

Lewisham Biodiversity Partnership

Full Partnership meeting

Date and time: 18 October 2023, 16:00-18:00

Location: MS Teams

Purpose: Strategically plan, share, support, monitor and promote biodiversity protection/enhancement and nature conservation volunteering in Lewisham

| ATTENDEES | | | |
|-----------|---|----|---|
| AS | Anne Slater – F/O Chinbrook Meadows, Lewisham Parks Forum | GT | Geoffrey Thurley – F/O Brockley and Ladywell Cemeteries |
| CC | Caroline Cupitt – Ladywell Fields User Group | JA | James Allen – LBL BPP |
| DD | Donna Davies – F/O River Pool | JK | Jessica Kyle – LBL |
| DF | David Ford – Lee Forum, London National Park City | MK | Mike Keogh – Chair of Lewisham Biodiversity Partnership, QWAG |
| EH | CLlr Edison Huynh – Lewisham Central Ward, Vice Chair of Sustainable Development Select Committee | MS | Michael Stuart – Age UK, Shake the Trees |
| EM | Emily Millhouse - Glendale | PL | Paul Lowndes – F/O Manor House Gardens |
| EWD | Eszter Wainwright-Deri – LBL | RM | Rachel Mooney – F/O Hilly Fields |

ACTIONS:

- **Anyone interested in setting up a local fruit harvesting group contact Michael (michael.stuart@ageuklands.org.uk).**

Upcoming events:

- 21 October – Apple Day in Chinbrook Meadows
- 21 October – Woodland Walk in Forster Memorial Park
- 28 October – [London Day of Nature](#), GiGL, Camley Street Nature Park (tickets available until 23 October)

Funding opportunities:

- [Rewild London Fund](#) – 27 Nov; 2 Nov webinar
- [Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund](#) (Aviva, WWF, RSPB) – 1 Nov
- [Community tree packs](#) (TCV)
- [Free Trees for Schools and Communities](#) (Woodland Trust) – January
- [Community Partnership](#) (Community Fund) – no deadline

1. Welcome/Introductions/Apologies

Apologies: Alona Sheridan – F/O Mayow Park; Philippa Nicholls – Thames21; Monika Mitchell - Sydenham Wells Park Improvement Group; Alex Middleton – F/O Friendly Gardens; Lawrence Beale Collins – Healthy Rivers, Annette Elliott-Dunn – F/O Hillcrest Woods

2. **Minutes and matters arising** – No actions from last meeting
- Google group reminder:** Feel free to share information with the whole partnership (e.g. events, questions) via the lewishambiodiversitypartnership@googlegroups.com email. Please note, if you reply all to an email your response will go to the **whole group** so please **check the recipients** of your email carefully to avoid sending unintended emails to the group.

3. **Biodiversity Partnership Summary Report and Highlights** – see BARS excel and slides for this quarter's summary

Please continue to send in your records so we can add them to our summary statistics!

Thanks!

4. **'Shaking the Tree' Urban Fruit Harvesting – Michael Stuart (Age UK):** Michael shared a [video](#) about the group he started in Kilburn to harvest fruit that would otherwise not be used. They harvested 2 tonnes of fruit last year mostly from back gardens and donated it to schools and foodbanks. The project helps people connect with nature and food growing and engaging the community. He offered help to set a similar group up in Lewisham and members were interested in the idea. Contact Michael (michael.stuart@ageuklands.org.uk) if you are interested in setting up a local group.

Discussion:

- Challenge is volunteer coordinator who organises the fruit harvest events and coordinates with homeowners. It is a very seasonal activity and it is a challenge to organise everything in the 6 weeks fruit harvest period. Could start with a few gardens with large trees and go from there.
 - General issue in Borough that community orchard fruit is taken before fruit is ripen so not able to harvest.
 - Question about how to crab apple street tree fallen fruit can be an issue and street sweeper picks it up – suggestion to
 - How do food banks manage and people react to not perfect fruit (e.g. worms)? The group is honest about the quality and only pick fruit that they already have takers for (e.g. crab apple if someone already indicated they want it). Also, there are some local small businesses who put it on their menu
5. **Kenneth White Award update:** A big thank you to the **Friends of Beckenham Place Park** for their generous donation for future Kenneth White Award round(s) to allow more biodiversity projects to be funded. The group has dissolved recently, and the members kindly offered remaining funds to the Kenneth White Legacy Award. Thank you!

6. **Partner updates and discussion**

a. **General discussion points:**

- Groups expressed their interest to have more meadow and/or relaxed mowing areas in parks.
- Attendees discussed the Miyawaki tree planting method and if more of these forests could be planted in larger parks.
- Preparations for the parks contract tender has started and a meeting was held with Parks Forum members.
- Data collection for projects and in general on biodiversity and the environment. Lewisham's Nature Conservation team collects species data from surveys or ad hoc

sightings and for reporting on the Biodiversity Action Plan (i.e. quarterly BARS output excel JK sends out). Many volunteers do water quality testing, riverfly monitoring for rivers and other water surveys which are usually collected by members of the Ravensbourne Catchment Improvement Group. Many apps are also available for species recording (e.g. iRecord, iNaturalist) some of which links directly to Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL) who manages Lewisham's biodiversity, habitat and open spaces data.

b. AS (F/O Chinbrook Meadows)

- i. Working on Our Space Award funded (Groundwork) project this year to improve the park for Biodiversity. Events organised for local community (e.g. walks) and planting plants beneficial for pollinators.
- ii. Apple day this weekend (21 October)
- iii. Involved with Chinbrook Allotment Orchard events and volunteer sessions

c. CC (Ladywell Fields User Group)

- i. Lost a row of plums and replanting them with heritage apples
- ii. Project to help native black poplar trees, 12 out of 14 trees alive thanks to local volunteers
- iii. Tiny Forest planted last year with Earthwatch and currently working on Kenneth White Legacy Award funded project to extend it. Reusing materials and volunteers digging the area. Huge community support, c. 20 people involved. CC explained the Miyawaki method.
- iv. Wildflower meadows in park – lots of positive feedback about South Field not being mown this year and would like to improve other areas.

d. RM (F/O Hilly Fields)

- i. Coal tit heard during bird survey
- ii. Plans to lay a hedge in the park
- iii. New trees were and being planted in the park using Woodland Trust bundles

e. DD (F/O River Pool)

- i. Lot of tree works
- ii. Seen lots of woodpeckers, and kingfishers are also seen regularly
- iii. Water quality testing done, and results show rivers are high in phosphate
- iv. Water vole project – aquatic mammal platform installation next week to see if there are water voles or minks around. This is a prerequisite for a potential water vole reintroduction project in case the area is suitable and there are no voles or minks

f. DF (Lee Forum, London National Park city rangers)

- i. Burnt Ash Pond is covered with duckweed, no ducks seen
- ii. Have ideas for naming bridges on rivers – EWD raised that naming bridges need to go through the correct process not on an ad hoc basis
- iii. Big pollution event in Sutcliffe Park recently, there is a discharge near Manor Park which is concerning - EM confirmed that it has been reported
- iv. Interested in getting involved in water testing

g. GT (F/O Ladywell and Brockley Cemeteries)

- i. Planting daffodil bulbs and gorse bushes
- ii. Collected some arisings from the area that was cut (Brockley A)

h. PL (F/O Manor House Gardens)

- i. Replanted a flower bed in the park with pollinator-friendly plants, Glendale provided plants and community volunteers manage it
- ii. Loggeries were installed by Nature's Gym in these community garden beds
- iii. Plans to improve another bed with woodland flora
- iv. Pond project to plant marginal vegetation try to help with the duckweed as it is quite bad despite Glendale trying to clear it regularly
- v. Question and discussion about data collection for project evaluation and in general (see general discussion section above). EM offered to help with pond survey, DD with water quality survey and JK offered help with species surveys with Nature's Gym.
- vi. Discussion about local swan who recently lost its mate and if anything needs to be done.

i. Thames21 – sent in writing

- j. Philly Nicholls is moving on from being the Ravensbourne Catchment Coordinator but stays with T21. Recruitment for the new Catchment coordinator is ongoing.
- k. The project in Chinbrook Meadows is going along well - 3 of my Thames21 colleagues will be there during the Apple Harvest Day on 21st October to talk through the project with anyone who would like to find out more.
- l. We've also been talking to Cllr Krupski about the NEIRF project, how to sell watercourse BNG units to developers and how to create a good financial model that allows us to use this money from the selling of the units to invest in other river improvement/restoration projects around the catchment

7. Lewisham updates

a. EM updates (Glendale):

- i. 16 conservation volunteer sessions (*Nature's Gym & Rivers & People*) delivered
 - Highlights: We made and installed some solitary bee hotels from tree works
 - London's European Eel officer gave us a talk on their ecology and conservation
- ii. We now have a Rivers & People Instagram account, so please do follow, and engage with us at @riversandpeople_lewisham
- iii. Autumn school sessions have begun
- iv. Meeting with a lot of friends of parks' groups to discuss future plans and how they can be supported
- v. 6 bird surveys have taken place
- vi. Liaising on a variety of ongoing/ future projects for the borough

b. JK updates:

- i. Led a walk with GoParks London from Lower Sydenham to Brookmill Park.
- ii. School sessions continued to be popular throughout July
- iii. Led a wade with the NHS
- iv. Kenneth White purchases have begun, will be in contact shortly if I haven't already!
- v. Started a new project in Ladywell Fields opposite the South tennis courts to improve the area for biodiversity.
- vi. Lewisham sites very successful in London in Bloom awards: Gold for Large Park - Beckenham Place Park; Gold for Large Park - Forster Memorial Park; Gold and

Category Winner for Small Conservation Area - Devonshire Road Nature Reserve; Silver gilt for Small Park - Brookmill Parks; Silver gilt for Small Park - Friendsbury Gardens; Apprentice Scheme of the Year Award Winner for our apprentice scheme at Beckenham Place Park. Thank you and congratulations to everyone involved!

c. JA updates (BPP):

- i. Butterfly Conservation's Big City Butterflies have been busy running a moth trapping and ID event with 22 different confirmed species. They also supported our Big Butterfly Count
- ii. I've led six successful bat walks in the park (with one more to go) they've been well attended with people and bats! Recording Common and Soprano Pipistrelle, Serotine, Leisler's and Noctule bats. Bat boxes were inspected as well.
- iii. Volunteers have started back in the woodland, we've coppiced some long overdue hazels and started reducing more holly creating dead hedges along the woodland paths.
- iv. Thames21 have been busy in the Ravensbourne with litter picking, balsam bashing and some work with woody debris.
- v. Various volunteer surveyors and recorders have been busy in the park and I'm looking to put together an informal quarterly get together to chat about what they've seen and make sure it's all recorded.
- vi. Last week I attended the Countryside Management Association's annual conference the subject of which was "Achieving Nature Recovery"

d. EWD updates:

- i. LNRS, BNG update:
 - Government postponed mandatory BNG to start from January 2024 with guidance in November; attending relevant meetings, trainings, internal WG with planning
 - No news about LNRS
- ii. Friendly Street verges improvement session with F/O Friendly Gardens and other projects
- iii. GiGL London Day of Nature in Camley Street Nature Park on 28 October – tickets until 23 October here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/london-day-of-nature-2023-tickets-665286518887>
- iv. Funding opportunities:
 - [Rewild London Fund](#) – 27 Nov; 2 Nov webinar
 - [Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund](#) (Aviva, WWF, RSPB) – 1 Nov
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- v. LWT's [Deer survey](#) is back, Sep 23 – Feb 24, last survey; two Lewisham sites in priority list: Summerhouse Hill Wood, Stumps Hill Wood

8. AOB - None

9. Next meeting: 24th January 2024 at 5pm (MS Teams)