

**FRIENDS OF EASTCOTE HOUSE GARDENS
MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP - COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 17TH APRIL 2025 AT 11AM - VOLUNTEERS CABIN**

The meeting commenced at 11.05am.

PRESENT

Catherine Dann, Chris Groom, Tony Swan, Sue Smales, Paul Lake, Christine Lake, Keith Barnard, Malcolm Penny, Jo Oliver, Susan Toms. Joan Butfield

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Sue Place, Denise Reed.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 16th January 2025 were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

General Account including Archive, Publications , Craft Group.	£14,456-80
Reserve Funds/Savings	£5,178-74

Next major expense. Paths in the Old Orchard and from the Dovecote to Dovecote Meadow	£1,766 plus VAT
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2025 EVENTS - DATES/LEADERS

SUMMER PICNIC - 7th June 2025. CG

CG that everything was in place except confirmation of the dancers. **CL will chase**

CL showed the committee the chart for volunteers which she is composed ---**CL**

HERITAGE DAY AND CLASSIC CAR SHOW- 14th SEPTEMBER 2025 JB/ST/KB

HERITAGE DAY-JB/ST

ST said that new Mayor, ice cream van and Pippa, the storyteller, are booked.

Simply Gray are booked to play for 3 sessions - need a band which can be heard by classic car people who choose to stay with their vehicles.

Robert and Barbara Green are happy to receive the Community Shield Award.

After the summer Picnic JB agreed she will speak with Brooke Persey of Robert Cooper about the details of Heritage Day. CG confirmed that he had already agreed with BP that they would sponsor the event.

Similarly, we cannot start to arrange volunteers to help on the day until after the picnic

CLASSIC CARS - KB

KB - bookings coming in slowly but normally pick up nearer the date. There will be a limit of 80 cars. Monies will go to upkeep of Eastcote House Gardens and a local charity which is to be confirmed.

TREE DRESSING - 29th November 2025 PL/CL

CG has booked stables and Keith has booked the Mayor. Schools to be contacted in September

FOREST SCHOOLS - 1st April 2025 - CL

All schools have asked for their details to be passed on to Archimedes Forest Schools to explore possibilities for further training.

20 people attended the course. Results of final questionnaire.

Q1. Have you ever visited Eastcote House Gardens before?

- A first visit for 7 of them.

Q2. Has today's session met your expectations?

- A positive YES from everyone.
- 7 said it had exceeded their expectations.

Q3. In what ways has the day been useful?

- How to settle children into the environment
- Examples of activities
- Adapting Forest Schools ideas
- Inspiring
- Covering lots of different areas
- Creative
- Gave me confidence
- New ideas I wouldn't have thought of
- Open-ended opportunities
- Structuring outdoor learning
- Realising what is on our doorstep
- Forest Schools ethos
- Ways to inspire children, even in a small green area
- Hands-on learning in an engaging and beautiful environment
- Using natural resources
- Greater understanding of how to educate in the outdoors
- Using space and natural materials that are around you
- Learning with no set end goal
- How to incorporate outdoor learning in the local area

Q4. Do you feel more confident to use these ideas in your school?

- A positive YES from everyone, some adding *definitely* or *absolutely*.

Q5. How do you intend to share the information you have learnt today?

- Powerpoint and meetings in my school
- Planning for the whole school to promote outdoor learning
- Professional development for staff
- Encourage use, particularly with vulnerable children
- Trial with small groups initially

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- Discuss with headteacher to implement more opportunities in school
 - Share resources/ideas with all staff
 - Will also share ideas with friends who work at other schools
 - Share with my colleagues
 - Meet with Early Years leader and headteacher
 - Trial other ideas in school
 - Meet with year group leaders
 - Meet with headteacher and Governing Body
 - Review how our Forest School area can be adapted
 - Begin to create and trial sessions (LBH Education Officer)

To sum up

“Thank you so much to the volunteers at Eastcote House – what a great team!”

LONDON IN BLOOM - TBA - JO

After a technical hitch we have entered although very late this year. We have added another category, Heritage Park, Awaiting date for judging.

CG informed ST that information on the history of Eastcote House Gardens maybe required for the Heritage Park category.

VOLUNTEERS LUNCH - TBA - SP

The date of the Volunteers' lunch will be announced when the date of release of the results of London in Bloom are known.

EHS SHOWS - 15TH MARCH 2025

“The Friends of Eastcote House Gardens team entered 42 exhibits covering daffodils along with hellebores and other plants. We were awarded the following :

1st x 9 awards

2nd x 9 awards

3rd x 8 awards

Highly commended x 1

We were also awarded a Silver Medal and rosette for the best exhibit in Section B – other horticulture for our hellebores in water.

At the spring show trophies are awarded for points accumulated during 2024 and the Mayor of Hillingdon, Cllr Colleen Sullivan was present to present these awards. FEHG were awarded two cups The Highmead Cup for the highest points in apple classes throughout the year and the TG Morris Memorial Challenge Cup for the highest points in fruit classes

Thanks go to Jane Neave, Linda Furnell, Janet Green and Linda Wells for all their hard work on behalf of the FEHG.

DOVECOTE OPENING - ST

ST stated that the problem of rats/mice in the dovecote is a worry especially as it is a building which is open to the public. It was suggested that the small hole in the bottom of the door should be covered over. **KB will contact the Council re the dovecote and cabin.**

Volunteers should also empty the waste bins in the cabin after use.

PLANT SALES - JO

A very successful plant sale on Saturday 12th April raising approximately £376, plus card sales, first time used, next time need to make a note of money taken. Once got the hang of it easy to use.

Forget-me-nots were the fastest selling plants.

BOOK SALES - SS

In the weeks preceding the first sale the books were refreshed courtesy of some large donations. Any books that had failed to sell the previous year were weeded out and passed to charity shops. For the first time we had a large amount of books for older children and teenagers. There was definite interest, but that section needs to become known.

One donation consisted of RAF books and aircraft engines. These are now on sale in the cafe at Bentley Priory, and the 'engine' books are currently with an enthusiast who will definitely keep some, and one or two may make their way to a museum/archives in Lincolnshire. He has donated £10 so far. The 'engine' books, when returned will be on sale at the Classic Car rally in September, along with another recent donation of car and motorcycle books.

Any books concerning WW1 and WW2 will be on sale in the Stables during the VE Day exhibition with proceeds going to the Royal British Legion.

On Forest School day I met someone from Hillingdon's Dept. of Education. We had recently received a lot of educational books for children, so upon learning that they were setting up Children's Corners at the Bunker and the new Civic Centre I invited her to take what she wanted from our stock. She was delighted as they had appealed for books and received none. She subsequently returned with a colleague and a car and took away a large number.

All of these books would be considered 'niche' and we would struggle to sell many here. I have tried to find the most appreciative places for them and where possible informed previous owners of these actions; they have been delighted that they are going to the 'right' places. Moving them on has freed up space for more lucrative books, we are engaging with other organisations and the Children's Corners will provide a community resource.

The first book and craft sales of the year were held on 12 April on a fine sunny day.

The cabin had its first customer just before 10am, it was very busy from 10 to 11, never empty and people were still arriving after closing time. People were appreciative of the new influx of books and the box of summer reading by the door was emptied. Many said they would return for the VE Day exhibition. **The book sale raised £105** in cash plus £5 taken with the plant sale card reader.

CRAFT SALES - SS

Profit from craft sales was £157.30. Some fabric was purchased along with some haberdashery bits and bobs. It was generally less busy than plants or books with few new faces; we'll be discussing whether we need or want to raise our profile.

Phillip did very well with his cards, selling 28 in total; not included in the craft takings.

VE DAY -10TH MAY -SS/ST

At the last committee meeting it was agreed that FEHG should celebrate the anniversary in some way. Susan Toms and Sue Smales met to discuss how the FEHG could celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE Day on 8th May.

It was decided to hold an exhibition in the Stables on Saturday 10th May when the usual monthly sales of books, plants and craft would be taking place.

The only useful thing that the craft group could contribute was space for the displays and a banner which has already been produced. Craft presence on the day will be reduced. Craft sales will take place during the usual times of 10 – 1, whilst the exhibition will run from 10-4.

Because it is primarily an historical event, Susan and Philip are leading and have done all the planning and organising. There was some difficulty in obtaining what they wanted from Hillingdon's archives but that has been resolved.

The Royal British Legion will be present, outside if fine, indoors if not.

Any WW1 and WW2 books that have been donated to FEHG will be on sale in the Stables, proceeds to RBL.

Mark Lemon has agreed to provide appropriate background music.

15 A4 posters (Wartime Eastcote) have been produced and laminated to advertise the event. Posters were put up at the cafe, the walled garden and the entrance in St. Lawrence Drive and of course the website in time for the first sales last Saturday so visitors then would be aware.

Susan has arranged with Fiona that we can access the Stables after 6.30 on the evening of Friday the 9th May so that we can set up in advance.

AGM - CG

The date of next AGM is 31st October

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM - CL/JO/PL/ML

No progress. CL said that following the success of the Forest Schools' event maybe we should be looking at having a second area we could designate as an outdoor classroom especially if we are having more schools visiting. FS said that the natural state of the outdoor classroom was liked. To be discussed. **Subcommittee of CL/JO/PL/ML will meet to formulate proposals.**

ML had spotted King Alfred Cakes fungi on one of the trunks of the trees and it was suggested that we put information on the bridge .

FIRST AID/DEFIBRILLATOR - CL

The last 3-monthly defibrillator check was carried out on 27th March 2025. All was well, and this was registered with the Circuit.

Thankfully, there is nothing to report on first aid - except to note the plasters have been topped up.

BANK CARD READERS - MP

The problem of the machine not being charged sufficiently has now been solved.

GARDENING - J0

After a cold wet start, gardens now blossoming especially after all the recent great weather.

We have 2 donations from volunteers, Margaret (gardener not coffee) gave us money for 2 camellias, planted in the old orchard. Norman also donated money for 2 more camellias. Norman's friend also donated an array of plants, some to be sold, others planted. Elaine Longhurst donated 2 climbing roses in memory of her daughter.

BOX HEDGING

Thanks to Keith for organising the box spraying last week.

NEW FOOTPATHS - CG/KB

Order placed. **KB waiting for date when meeting on site can take place.**

LOCKING OF PARK AND WALLED GARDEN GATES

Having been discussed by the Committee it was agreed that **CG should contact the Ward Councillors** stating the problems which could possibly arise with the gates being left unlocked. Previously problems have arisen with travellers on the site. Vandalism of the gardens has also taken place.

Whilst a few members of the Committee were willing to open up the walled garden in the mornings, it was not clear how they could deal with visitors who did not wish to leave the park when they had

come specifically to lock up. They wouldn't have any authority and this could lead to a dangerous situation. To be reviewed .

AOB

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- The donation box has been replaced in the cafe.

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- CL showed the 2026 calendar which is now available for sale.

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- PL/CL said that it has become increasingly difficult to collect prizes from the shops in Eastcote. It was agreed that this would no longer take place.
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- CL wondered if it was possible to have a sign as you enter the walled garden stating that "This is a quiet area". Recently noisy children and dogs off leads have been causing a nuisance. **CG to source sign.**
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The meeting closed at 12.30pm.