda - Trafford are having the bystander training at our annual conference in January - so it is great to hear it is good

Sally Sanderson - Horsham Green Spaces

Could be a good template for all forums to report on

Sally Sanderson - Horsham Green Spaces

Our Council collects the volunteer hours from all the groups

Nigel Sharp - NWPFF, Trustee NFPGS

Recording volunteer hrs is general good practice - it adds up and funders will recognise it as 'match funds' too

Chris Libby - Newcastle Parks Forum

Funding: Geordie phrase is "Shy Bairns get nowt" and asking is the first important step. Recording volunteering hours is a good metric to use, but takes too long to gather from everyone so the Better Friends average is available.

Len Bristol PF

Love the Geordie phrase - would suggest an alternative - "Shy bairns work differently".

Sally Sanderson - Horsham Green Spaces

And sharing resources eg someone who can help monitor specific wildlife in a greenspace to sharing a projector/gazebo etc

Nigel Sharp - NWPFF, Trustee NFPGS

All sounds fabulous Andy...any chance of a case study on the buddying approach, and the social impact assessments is another study theme too?

Andy (Edinburgh):

Shelly Quinton-Hulme - Trafford / NFPGS Trustee

Alison - can you do a case study on this - it sounds amazing and something I'd love to bring to Trafford

Nicola Dempsey, Sheffield Green Spaces Forum:

Sally Sanderson - Horsham Green Spaces

The app sounds a great way of involving wider numbers

Alison, Glasgow FF

Link to the QP project and the stats overview

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/queen-s-park-glasgow-scotland?tab=stats>

Nigel Sharp - NWPFF, Trustee NFPGS

Biodiversity. Recording - great way to engage more vols - also potential education opportunities too and involve young people.

Nicola Dempsey, Sheffield Green Spaces Forum

That Just A Minute slot sounds really good. We do it but it's more about what is happening in spaces. But this sounds really useful - thanks @Lynda Kitching Leeds P&GS Forum

Len Bristol PF

Bristol City Council has a range of supporting information to setting up groups, running meetings etc. Parks Forum has fed into them. Volunteering in parks

Robbie Liverpool

Thank you all for an informative and illuminating meeting

Alison, Glasgow FE

Replying to "Alison - can you do a case study on this - it soun...":

Hi Shelley, happy to do something/anything to help. Let me know what you'd like to know.

Sally Sanderson - Horsham Green Spaces

Thank you - some great takeaways

Len Bristol PF

Thanks for the help and support. Best wishes for the future.....over and out

Shelly Quinton-Hulme - Trafford / NFPGS Trustee: ☐ ☐

Shelly Quinton-Hulme - Trafford / NFPGS Trustee

Len - you have been brilliant

Barry Johnson, Manchester to Everyone:

Thanks for everything

Shelly Quinton-Hulme - Trafford / NFPGS Trustee

Social return on investment | Better Evaluation

Trustees Meeting 27.9.25

[directly followed the AGM]

Present: Dave Morris (Chair); Shelly Quinton-Hulme (Treasurer & Vice Chair); Nicola Dempsey; Nigel Sharp (Secretary), Wendy Blythe (new Trustee), Nikki Iyayi (new Administrator). **Apologies:** Sarah Royal, Paul Ely, Michelle Furtado.

Meeting review	
All welcomed W as a new Trustee and a great addition to provide a regional link to Cambridge and additional south-east green space communities. NS agreed to share key information and links and discuss as necessary by way of an introduction and induction.	SR/PE/MF /NS
NI was welcomed too and all looked forward to working together to improve NFPGS organisation and capacity.	All
SQ-H / NS will revise and upload the updated NFPGS Constitution with the meeting mins to confirm AGM approval of these changes.	SQ-H/ NS
NFPGS Update	
ND has submitted a joint bid (with NFPGS) to undertake survey and report work specified by the MHCLG, to support the work of the Parks Working Group. The project will help identify the needs of Park Forums, Friends and community groups and help inform future initiatives and funding bids.	
DM added that there are further opportunities – eg with the Nature Towns and Cities project - to also explore funding to support related research into need and sharing good practice, such as case studies.	
Date of Next Trustees Meeting	
7.30pm, Monday 25 November (by zoom) Join Zoom Meeting https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9213929960?pwd=Y1QyYi9iK2ZjY2VrdFk3RVh2Qm5Sdz09 Meeting ID: 921 392 9960 Password: FOVPS	All