

# ELL minutes AGM Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October

## **Present:**

Jo Homan (Chair) – Alex Sylvester – Chris Speirs – Vanessa Morris – Sarah Bush – Gemma Harris – Alison Roberts – Nick Turner- Carrie Anker – Geraint (UCL)

## **Apologies:**

Jane Howson

### Last AGM minutes

#### ▪Some incomplete actions:

-Site signs outlining “12 principles of permaculture” have not been created for the site

**ACTION:** Directors to coordinate and delegate creation of signs to volunteers

-Create a system to outline and communicate basic priorities for each volunteer day. Current diary system is useful but has some flaws

**ACTION:** Shift leaders to ensure that monthly list of tasks is listed in the diary on 1<sup>st</sup> day of each calendar month

### Matters arising

▪Gemma Harris is stepping down as a Director with immediate effect, due to her decreased involvement with the project’s activities

▪The site is in need of an easy-to-access list/database of what cuttings can be taken of which plants at different times of the year

**ACTION:** Shift leaders to monitor and record cuttings taken at different times of year in separate diary

▪ELL’s status as a charity

–the Charity Commission has responded to ELL’s submission to register as a charity stating that we are not currently eligible to become a charity as Jo, a trustee, is currently receiving a direct benefit from the project’s activities through her use of the Finsbury Park nursery ELL site in her private teaching

**ACTION:** Chris to assist Jo w/ charity status application

▪Manor House Lodge move

-Jo has met with the Manor House Lodge Garden Group (MHLGG), who have stated that they no longer feel able to look after the MHLG site and no longer wish to operate as a group. MHLGG have indicated that ELL volunteers may take full responsibility for the management of the MHL garden, and use the MHLGG’s tools and storage space inside the lodge building. MHLGG members may still wish to attend occasional Saturday volunteer days. Jo has a key for the site.

-MHLGG do not pay rent and have no obligation to produce reports etc. They have a constitution and a bank account – Jo suggested that we keep these active as separate entities to the ELL account to allow us flexibility in the event of 1 or the other of ELL/MHLGG expanding or shrinking as an entity, although this will carry a greater administrative burden

**ACTION:** Vanessa to register as a signatory for the MHL Garden Group bank account

▪“Finsbury Park Community Hub Group” (FFPHG)

-Jo has met with Claire and Phil from the Friends of Wolves Lane (FoWL) to discuss creating a “Friends of Finsbury Park Hub Group” which would put forward a formal expression of interest for the Finsbury Park nursery site proposing a shared use between ELL and the Friends of Wolves Lane, in order to secure tenure of the site during this period of uncertainty.

-The existence of this group would also mean that Haringey council would have to consult the group on developments in the park, strengthening our ability to influence decisions. Claire from FoWL has already put together a constitution and there is also the possibility of getting other groups involved in the FFPHG group, such as the Friends of Finsbury Park.

**ACTION:** Directors to register as members of the FFPHG

**ACTION:** Jo to publicise meeting dates for FFPHG

▪Accounts for year ending August 2016

-The accounts for the year September 2015-August 2016 were examined and approved by those present. After approximately £5,300 of income and £14,900 of expenses, there is currently approximately £1000 remaining in ELL’s account.

#### ▪Shift leading

-We are currently experiencing difficulty in recruiting enough session leaders to have 2 session leaders present on Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays. Nessa has listed some ads on Haringey and Hackney's volunteering website.

-It was decided that as it is not safe for just 1 person to be on site, Monday sessions will be discontinued effective from Monday 24<sup>th</sup> October (unless a session leader is able to confirm in advance with Ray that he will be in on Monday). *Saturday sessions will be twice monthly, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays of each month.* Volunteers should ring before a volunteer day to confirm the site is open.

**ACTION: Nessa to adjust volunteer recruitment listings on Hackney/Haringey volunteer services to exclude Mondays**

**ACTION: Alison to liaise w/ Ray re: arrangements for Monday openings**

**ACTION: Jo to list a number on the ELL website that potential volunteers can ring before attending a volunteer day to confirm that the site will be open.**

#### ▪Site access

There have been a number of break-ins at the site recently which have resulted in the theft of tools from Ray's area, and some incidences where parts of the site appear to have been left unlocked after a volunteer session. Instructions from Stuart Hopkins of Haringey council are that:

-Keys must not be taken home by volunteers (including Ray), but always be left with a member of park staff

-No dogs policy to be reinforced on site

On Mondays, keys can be dropped back off at the staff yard or left inside the staff yard letterbox. The same applies on Fridays, unless the staff yard gate is locked, in which case there is a labelled envelope containing a key for this gate in the Finsbury Park Café in the centre of the park, to allow access to the staff yard so that the ELL site keys can be left in the postbox there. The gate keys can then be returned to the café.

**ACTION: Richard to contact Stuart to enquire when site locks will be changed and to confirm new arrangements re: site keys.**

#### ▪Miscellaneous

-Jo asked those present at the meeting if we would prefer to move to a new site if it carried a greater degree of certainty (e.g. a 10 year lease) – those present answered in the affirmative

-Gemma outlined the advantage of attending Friends of Haringey Parks forum quarterly meetings due to the strong level of support for ELL seen from members of this group

**ACTION: Richard to publicise FoHP forum meeting dates on a sign inside the ELL greenhouse and encourage directors, trustees and members to sign up**

-ELL's safeguarding policy is out of date, being derived mostly from a 1999 document and making no mention of young adults

**ACTION: Nick to update safeguarding policy**

-ELL's signs for the front gates are missing, as is the "please close the gate" sign

**ACTION: Nessa to create and install new signage**

#### Working Group's Discussion – Chris Speirs

▪Chris facilitated a workshop whereby those present at the meeting were split into two groups and held discussions about-  
What is ELL's unique selling point?

If we could prioritise funding for one thing at ELL, what would it be?

#### ▪Points from the discussion

-the project's key strengths are its unique focus on forest gardening, emphasis on training, the production of plans for the benefit of the community, and the adaptability of our working model to a variety of sites

-accredited training is easier to fund and should be a focus of fundraising efforts

-being unfunded may give us a certain freedom as it means we do not have to adhere to strict guidelines which dictate daily activities and organisational goals – we can direct activities on our own terms

-there will be a grassroots skillshare workshop on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> Jan

**ACTION: Nessa to publicise skillshare workshop**

-Participation of those present in the 4 working groups was confirmed:

*Comms – Jo, Vanessa*

*Site – Richard, Jane*

*Training/education/volunteer management – Carrie, Sarah, Jo, Vanessa*

*Fundraising – Chris, Nic, Vanessa*