Annual General Meeting Minutes

Zoom Meeting

Saturday 26 September 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
Michelle Furtado (Trustee, NFPGS)	Network Coordinator, NFPGS
Wendy Blythe	Federation of Cambridge Residents Associations (FeCRA) & Cambridge Green Space Groups
Nigel Sharp (Secretary, NFPGS)	NW Parks Friends Forum
Chris Blythe	Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF)
Suzanne Morpurgo	Brent Residents and Parks Forum
Cliff Munn	Brighton & Hove Green Spaces Forum
Frances Robertson	Bristol Parks Forum
Sarah Tolley	Edinburgh Green Space Forum
Sally Sanderson	Friends of Horsham Park, Horsham
Alison Brown	Glasgow Friends of Parks and Green Spaces Forum
Caroline Williams	Liverpool Parks Friends Forum
Ean MacKeller	Newcastle Parks Forum
Malcolm Hall	St Albans Forum
Judie Collins	Trafford Parks & Green Spaces
John Mardle	Luton Friends of Parks, Green and Blue Spaces

Apologies:

These included:

Nicola Dempsey (Trustee, NFPGS)	Sheffield Green Spaces Forum
Sarah Royal (Trustee NFPGS)	Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF)
Paul Ely (Trustee, NFPGS)	Parks Community UK
Pat Gross (Trustee, NFPGS)	Wandsworth Forum
Lynda Kitching	Leeds Parks & Green Spaces Forum
Martin Willis	Nottingham Open Spaces Forum
Alona Sheridan	Lewisham Green Spaces Forum
Steve Bool	Cardiff Parks Friends Forum
Adrian Pitts	Natural Kirklees
Roger Jones	Tower Hamlets
Wasyl Strutynskyj	Association of Manchester Open Space Societies (AMOSS)

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 (27.9.25)

These were approved.

Annual Report April 2025-March 2026 and Officers' Updates

A link to the NFPGS Annual Report was circulated prior to the AGM. The report is also available at: https://natfedparks.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/NFPG-Annual-Report-2025_2026-final.pdf

Chair update (DM)

DM provided a brief summary of the report and the sector since the previous AGM:

- NFPGS helps coordinate and support parks communities, particularly our members - area forums – but with additional support throughout the wider sector, including individual park friends and community groups.
- Support continues to be provided through the parks community uk and NFPGS websites, with regular newsletters also circulated to around 2,500 community contacts
- NFPGS is the lead on community empowerment for the governments' Parks Working Group coordinated by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).
- In addition, NFPGS has established 3 working groups to enable further consideration of: 1. Research; 2. Funding and 3. Campaigning (in formation).
- Recent NFPGS activity has included 3 key areas of work:
    - Lottery funded (Awards for All) administrative support and charity development, including rationalizing NFPGS databases and upgrading websites and communications.
    - MHCLG funded national survey and report 'Friends in Green Places'. Although still awaiting final MHCLG approval to enable a formal launch, the report was outlined at the NFPGS general meeting 14.3.26[1].
    - Day of Action (18.4.26) in support of the Community Planning Alliance campaign for nature, parks and green spaces. Over 220 groups participated across the UK.
- DM thanked all groups for their continued work and commitment and invited others to become involved with NFPGS coordination, either a trustee or in support of a working group.

Secretary update (NS)

- Since the previous AGM NFPGS Trustees have met every couple of months, with additional general meetings including member discussion on the MHCLG report (March) and community events (July). Minutes are available at: https://natfedparks.org.uk/resources/minutes/
- NFPGS review and rationalization, supported by the Awards for All funding to provide additional capacity (see update below) is also enabling a review of membership – NS noted that in addition to park friends area forums there are additional green space volunteer networks to whom NFPGS may be relevant and supportive.
- NFPGS continues to receive enquiries annually – from individuals, Friends groups

[1] Minutes available at: https://natfedparks.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/NFPGS-General-Trustees-Mins-14.3.26.pdf

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. Resources are available at: https://parkscommunity.org.uk (PCUK) and with other sector partners whom NFPGS share links. **Treasurer update (SQ-H)** - SQ-H summarized the accounts, with £1,945 unrestricted funds to be retained as a reserve. The accounts have been signed off independently - 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). **Administrator / Networks update (MF)** - MF helped establish NFPGS and has been a trustee since the CIO was registered, particularly leading on communications, and including coordination of events which helped develop the national network. - Awards for All funding supported the appointment of a freelance administrator (Nikki Iyayi in Sept. 25) to provide additional capacity and support NFPGS development, however since NI has now left to take up a new post, Trustees invited MF to fulfill the role for the remainder of the 2 year grant period. - MF is now progressing the review and rationalization of NFPGS websites and communications initiated by NI, including a regular seasonal newsletter. - Additional materials, including case studies are requested to support website improvements. The Annual Report and Financial Report (2025/ 2026) were adopted by those attending and SQ-H agreed to submit to the Charity Commission.	
Motions / Proposed Constitution Changes	
There were no motions or constitutional changes to be considered.	
Election of Officers and Trustees	
NFPGS officers formally stood down and following a nomination and election process: - DM was re-elected as Chair - SQ-H re-elected as Treasurer - NS re-elected as Secretary MF, WB, ND, SR, PE and PG are to continue as trustees. 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.	**All note**
Discussion: How do we try to ensure adequate funding for the UK's public green spaces? ▪ How can we try to ensure they get the funding and staffing they need? ▪ How can Forums and Friends Groups speak out and lobby effectively? ▪ What do we do in the meantime to try to mitigate the chronic lack of budgets and resources?	

Edinburgh (ST)

- Over 70 member groups.
- City is benefitting from visitor levy with £5.15m raised.
- Council restructure includes new park officers and a parks communities role, particular focus on 'prestige parks'.
- Green Investment plan includes education, city centre issues (see link in chat).
- Close relationship with City Council with monthly meetings providing contact and liaison.

Newcastle (EMcK)

- Over 30 member groups.
- Control has reverted to the City Council from the Urban Green charity.
- Climate concerns have led to further tree planting.
- Concern that section 106/ CIL funds insufficient to cover works required.
- Issues re. management planning with City Council – lack of input and coordination.
- Insurance costs for Friends groups.
- Limited ranger recruitment – Council seeking external funds.
- Issues re. events and impact on sites and the benefit of any income raised.

St Albans (MH)

- Established this year. NFPGS Chair attended launch. Around 25 member groups.
- Campaigning re. Splash Park delayed opening.
- Local government reorganization issues about different responsibilities.
- Large litter bins introduced to help manage event waste issues.
- Links to wildlife beneficial to show value of parks in local nature recovery strategy and additional links with the environment agency and wetland works.

Horsham (SS)

- About 15 local groups in network.
- Local government reorganization issues.
- Pressure on parks community groups to seek funds.
- Concern that local authority becoming more dependent on Friends groups.
- Friends of Horsham Park contributed approx. £100K in voluntary work.
- They bring councillors to see the impact of Friends groups.

Leeds (forwarded by LK)

- Partnerships can help lever in additional funds
    - The City Council is working with National Trust/ English Nature and the Heritage Lottery on the Nature for Towns initiative.
    - West Yorks. Combined Authority has part funded research in safety in parks, particularly for women and girls, and will provide funds from the local authorities to support certain redesign identified.
    - West Yorks. Wildlife Trust supports with volunteers.
    - Leeds Beckett University landscape students have supported community growing schemes.
    - Local businesses have been engaged to support their corporate social responsibility activity in parks.
- Current issues include concerns relating to nitrous oxide use.
- The area forum provides a chance for groups to share views, speak out, and develop links to local politicians.

Liverpool (CW)

- Over 25 groups involved in the Forum.
- Issues with reduced maintenance levels in parks.
- Council elections brought renewed investment (£8m) for parks.
- Funds desperately needed to compensate for lack of investment.
- Release of s106 enabling play improvements.
- Positive impact of 'Scouse Flowerhouse' https://www.scouseflowerhouse.com
    - Creation of meadows and more biodiverse areas.
    - Seed collection sharing and sales.
- Need to look at an 'acceptable' level of income and related pressure for events.
- Additional Green Flag sites (6) but still lagging behind past achievements (17 in 2011).

Glasgow (AB)

- Established 2 years ago, with help from the NFPGS. About 48 groups involved in the Forum.
- Some established as charities enabling wider funding bids.
- City Council has committed a £50K pot with £2K grants for Friends groups.
- Groups need to provide volunteer hours but cover for insurance provided.
- No mow schedules have led to increase in butterflies, recording supported by a biological records officer https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/glasgow-museums-biological-records-centre
- Reorganisation of local authorities in Scotland.
- Community led campaign for Queen Park Glasshouse has helped prevent closure.

Brighton (CM)

- Forum members have benefitted from a volunteer leadership accreditation programme.
- The programme has helped develop work plans and enable insurance cover.
- Volunteer policy with the Council has raised issues with power tool use.
- Questionnaire survey of groups has shown the value of PCUK and help for group governance and adopting a constitution.
- Issues arising from council structure and parks/ housing and highways.
- Wildflower conservation on South Downs enables seed collections and sales with the Wildflower Conservation Society https://www.wildflowerconservationsociety.com.

Bristol (FR)

- Around 70 member groups.
- 'standstill' budget.
- Cost issues include ash die-back.
- Friends groups expected to do more.
- Concerns at outsourcing litter collection and issues with waste charges for friends group events.
- Communication role of forum important.
- Cemeteries & crematoria service income contributes to parks.
- Council are providing training and this can enable cover for risk assessments and insurance.
- Issues relating to waste collection costs.
- Some potential benefit from biodiversity net gain, managing for nature projects.

Haringey (DM)

- Chronic underfunding and understaffing levels in Parks Service due to Government cuts to LAs.
- Focus is on emergency or essential works only, plus occasional investment funding streams (eg due to CIL/s106/Pride In Place funding 10 playgrounds are currently being renovated/upgraded)

- Council has signed the Parks Charter https://natfedparks.org.uk/news/parks-charter/

London Network

- Founded nearly 20 years ago. Now around 1000 local Friends Groups, and 22 Borough Forums.
- Funding support for a part time worker has dried up, so the usual intense programme of webinars was put on hold for last 6 mths - to resume in November.
- LFGN has now formally constituted itself.

National update (DM)

- The Day of Action (18.4.26) by the Community Planning Alliance, backed by NFPGS, saw over 200 local groups hold activities to champion their green space. https://communityplanningalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/260219_Day-of-Action_Campaign-Pack_Feb26.pdf

General comments:

- Aim to ensure volunteering leads to empowerment.
- Need to lobby that volunteers are not taken for granted, let alone seen as cheap labour.
- Communication increasingly important with limited resources to ensure coordination and input at site level, and at borough/town levels between Friends groups and Area Forums.
- Forums provide an effective focus for community-council engagement, increasingly vital when staff capacity is limited.

Additional comments - from Zoom Chat (see Appendix – below)

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 NFPGS's Forums' network communications e-mail: parksforumsuk@lists.riseup.net	**All**
Date of Next General Meeting	
Date to be confirmed.	**All**

Appendix: Zoom Chat

Sarah Tolley - Edinburgh
https://www.abundanceinvestment.com/invest/edinburgh-green-investment-1

Judie Collins - Trafford
I met a developer yesterday where I've had some success previously with greenspace as part of developments. He is planning to give a new community centre to the community and has plans for them to grow fruit and veg as part of development

Michelle Furtado (NFPGS Trustee)
We had the same problems with the council in terms of communication. They were too often going through restructures, things that were promised weren't delivered, and we rarely met with senior parks staff, despite their acknowledgement of our groups' importance.

Judie Collins – Trafford
for Frances - 106 is area based CIL not so our town centre public realm money came from Peel as past of Trafford Centre.

Frances - Bristol
Here is our Bristol Council parks volunteering web page –
https://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/museums-parks-sports-and-culture/parks-and-open-spaces/get-involved-in-your-local-park-or-green-space/apply-to-be-a-bristol-parks-lead-volunteer

Alison Brown - Glasgow
Glasgow City Council's plans for their parks and greenspaces 2026/27 approved by Council 9th June 2026, and the various projects they are focussing on across the city and the various funding sources they are drawing on:
https://onlineservices.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/viewDoc.asp?c=P62AFQDNUT0GNTZLZ3
https://onlineservices.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/viewDoc.asp?c=P62AFQDNUT0GDXNTT1

Michelle Furtado (NFPGS Trustee)
Enquiry from Wilmslow about how to fill the gaps in their parks masterplan - they are completing elements from different pots, but struggling with fencing and infrastructure. They are coming up against lease requirements, which they cannot get (and probably wouldn't want), which is restricting their opportunities.

Judie Collins - Trafford
Thanks Michelle Wilmslow lost their town council under re-organisation and then got it back as did Macclesfield. Wilmslow has a Business Improvement district run by Groundwork. Cheshire East elections will go ahead in 2027 with Cheshire West and Warrington, Happy to talk to them

Frances - Bristol
Bristol did briefly train vols in using their strimmers and hedge cutters which trained vols could use. This stopped some years ago, and we haven't gone back to see if they will do this again. I suggest their insurers aren't keen. Otherwise we are not allowed to use powered tools because of the public liability issues and because they cannot check everyone's equipment is safe.

Alison Brown - Glasgow
Glasgow does have volunteer power tool use restrictions, but we are trying to address individual Friends groups issues and conflicts faced on this through the Forum having a PTU review and volunteer work discussion.

Judie Collins – Trafford
Don't know if anyone was on the health and greenspace launch from govt and Natural England- Shelley has my slides.

Ean - Newcastle
Newcastle trained some volunteers to use hedge trimmers and blowers but currently this is paused as one of the staff damaged themselves in an accident. So, this may be re-instated but with appropriate PPE (special trousers with pads to prevent accidents.....)

Malcolm Hull - St Albans
Cliff - We have similar power tool issues in St Albans. The general position is volunteers aren't insured to use them. Council staff can join tasks and use them. Some things like brush-cutters can be used by vols after extra training.

Frances - Bristol
Cliff - I like the idea of getting staff to join in. There was supposed to be a programme of staff working with vols, but I don't know what happened so you remind me to follow this up.

Michelle Furtado (NFPGS Trustee)
Replying to "Cliff - We have similar power tool issues in St Al...":
We did successfully fundraise for brush cutter and hedge trimming training for vols previously, which gave them a cert that the council accepted. It was expensive professional training but certainly helped some groups' function.

Frances - Bristol
Is there a list of which Councils have signed the Parks Charter?

Michelle Furtado (NFPGS Trustee)
Replying to "Is there a list of which Councils have signed the ...":
I'm sure we can find that info in our data - gives us a little time and email me to remind me (haha!)
networks@natfedparks.org.uk

Wendy Blythe – Cambridge / NFPGS Trustee
Has anyone else been approached about "resilience meetings" via councils/local authorities et al?

Ean - Newcastle
Resilience meetings?

Judie Collins - Trafford
Greater Manchester has resilience panel happy to update Nat Fed.

Wendy Blythe – Cambridge / NFPGS Trustee
Do you have a link? Think might be relevant to green spaces.

Judie Collins - Trafford
yes its a joint project with what was greening in later life led by Heriot Watt and UCL happy to send slides if you have email.

Trustees Meeting 26.9.26

[directly followed the AGM]

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

Meeting review	
All agreed the meeting enabled useful discussion with good contributions from those attending, including some new representatives.	
NFPGS Update	
Communication remains a key area for further progress to rationalize and extend contacts. The survey and new, regular newsletters are helping this process thanks to MF input.	
MF is still trying to resolve website access with Dave H (our IT adviser) and hopes to be able to invite and include more case studies.	**MF**
Noted the need to develop membership links, potentially including other volunteer networks, and particularly to involve wider areas.	**All**
Agreed that it would be beneficial to extend representation to include a trustee from Scotland or Wales, with also potential to involve members in NFPGS working groups.	**All**
Date of Next Trustees Meeting	
7.30pm, Tuesday 17 November (by zoom)	**All**