



Friends of Firs Farm

Registered Charity 1177069

L♥VE YOUR GREEN SPACE

Community working together to help shape how our park works, is maintained, & protected.

Friends of Firs Farm

Wetlands Park & Playing Fields

AGM

28th June 2024

This report is to highlight the achievements and the aims of the group 'Friends of Firs Farm (FOFF)' for the twelve-month period to 31st March 2024.



Message from the Trustees – Thank you for your continued support with this special blue-green space!

Community hub

Finally, we did it! Despite the huge increase in the build costs and challenges we faced in bringing in the services and utilities. Locating the sewer drainage pipework and fresh water source was a humongous challenge 23rd February saw the doors open for the first time to the warm welcome from the general public.

Water sadly is still an ongoing issue with pressure on the low side, so we will hold off the 'official opening' until this is completed Sewer problems resolved with thanks to LBE

Work still to be done on the sensory room, internal fit out of some of the interior areas and to bring in a Bike / buggy shelter with a bit of landscaping. Volunteering is a must for 2024 and beyond to help achieve this and to maintain the areas to keep welcoming the community.

We thank our many sponsors who include Sport England, Enfield council, Thames Water and London Marathon Foundation and more besides for their patience and generous contributions to this amazing much needed facilities.

Events

This past year included the 2nd well attended Winter Walk with a popular Santas Grotto, organised by local elves supported again by the Boys Brigade – Thank you.

Thank you to the Firs Farm Volunteers

This much valued team of dedicated people have for the 10th year running given up their own time for free to help make a difference to this much-loved blue & green community space. Firs Farm would not be what it is today without them.

Duke of Edinburgh – We continue to see more and more young people joining us each year and for them to get to know and understand more about volunteering in their local wetlands and how they can contribute.

Thank you

The FOFF Trustees

Chris Ferrary, Simon Jarosch, Geraldine Cosh, Paul Guiver, Lisa Chapman & Toni Guiver



Friends of Firs Farm Park

Firs Farm Wetlands and Playing Fields and its unique position in the borough of Enfield brings a diverse community of people together. One of the borough's earliest and largest flood alleviation schemes has in under ten years, evolved into an important blue/green space, a diverse habitat for hundreds more species; enriching the lives of residents. It is also an award-winning wetland, visited by scientific institutions, ecological groups and local authorities from across the country to study both the environmental and amenity benefits in creating an amazing sustainable urban drainage system (SUDs). The new facilities we hope will only encourage more of these special visitors.

We host both community & company volunteering opportunities.

Our Trustees and members

We currently have over 250 members of which 6 are trustees, with around approximately 25 part time active volunteers who work on various projects in-between work, family and other commitments.

As a charity we are only as good as our Trustees, volunteers and members without whom our work would not be possible.

We thank all the volunteers who were involved in the last year's work for the Friends of Firs Farm and we encourage others who feel that protecting a green space is important for the community to come forward and join us.

Volunteers - Thank you

We are very proud of the volunteers that turn up each and every week (Mondays and Saturdays) to carry out numerous gardening tasks that support maintaining Firs Farm Wetlands as a very special Go To green space.

Thanks also to those who supported local young people in achieving their Duke of Edinburgh - Volunteering section.

Corporate volunteering is on the increase now that the new hub with facilities are in place.

It has been encouraging seeing the increase in the number of community groups including schools, scout and local families who supported our tree planting and care over the last 12 months. The heavy watering throughout the dryer season was made more difficult due to the further vandalism in the old compound where once stood the football changing rooms. This important planting and care of our trees, supports mitigating some of the climate change, attracts and supports further wildlife.

Get out & Get Active in Firs Farm

We have held a number of events throughout the year which have proved to be popular and encouraged activities with other groups and can already see an improved uptake of activities including the regular joggers, walkers and cyclists over the last year. Edmonton running group are regular users of Firs Farm as are a number of cycling groups.

With the opening of the new hub facilities, 2024 is going to make such a difference, to so many in visiting Firs Farm. Our intention of the Hub is to bring the community together, to regenerate interest in sport at Firs Farm in addition to the ever-increasing popularity of Firs Farm tennis courts that we were instrumental in bringing back to Firs Farm in 2018.

The long-term project of the multi-sport pitch is unfortunately still in limbo with the council. Sadly, this project would have made a difference to the local hockey and football teams and we continue to encourage the council to now progress this project to no avail. The councils Enfield Sports strategy (adopted April 2018) has yet to be progressed by the council.

L♥VE YOUR GREEN SPACE

friendsoffirfarm@gmail.com www.firfarmn21.org Facebook: @FirsFarmParkN21 Twitter: @FirsFarm



Friends of Firs Farm Park

Wildlife

The terrapins are still around, and numbers are on the increase. The swans come and go every years but have never felt comfortable enough to remain and nest yet in Firs Farm. With the latest planting in the wetlands cell by the 'windows' we hope that the increase in vegetation will encourage more wildlife to this special habitat.

The Egyptian geese are a favourite with locals. Numbers have increased year on year in the UK to the point that in some circles these are considered to be an invasive species. <https://www.waterfowl.org.uk/wildfowl/true-ducks/egyptian-goose/#:~:text=The%20Order%20makes%20it%20an,and%20Ruddy%20Ducks%20Oxyura%20jamaicensis.>

It is good to see some of our more protected species continuing to thrive at Firs Farm e.g.: water voles, slow worms, and stag beetles to name but a few. We are keen for volunteers to get involved in the team to help with wildlife surveys Please contact the charity if you are interested.

Social Media / Google maps / website

Our bright new website was launched in the first quarter of 2024 thanks to the many hours of work by Helen Osman. Chris Ferrary and Ruth Smith. We are still reviewing content for completeness and accuracy so if you spot anything please raise it with us We continue to use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

Googles maps remains at a healthy 4.5 with 559 good reviews. Google reports that the average time spent there by visitors is 60 minutes we expect this figure to change with the fantastic new Firs Farm Community Hub.

Funding/donations

Funds/pledges have again increased this last year particularly around the community hub. Please refer to the Finance report for further information.

Summary

In summary, FFFF, a registered Charity, dedicated to maintaining and protecting the park and wildlife for public benefit. The friends are an active group which is evidenced by volunteer hours since inception of **more than 27,000**.

There is **no membership fee** in order to keep the group 'open to all', although donations are always welcome. 😊

Come and join us and show that you **L♥ve your Green Space**.

Thank you

The Trustees of Friends of Firs Farm

Registered Charity 1177069

Please also refer to the following: 1 Treasurers Report, 2 Elections of Trustees & Committee, 3 Membership Form (including Equal opportunities policy)

L♥VE YOUR GREEN SPACE

friendsoffirsfarm@gmail.com www.firsfarmn21.org Facebook: @FirsFarmParkN21 Twitter: @FirsFarm