

General Meeting Minutes

Zoom Meeting



Saturday 18 July 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
Wendy Blythe (Trustee, NFPGS)	Federation of Cambridge Residents Associations (FeCRA) & Cambridge Green Space Groups
Nigel Sharp (Secretary, NFPGS)	NW Parks Friends Forum (NWPFF)
Sarah Tolley	Edinburgh Green Space Forum
Alison Brown	Glasgow Friends of Parks and Green Spaces Forum
Lynda Kitching	Leeds Parks & Green Spaces Forum

Apologies:

These included:

Nicola Dempsey (Trustee, NFPGS)	Sheffield Green Spaces Forum
Michelle Furtado (Trustee, NFPGS)	Network Coordinator, NFPGS
Pat Gross (Trustee, NFPGS)	Wandsworth Forum
Sarah Royal (Trustee, NFPGS)	Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF)
Paul Ely (Trustee, NFPGS)	Parks Community UK
Cliff Munn	Brighton & Hove Green Spaces Forum
Frances Robertson	Bristol Parks Forum

Welcome and Introduction

DM welcomed all and outlined the Agenda items.

NFPGS Updates

Parks Working Group (PWG)

- Liaison group between parks sector and Westminster – DM/ND attend for NFPGS.
- Others attending include Fields in Trust, Keep Britain Tidy and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) officers.
- Terms of reference are to advise HM Gov. and work to protect and improve parks and green spaces.
- Recent meetings focus on sector updates, including current initiatives and recent surveys.
- The group needs to be more assertive and undertake more lobbying for adequate funding and protection of greenspace and support the parks sector.
- Meetings reviewing public open space protections/ designations; also discussion re. local government re-organisation and potential impact on green space management.

NFPGS Working Groups • <u>Research</u>: (DM) Through links with the PWG NFPGS was able to successfully tender to the MHCLG to undertake major research, with support from the University of Sheffield and the 'Friends in Green Places' report has been prepared and submitted to MHCLG for sign-off. It is hoped this protracted process may be approved in August and finally enable a launch/ publicity of outcomes/ recommendations. • <u>Funding</u>: (SQ-H) NFPGS has a 2 year Awards for All grant (National Lottery Community Fund - NLCF) to support administration and development but aims to seek further funds to support delivery of recommendations identified in the MHCLG report, once this is approved. • <u>Campaigning</u>: (DM) The recent Day of Action (18/4/26) involved over 200 groups undertaking activity across the U.K. to support a campaign led by the Community Planning Alliance to raise the needs of parks during the build up to the local Council elections. WB mentioned a link to a webinar by Landmark Chambers covering Planning High Court Challenges which may also be of interest¹. General items • DM reminded all of an opportunity for NFPGS linked groups to benefit from a free trial of the 'Love Exploring' app https://loveexploring.app which helps groups set up trails through their sites - NFPGS negotiated this to be free for this year's summer.	DM
Area Forum Updates <u>Leeds (LK)</u> - 100+ group members. - Discussion about Forum structure/ capacity i.e. as membership grows is there a need for a core group. NS referred to the Liverpool Forum – originally structured with area reps. regularly attending committee meetings, linking to update other groups. - A survey is underway to assess what groups get/ want from the Forum. - Forum is involved with Safer Spaces for Women initiative² to review use/ or why sites are not used, design lessons, etc with Leeds University. - Also, work with the City Council / combined authority, mapping W. Yorks parks - Links with local Public Health -aim to involve more in promoting parks. - Concerns re. nitrous oxide abuse and litter. <u>Edinburgh (ST)</u> - New contact with the City Council. - Developing a Volunteer Strategy. - Hope that there may be benefits to parks from the new visitor levy. - 1m trees planting scheme. - Concern that there is now a need for a fire prevention strategy - Meetings are popular, on line with guest speakers. <u>Glasgow (AB)</u>	

¹ <https://www.landmarkchambers.co.uk/events/webinar-series-planning-high-court-challenges-2022-session-1>

² <https://www.makespaceforgirls.co.uk/resources/safer-parks-for-women-and-girls-guidance>

- 2nd full Forum meeting in May.
- Meeting includes lunch and themed breakout session.
- 30-40 reps attended; 48 groups registered.
- Aim to host meetings at different parks, link to projects.
- Queens Park campaign to save historic glasshouse.
- Forum comparing 'permission to use' (PTU) documents – meeting with the City Council to clarify permissions.
- Issues re. volunteer recruitment/ retention – NS suggested example in Maghull (Sefton) and a 'micro-volunteering' approach 'Give an Hour to Maghull' initiative.

Trafford (SQ-H)

- Meetings online in evenings, include about 35 groups.
- Ongoing discussions re. Council relationship – issues include waste removal.
- Funds in place to set up a website and improve sharing of information.

Cambridge (WB)

- Supporting consultation ongoing for Local Plan
- Support for recent Council motion re. protection for River Cam.
- Issues re. site access and intensive use.
- Tourist tax proposal rejected by City.

NWPFF (NS)

- Provided advice to Sefton group re. funding opportunities.
- Enquiry from Bury group re. volunteer recruitment.
- Support with advice and link groups to Parks Community UK website resources.

Haringey (DM)

- Ongoing issues re. diminishing resources.
- Supported Day of Action (18.4.26) with Forum reps' banner protest/photoshoot.
- Forum chair has met with new Cabinet member to review local issues, inc. litter from high levels of summer site use.

London Friends of Green Spaces Network (DM)

- Area Forum well-established (15yrs). Around 1000 groups, 20 borough-wide forums.
- Recent 5yrs support from a P/T worker through partnership with CPRE London came to an end.
- Aim to replace this lost capacity by becoming constituted (done) and seeking funds.

NFPGS Comments

- Communication highlighted as an important role/ need for Area Forums. Concerns over GDPR but generally groups can be recruited and an opt out clause included in mailings. Parks Community UK has guidance and also the parkforumsuk e-mail list can be used to share information/ seek comment or advice.
- Safe parks Haringey has also undertaken surveys re. women and girls' usage.
- The Haringey Forum has promoted walking with routes shown with booklets available from health centres etc. See www.haringeyfriendsofparks.org.uk
- Tree Planting schemes need consultation and management planning. [also support from The Tree Council <https://treecouncil.org.uk>].
- Permission to Use agreements – there are various examples of Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with local Parks Services, with different levels depending on what's suitable for each area/ group. Essentially there is a need to build good

all

relationships and trust.	
Parks and Green Space Community Events Update and Discussion	
Trafford (SQ-H) - link with the Council events team but changing procedures add complications - Events team attended Forum meeting to outline requirements. Leeds (LK) - Forum provides a focus for discussion and sharing information re. event procedures. - Forum can provide links/ share examples of docs required - Participate/ promote and link with event programmes – e.g. Love Parks Week; Heritage Open Days, etc. - Need for First Aiders – groups share volunteers or support with links to other partners/ schools. - Concern at large scale/ external led events – also ‘privatisation’ of sites during set up. Haringey (DM) - Free use of parks for Friends group events. - Council controversially trying to make Friends Groups pay for waste removal after their community events – ongoing discussion. - Creeping threat of increased numbers of huge inappropriate commercial events NWPFF (NS) - Calendar doc prepared showing links to seasonal dates and awareness days etc to provide ideas for themes for events. [This doc to be shared as an Appendix.] Glasgow (AB) - Friends groups organize events. - Issues re. permissions to use. - Larger Council events held at bandstands. - Council levy for events – grey areas – e.g. volunteer sessions. - Limits/ levy affected by no.s due to attend. General comment - Greenwich Forum receives annual funds from Council to allocate to Friends Groups for events. - Value of Area Forum for events: - Collective bids for resources. - Opportunities to share equipment – e.g. gazebo, etc. - Advice re. permissions, contacts, links to event partners, etc. - Volunteers to help steward event, etc. - Help to promote. - FGs need to evaluate successes etc of their events – esp. if grant funded. - Need to thank any donors, partners, etc. - Information/ impact of event can help inform and support next event bid.	
Date of Next Meeting	
NFPGS AGM: Saturday 26 September 2026	All

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Trustees Meeting 18.7.26

[directly followed the General Meeting]

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

Meeting review	
- High quality and useful reports and discussion - Low attendance but understandable due to summer period. - Ensure wider and focused promotion ahead of next general meeting (AGM)	
NFPGS Update	
NFPGS Annual report SQ-H has prepared a draft awaiting further input and comment to finalise the update.	All
Awards for All (NLCF) – Admin/ Co-ordination - Nikki has a full time work opportunity and will leave the NFPGS admin role - Important to ensure continuity and avoid delay from re-appointment/ induction, etc. - MF was an applicant and very well placed to ensure smooth transition as a pragmatic option. - All agreed in principle, subject to DM discussion with MF. [Agree - now in role] - There will then be a need to review outstanding works and handover – esp. re. newsletter.	DM/MF
NFPGS AGM – 26 September - Need to circulate link to final draft of Annual Report - Promote widely and in good time – (early September?) - Consider including discussion item re. funding for green spaces.	All
Date of Next Trustees Meeting	
7.00pm, Tuesday 8 September (by zoom) – to be confirmed Join Zoom Meeting https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9213929960?pwd=Y1QyYi9iK2ZjY2VrdFk3RVh2Qm5Sdz09 Meeting ID: 921 392 9960 Password: FOVPS	All note

Appendix: Events - A Calendar of Opportunities

Note: * while some awareness days are on the same date, many days – and all awareness weeks - change each year and need to be checked annually to confirm the correct date.

For example, Sporting events such as the Olympics, and World Cups, etc are on a 4yr cycle.

January 1	New Year's Day
January 25	Burns' Night
February 2	Groundhog Day
February*	Winter Olympics
February 14	Valentines Day
February*	Chinese New Year
February 20	National Love Your Pet Day
February-March*	Academy Awards (Oscars)
March 1	St David's Day
March 1	World Book Day
March*	Great British Spring Clean
March 8	International Women's Day
March 10	Disabled Access Day
March*	Mothering Sunday
March*	Sport Relief (Comic Relief)
March 17	St Patrick's Day
March 20	Spring Solstice
March 20	International Day of Happiness
March 22	World Water Day
March 26	World Purple Day (Autism Awareness)
March 29	Wear a Hat Day
March / April*	Easter Day
April 6	Walk to Work day
April 7	World Health Day
April 21	National Tea Day
April 22	International Mother Earth Day
April 23	St George's Day
April 23	National Skipping Day
April – May*	World Parks Week
April 29	International Dance Day
April*	National Gardening Week
May 1	May Day
May*	National Dawn Chorus Day
May*	Sun Awareness Week
May 13	National Children's Day
May*	Mental Health Awareness Week
May*	Ramadan
May*	Outdoor Classroom Day
May*	FA Cup Final Day
May*	Walk to School Week
May*	Chelsea Flower Show
June*	The Big Lunch

June*	Volunteers Week
June 5	World Environment Day
June*	Carers' Week
June 14	Cupcake Day
June – July*	Euros/ FIFA World Cup (men/ women)
June*	National Picnic Week
June*	Civic Day
June*	Father's Day
June 21	World Music Day
June 21	Clean Air Day
June 21	Summer Solstice
June 30	Armed Forces Day
June - July*	Wimbledon Tennis
July*	Love Parks Week
July*	National Fishing Month
July 30	World Friendship Day
August 14	National Allotment Week
August 19	World Photo Day
August 21	Poet's Day
August 26	Dog Day
August 30	International Day of the Disabled
September*	Heritage Open Days
September 14	National Quiet Day
September 21	World Alzheimer's Day
September 27	World Tourism Day
September 29	World Heart Day
October 1	World Vegetarian Day
October 21	Apple Day
October 25	International Artists Day
October 31	Hallowe'en
November 1	Stress Awareness Day
November 5	Guy Fawkes (Bonfire) Night
November 11	Remembrance Day (Armistice Centenary)
November 13	World Kindness Day
Nov – Dec*	Tree Week
December 1	Advent
December 25	Christmas Day
December 26	Boxing Day

Additional details and sources:

<https://www.awarenessdays.com>

<https://www.daysoftheyear.com>

<https://nationaldaycalendar.com>

Comment

This represents an arbitrary, selective sample as an example of calendar opportunities.

There is a wide variety of dates highlighted to indicate the scope of 'awareness days', hence some are relatively trivial, some fun but others more meaningful + more significant than others.

Awareness Days may present scope for partnership / sponsorship opportunities, a chance for group promotion or profile raising. There may be potential for a programme of events or coordinated day linking with other organisations.

A diverse calendar may encourage wider participation, tapping into particular volunteer interests and imagination, perhaps enabling links with target groups. There may be potential to develop local links and further research will identify locally significant dates and anniversaries as the basis for site events.