

General Meeting Minutes

Zoom Meeting



Saturday 14 March 2026

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
Nicola Dempsey (Trustee, NFPGS)	Sheffield Green Spaces Forum
Wendy Blythe (Trustee)	Federation of Cambridge Residents Associations (FeCRA) & Cambridge Green Space Groups
Nigel Sharp (Secretary, NFPGS)	NW Parks Friends Forum
Cliff Munn	Brighton & Hove Green Spaces Forum
Jeni Rowe	Edinburgh Green Space Forum
Alison Brown	Glasgow Friends of Parks and Green Spaces Forum
Pat Gross	Wandsworth Forum
Lynda Kitching	Leeds Parks & Green Spaces Forum
Roberta Peak	Liverpool Parks Friends Forum
Barbara & Ken Rouse	Friends of Derby Park, Sefton
Norman Jones	Stockport Green Space Forum
Laura Collins	Merton Green Spaces Forum + LFGN
Dianne	Barnet Green Spaces Network
John Mardle	Luton Friends of Parks, Green and Blue Spaces
Suzanne Morpurgo	Brent Residents and Parks Forum

Apologies:

These included:

Michelle Furtado (Trustee, NFPGS)	Network Coordinator, NFPGS
Sarah Royal (Trustee NFPGS)	Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF)
Paul Ely (Trustee, NFPGS)	Parks Community UK
Wasył Strutyński	Association of Manchester Open Space Societies (AMOSS)
Nikki Iyayi (Admin worker, NFPGS)	n/a

Welcome and Introduction	
DM welcomed all and outlined the Agenda items.	
NFPGS Updates	
Parks Working Group (PWG)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Liaison body between greenspace Sector organisations and the Government. - NFPGS is the only member of the PWG representing community groups – DM chairs a community empowerment task group, others cover funding, planning policy. Staffing. Our recent Survey (see later) came out of the PWG. - NFPGS continue to lobby for adequate funding for parks and green spaces. 	

<p>NFPGS Working Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Research:</u> (ND) This comprises NFPGS and academic representatives, with members providing valuable comment to support the MHCLG survey development (see item below). The group will now help follow up links for further analysis and future research. • <u>Funding:</u> (SQ-H) Awards for All funds have supported NFPGS capacity with a part time Admin. Worker (Nikki) for 2 years and hope to identify further opportunities for additional support with the recent MHCLG survey helping identify areas of need – and show the level of interest and impact of parks community work. Nikki is now doing monthly Newsletters, supported by Michelle. DM is managing her post. • <u>Campaigning:</u> (DM) aim to launch a NFPGS working group to liaise with other sector groups and lobby on policy and funding – link with forthcoming Day of Action (see item later). Anyone who wants to join can contact DM. 	
<p>Area Forum Updates</p>	
<p><u>Trafford (SQ-H)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet 4x per yr, also 4 mtgs with Council - Planning projects with Council - Awards for All funds for website + quarterly newsletter development - Aim to use website to promote events - Support for 18.4.26 Day of Action with events planned in many different parks <p><u>Haringey (DM)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Established 25yrs - General meetings every 2 mnths, about 10-15 groups attend. 65 groups in total. Have internal whatsapp Forum coordination group. Plus internal email list for all groups. - Good relationship with Council - but impact of cuts affecting sites and activity, and Forum is resisting charges to FGs for things previously free Council agreed 7 yrs ago that all sites should have FiT covenants. But only 12 out of 60 completed. Also number of Green Flag applications cut by half. <p><u>Leeds (LK)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good relationship with Council - Critical friend role - Concern at car park charges introduction but concession passes for friends activity - Keen to see wider input through Climate Change cross-sector action - Undertake surveys – e.g. re. use/ non use of parks; older people use of parks - Forum is a case study for Nature Towns & Cities promoting area forum development - Link to short films re. promoting work with Friends <p><u>Wandsworth (PG)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Services now taken back in-house – period of change again - Biodiversity Action Plan launched – keen to see some actions - Concern that local elections may bring further change 	

Barnet (D)

- Dianne is new chair; 63 members
- Good relationship with Council
- Input to projects, e.g. flood relief, community liaison
- Meet 4x/yr
- Invite LA reps at start, then leave to just the Forum
- Council funds for training courses inc. wildlife recording, practical work, etc

Sheffield (ND)

- 10yrs ago, set up with Council, act as critical friend
- 8 on cttee
- 6 mtgs / yr inc. speakers and on site (spring/summer)
- Aims re. pressing Council on dogs 'voluntary code of conduct' issues
- Input on Council task & finish group to revise green/blue strategy
- Preparing funding bid to support Forum
- Aim to improve representation of Forum – now more city centre residents who can be isolated with lack of support or groups.

Liverpool. (RP)

- Concern that Fields in Trust (FIT) transfer process is protracted. Only 9 sites transferred, 19 are ready (since pre-Covid times)
- Concern at change resulting from elections – impact on continuity
- Challenge to recruit younger people

Glasgow (AB)

- In 2nd yr, still establishing
- 8 on cttee, meet 4x/yr
- Aim to have 2 general mtgs – In May on site in Park to look at initiatives, needs and issues, indoor AGM mtg in Nov
- Close link with Council with NFPGS help – big net zero green plan supported by forum
- Council provide admin support
- Council to provide £50K/yr to Friends group support and development to help volunteering
- Need to involve community, and to build up Volunteers.

NWPFF (NS)

- Regional Forum network challenges – ambitious and extensive affected by loss of committee reps – NS remains.
- Aim to adopt more pragmatic approach with now limited capacity.
- Provide NW link for NFPGS and review Area Forums development in region following MHCLG report.

Cambridge (WB)

- Network of community groups inc. local villages
- Concern about Grtr Cambridge Dev Corp take over planning including Green Spaces and loss of local influence
- Forum helping ongoing consultation

<p><u>Edinburgh (JR)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet 3-4x/yr - Regular mtgs with Council - Discussion re. sub-group to set up Vol strategy + recording vol input (hrs) etc. - New website set up by one of group, helping others, active Facebook group - Loss of rangers but managed to reverse threat. - Surveys with groups re. facilities input from friends, needs, etc - Council organises annual mtg for Friends groups to celebrate input and as thanks <p><u>Brighton & Hove (CM)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constituted in 2017, plans to celebrate 10yrs - Cttee of 8, good range of input - 100 member groups, approx. 80-90 active - Seminar once a year with guest speakers, provides networking opportunities - Changes in Council, concern at continuity, repeated issues, etc. - Open Spaces Strategy (2017) being revised – issues re. delivery of existing doc. <p><u>Sefton (BR)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No forum at present - Covid Memorial introduced in Derby Park, Bootle <p><u>Luton (JM)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 22 groups across town area - Self funded but limited response from Council - Contact with Luton Rising re. airport expansion and mitigation work - Bedfordshire Wildlife groups helped set up 2 new Friends groups <p><u>Stockport (NJ)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of Council support for Forum – used to help admin/ mtg rooms - Reorganisation: Parks in Council linked to Traffic – loss of expertise and empathy - Concern about damage to Carr Wood Nature Reserve <p><u>Merton (LC)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet 3x/yr - Decent relationship with Council and contractor, attend part of mtgs and supportive - Changing green space contract idVerde → Glendale <p><u>London Friends of Greenspace Network (LC/DM)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approx. 700 groups supported (about 1000 in total) - Help new/ relaunched forums e.g. Hounslow - 6 webinars during 2025 (inc. safeguarding, com development) – available on LFGN youtube channel. - Monthly newsletters, and also social meetings. <p>DM urged groups to continue to share updates and information through the parksforumsuk email all-to-all list. NFPGS can support creation of new forums, and re-launch of struggling forums</p>	
<p>Day of Action for Nature, Parks and Green Spaces: 18 April 2026</p>	
<p>DM outlined this event:</p>	

- Link with Community Planning Alliance <https://communityplanningalliance.org>
- 18 April, Day of Local Action for Nature, Parks & Green Spaces
- Opportunities for UK groups and Forums to organise activity and register online
- Details at: <https://communityplanningalliance.org/events-calendar/>
- Activity can include regular event – e.g. litter pick, tagged to link with the campaign.
- Website includes templates and resources
- This will be a timely event to get nature on the agenda in the build-up to local elections on May 7th

Friends in Green Places – report on National Survey of Parks Community Groups and Area Forums Update and Discussion

NFPGS Update:

ND provided a summary of the survey

- Largest and most detailed survey of Friends Groups ever with 938 friends / community groups + 28 area forums repoding

Full and very detailed Report (by ND and DM) not quite completed yet and will then await MHCLG approval to go on Govt website. In a ‘sneak preview’, DM was able to share the draft Executive Summary of the Report highlighting some of the findings:

- An estimated 1.7m formal and informal members of local groups
- Contributing 9m+ volunteer hours per year
- Equivalent to £183m/yr (at £20 ph, HLF rate) + need to add maybe £70m obtained by grants

The report summaries the activities and contributions of groups; their relationship with site managers/ local authority and other partners; and issues, challenges and needs, the latter including:

- Increasing membership
- Getting advice and support
- Becoming more influential and involved
- The need for funding and resources

The report includes recommendations for:

- Friends groups
- Area Forums
- Local authorities
- Landowners, managers and contractors
- The NFPGS
- The green space sector
- Central government

Recommendations urge Area Forums to:

- Encourage Friends groups to share good practice and support each other, identify and take up common strategic concerns, and encourage groups to develop the strength and diversity of their membership. This can be achieved through hosting regular meetings, seminars, Facebook pages, all-to-all email lists, and/or other mechanisms
- Familiarise themselves with the Parks Community UK online advice and guidance, and promote relevant material to their Friends Groups including the Better Friends Strength Checker, and the new Inclusion and Diversity Checklist
- Strengthen relationships with the parks service and local authority over time to

- develop the sense of partnership and trust
- Call for adequate funding and staffing for local green spaces
- Support and promote the Green Flag Awards scheme and the Fields In Trust covenanting programme to help maintain standards and protect green spaces
- Link into, support and share news and views with other Forums and the NFPGS

As with all the possible actions, a lot will depend on the resources to support delivery of new measures.

Comment and discussion

- It is intended that the final report – once approved – will be the subject of a launch and shared widely throughout the sector, circulated to Area Forums and Friends groups.
- It is to be hoped ongoing progress, actions etc. will be promoted.
- LK noted the difficulty to capture volunteer hours data, without the capacity to offer incentives for groups.
 - o Comment that it may be effective to estimate full volunteer hours per group per year from no.s involved with meetings, events and other activity and agree an average. (Groups vary widely but average is around 1,300hrs per year per group annually)
 - o Volunteer contributions can also be costed - e.g. the National Lottery Heritage Fund value basic input at £20/hr. [Used for their ‘match funding’ in applications]
- LC noted the fundamental need for admin. support and also highlighted resources already available that could be shared and promoted for wider benefit, such as You Tube showcase/guidance/discussion videos by the London Friends of Green Spaces Network. <https://www.youtube.com/@lfgngreenspaces4122> Let NFPGS know if you have any useful videos.
- JM stressed the need to consider raising wider, cross-sector awareness – for example to vital role of green space in relation to flood control.
- Similar comment followed urging all to promote the value of parks in terms of climate change response, biodiversity and health – including green social prescribing benefits.

It was noted that the report is particularly significant owing to the large sample size, ensuring a credible analysis and evidence of community impact, endorsed by academics and (we expect) HM Govt.

In addition to the report there are detailed datasets drawn from the hundreds of responses.

The report is currently awaiting final approval from HM Gov. policy analysts.

DM urged all to share the report and associated links once available. It will be important to ensure this is shared widely and clearly communication is an important issue for community groups. He noted that the survey showed 67% of area forums rely on one person to communicate information, but many Forums are setting up whatsapp groups and email lists to encourage all-to-all comms.

AOB / Additional comment [chat]

Additional details and comment to share were included in the zoom chat – included as an appendix after these mins.

All

Date of Next Meeting

NFPGS AGM: Saturday 26 September 2026

All

Appendix: Zoom Chat

Area Forum updates

NJ (Stockport)

- Stockport Council withdrew all support for our Parks Forum. There is little or no communication from any senior council leaders but we do have contact with greenspace officers.

SQ-H (NFPGS & Trafford)

- Norman - do you want a meeting with Trafford's forum and we can see if we can help?

NS (NWPFF)

- Good idea Shelly - I'm happy to help too

LK (Leeds)

- Alison in Glasgow - we in Leeds have 4 meetings a year for our Members (we have 102), 3 hosted by a Friends group, who show us round their site, and provide a room, paid for sometimes by the group, otherwise the Forum. These visits are the most popular feature of being a Member. Our 4th meeting is our AGM, held in Leeds Civic Hall courtesy of the Council.

NJ (Stockport)

- I am unaware of any greenspace grouping in Stockport There is a listing on Council website of Friends Grps - it has only 15 or so groups listed out of probably 30-50. This is because Council hasn't informed anyone about site. It knows how many "official" groups it has as there is a v.junior employee who communicates with grps occasionally.

LK (Leeds)

- My point was that many Councillors (99 in Leeds) don't connect enough with the issue of Climate Change in the broader sense eg Planning, Education, even if they might support their local park's Friends groups.

Day of Action for Nature, Parks and Green Spaces

ND (Sheffield)

- <https://communityplanningalliance.org/events-calendar/>
- Scroll down that page and you'll find the link to a form to get your action on their map: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc-0a2rxekhnYMB1OHdzK-mouysJ6-sSqW8oU7NWwcpWHO3MA/viewform?fbclid=IwY2xjawPYSOVleHRuA2FlbQixMABicmlkETBaNnpDZGJIMTI6MFhGSWtRc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODlwMDg5MgABHqD0Ksn8wVfj1Ewal_WPWYJLlrG1BtSn6ydaYfQqd8rn42Ks3uiCUKxVSI7Z_aem_Khicylr2OZqjU0_zCkze4g

Friends in Green Places – Survey report and discussion

ND (Sheffield)

- Forums who are included as case studies in the report: Cardiff, Glasgow, South Gloucestershire and Haringey

AB (Glasgow)

- In case these are of any interest to other Forums, here are links to Glasgow's strategic policies.
- GCC strategic plan 2022-27 - see parks, greenspaces and environment/biodiversity mentions on pages, 15, 30, 37-40, and to empowerment of nrs dept to communities on p50:
- https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/media/5867/Strategic-Plan-2022-to-2027/pdf/Strategic_Plan_2022_to_20271.pdf?m=1702657470553
- https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/media/11511/Our-Dear-Green-Place-full-document/pdf/Our_Dear_Green_Place_-_full_document.pdf?m=1715768329640 (our Dear Green place, Parks dept strategy 2019)
- <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/openspacestrategy> (plan introduced 2020, follow links for documents)
- <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/article/13029/Parks-And-Open-Spaces-Benefit-From-3m-Fund> (published May 2025)

JM (Luton)

- I would argue that many forums should formally link with the likes of the Local Access Forum (statutory consultee on footpaths etc). With Highways re drainage, with planning departments re petitions and critically with the Environment Agency re flooding.

AB (Glasgow) & SQ-H (Trafford)

- Can you share the YOU Tube channel link please?

LC (Merton/LFGN)

- YouTube channel for LFGN: <https://www.youtube.com/@lfgngreenspaces4122> (we've also hosted some of our videos on the CPRE London channel but I've transferred them all to LFGN now)

JM (Luton)

- Social prescription, NHS and mental well-being critical in green spaces. It does need H&S reviews in each park to ensure this area is successful
- Please take a look at Houghton Brook Flood Storage Area on YouTube as this highlights flood resilience.

PG (Wandsworth)

- Please share info by email friendsofwandsworthpark@gmail.com to everyone...thanks

AB (Glasgow)

- Quick question - will the report have devolved nations summaries? Will there be a summary just for Scotland?

ND (Sheffield)

- There is not a devolved section...but that could be something done by Nat Fed [later]

Trustees Meeting 14.3.26

[directly followed the AGM]

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

Meeting review	
<p>Another decent turnout and positive meeting enabling input from different Forums and their reps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noted need to ensure mins are available on the NFPGS website. - Also need to review available resources – both NFPGS and member organisations – notably London Network (LFGN) and the You Tube channel webinars. NS agreed to review with a view to collating links to share from Parks Community UK as a platform for access. Noted there will be a need to check any permissions, ensure appropriate credit to relevant original provider. - Need to share ‘Friends in Green Places’, the MHCLG report, once approved. - Need to invite academic comment/ further discussion. <p>Comment also re. reviewing/ updating group contacts and emails to incorporate those involved in the MHCLG survey and maximise links.</p> <p>SQ-H also noted the need to consider alternative communication options in addition to the parksforums list e-mail.</p>	<p>NS/ MF</p> <p>NS</p> <p>DM</p> <p>ND</p> <p>All</p> <p>SQ-H</p>
Date of Next Trustees Meeting	
<p>7.00pm, Tuesday 12 May (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 note</p>