



# Friends of Yeading Walk Newsletter



*Spring 2025*



**Join our volunteers and make a difference!**

**Calling All Volunteers!** Since the Friends of Yeading Walk was formed in Sept 2020, there has been enthusiastic support from community volunteers. It is their hard work which has cleaned the stream, swept up the leaves for compost, pruned the orchard, helped create the planting which brightens the park and feeds the pollinators, and provided 'Heads-Up' reporting when there are problems. We know you are busy with family, work and your own gardens, that some have achy knees and backs, and that our scheduled workdays often clash with your other commitments.

**BUT.... we need your help and your committee is asking for it.**

Project Saturdays take place most weeks but the Friends can be flexible by offering different times and days for volunteering. There are a wide range of activities to suit your interests (and your knees/back!). **Currently the overwhelming majority of volunteering effort in the park is provided by only eight extremely hard-working volunteers.** If you enjoy the park with your children, walk your dog regularly or walk through the park enroute to shopping or work, and treasure this green space as an oasis offering quiet relaxation - then this is your park too and we invite you to help. We're not expecting you to commit huge chunks of time but.....

***'What a Difference an Hour Makes!'***

After Easter, there will be banners at each entrance inviting Volunteering, and posters with contact details. The past five years has seen the park transformed into a clean, safe, welcoming and beautiful place, with an increasing focus on the environment and conservation. This is your park, and sustaining all that has been achieved, depends on you. The committee will be in the park on **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April** to provide information about what volunteering entails and how you could join our friendly team, with as little or as much time as you can give. This initiative is supported by a grant from the Crane Valley Partnership, a continuing source of both finance and encouragement.



*We hope you will join us to improve and protect the park. If interested, please email [foywgroup@gmail.com](mailto:foywgroup@gmail.com), with **VOLUNTEERING** in the subject line and an indication of possible days and times for volunteering and the sort of activities that interest you.*

## What's been happening in the park?

### *'Three Men and a Bin'*



Rubbish bins have been a bit of a contentious issue in the past couple of years with two bins having been lost from the Northumberland Road area of the park. Thankfully two of our members Eddie and Leon along with a friendly park user recently came to the rescue and moved a rather heavy bin from the 'willows' area to the crossroads section of the park. Thank you to all concerned!

### *New Steps for Safety across the Stream*

Additional steps been installed by Eddie and Jiri on both of the steep banks on the approach to the stepping stones, creating a much safer environment. This improvement deals effectively with slippery conditions especially in the wet season.



### ***Warden's Conservation Corner***

**'No Mow' areas:** 'No-Mow' areas are being created in the park: the first, just along the path downstream of the main bridge and the second just past the willows, towards Rayners Lane. You may have noticed that we have mowed the edge of these to indicate to the Council's mowing team where to avoid cutting.

Leaving grass areas uncut will boost biodiversity. It gives wildflowers like clover, daisies, and dandelions a chance to bloom, attracting pollinators including bees, butterflies, and other insects. Longer grass also provides habitat and shelter for insects, birds, and small mammals. Less mowing means reduced fuel use and emissions from petrol-powered lawnmowers (although the Friend's mower is electric powered). The rest of the park's grass has been mowed, with Adam, Harrow Council's Mowing Expert having taken care to avoid the cuckoo flowers along the sports field fence.

**Bird Boxes:** These are boxes with a small hole for birds like blue tits. They are positioned facing east to be warmed in the morning but then not overheat later in the day. Jacob, FoYW Warden has erected seven boxes in the park, and you will see some along the Nature Walk.



**Dead Hedges:** We have started to construct what are called 'dead hedges' in a couple of the wildlife areas in the park. These are constructed with upright supports filled with green waste from the park. The idea is to form a hedge-like habitat for a multitude of creatures to live and nest in. They can also deter people from entering areas where sensitive plants are growing e.g. blue bells. The additional plus is that vegetation is reabsorbed into park use rather than disposed off-site as green waste.



**Bird Walk Event:** During a recent 'Bird Walk' in April led by Ian Jackson of the RSPB, over twenty species of birds were identified by the 'Merlin' app. Separately during March, over 30 different species of birds were recorded in the park, including the rarely heard Firecrest.



Goldfinch



Green Woodpecker



Nuthatch



Goldcrest

Blackbird  
Black cap  
Blue tit  
Carrion crow  
Chiffchaff  
Coal tit  
Collared dove  
Dunnock  
Firecrest  
Goldcrest

Goldfinch  
Great tit  
Green woodpecker  
Greenfinch  
Grey wagtail  
Jay  
Little white egret  
Long tailed tit  
Magpie  
Mallard

Moorhen  
Nuthatch  
Ring necked parakeet  
Robin  
Rook  
Song thrush  
Stock dove  
Tawny owl  
Wood pigeon  
Wren

### ***The Challenge of Climate Change***

It has been a dry and sunny March and while this was so welcome, it creates a quandary for gardeners: To Water or to Hope for Rain? We know that water preservation is important and that plants must be chosen for their resilience as well as benefits for nature and appearance. So, what to do when they start to suffer? We try to strike a balance in the park. Planting trees is a key carbon mitigation measure and plants are chosen to appeal to a variety of pollinators. Newly planted or young plants and trees need regular watering initially. As they mature, they toughen up and can cope with less. We try to water only when necessary. It is better to give plants a good drink than a sprinkle, which only encourages shallow rooting and potential failure. We share the public water supply with the allotment but there are areas of the park where hoses don't reach and pulling water carts is time-consuming, and hard work.



If you have questions about the Friends' environmental approach, please talk to the Warden, Chair or any volunteers working regularly in the park.

### ***Update on Yeading Brook Unbound***

Environmental consultant Steve Marshall was appointed by Harrow Council to support management of this project last year and recently visited Yeading Brook to meet members of the FoYW committee to discuss future expectations. You will recollect that this £360,000 major nature recovery project is supported by the Rewild London Fund, the Environment Agency and the Crane Valley Partnership. It was awarded to the London Borough of Harrow. Commencing in spring 2024, the project focuses on c 3.5 km of the river from Headstone Manor to Roxbourne Park, and adjoining allotments/open spaces.

In Yeading Walk, in 2024, invasive and non-native cherry laurel was cut back along the left bank to increase light levels to extend marginal vegetation and enhance aquatic biodiversity. The bamboo was also cut to the ground and along the stream other self-seeded trees culled. In 2025, further action will be undertaken to limit regrowth of the laurel and other trees cut back last year. The invasive Japanese knotweed on the 'island' will be treated in summer and autumn to control it, with regular follow-up in later years, and consideration is being given to reducing the spread of the bamboo. These actions will create more space for native vegetation. Additionally, work will start on plans to enhance the brook itself through the open space. There is potential to remove some artificial parts of the bank and to re-shape other parts to create marginal habitats for wildlife. More gravel riffles can be created and flow deflectors placed in the channel edge to vary the river's flow and create pools. Work would start next autumn at the earliest and we will give updates as the plans progress.

## **Future Events**

### ***Clean the Stream, Sunday pm, 1 June***

***London River's Week*** is a week-long annual campaign inspiring the public to celebrate all of London's rivers and the many projects taking place to protect them. We plan to hold the annual 'Clean-the-Stream' on Sunday 1 June, supported by the 4th Headstone Scouts. We welcome help from volunteers on the banks to monitor the safety of youngsters in the stream, help collect debris and thoroughly litter pick the park. Details to be posted on Park Notice Boards closer to the date.

### ***St Alban's Fete, Saturday 7 June***

FoYW supports this popular community event at St Alban's Church, North Harrow. We shall have a plant stall and also sell good quality 'pre-loved' children's books and toys. If you can supply spare plants from your garden or allotment, or donate no longer needed children's toys and books, we should be pleased to collect. We would welcome help for an hour at the fete. Please email [Foywgroup@gmail.com](mailto:Foywgroup@gmail.com) if you have donations for the FoYW. Funds go to support the park.

## Spring in the Park



***Lamium Album** (white dead nettle), supporting long tongued insects, such as bumble bees and mason bees. It leaves do not sting like the regular nettles*



***The Cuckoo Flower** or Lady's mantle, provides early nectar, and emerges supposedly at the same time as the return of the cuckoo. There are many of these dainty flowers in the grass*



***Crab apple 'Rudolf'** is one of three new crabs planted recently in the orchard. Associated with love and marriage, crab apples produce small fruits loved by birds.*

*Spring tulips blooming at Northumberland Road entrance, courtesy of local bulb grower, Jacques Amand. Thank you! Across the path, the Rainbow Garden was created as a 'Garden of Hope', entirely from plant donations by the community, during the Covid lockdown in March 2020. Our ethos for this space is not to buy stock, the garden thrives entirely on your donated plants.*





## Other ways you can support your park

### ***Be a Winner with 'Harrow Wins'***

This is a local Harrow lottery to benefit good causes in Harrow. Tickets cost only £1, of which 60p goes to your nominated beneficiary, which we hope will be Yeading Walk. Local lottery odds are so much more favourable than the National Lottery, and we have had some Yeading Walk winners, so support your park, PLAY TODAY and GOOD LUCK! See details at <https://www.harrowwins.co.uk>

### ***Looking After the Park***

We welcome families and volunteers to help us with projects and ongoing activities at Yeading Walk. We continue to raise funds to support and improve the park, and for specific projects. Just an occasional hour of your time makes a huge difference. Why not join our friendly group of volunteers for Project Saturday a.m., or other advertised times in the park?

Your contributions, suggestions and comments are welcome and greatly appreciated. Visit our website at <https://friendsofyeadingwalk.co.uk> or join our active volunteer WhatsApp group by sending us a request with your mobile number via email. Email: [foywgroup@gmail.com](mailto:foywgroup@gmail.com)

We encourage everyone who loves Yeading Walk to support the park. As a Friend of Yeading Walk, **your annual donation of £5 /year works out to 1.4p/day - a bargain in anyone's books.** Please enable the Friends to care for your park by making your annual voluntary donation today.

BANK: National Westminster

ACCOUNT NAME: Friends of Yeading Walk

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 21131511

SORT CODE: 52-10-33

If donating by electronic transfer of funds, please give your name or that of your organisation as a reference. Do send us an email when you donate, using email address [foywgroup@gmail.com](mailto:foywgroup@gmail.com) with 'TREASURER – Payment' in the subject line, so that we can thank you for becoming a Friend and keep you updated with all the latest news.

Sincerely,

Committee, Friends of Yeading Walk