

## Leeds Parks & Green Spaces Forum

### Annual Review of 2024

We have had 4 **Committee meetings** this year, and my thanks to the Committee members for their ideas and support, with especial thanks to Michelle for co-ordinating meetings, speakers etc

These were followed by our **Members' meetings**, - and we thank our hosts for arranging a tour and hospitality: Incredible Edible Garforth, Friends of Cross Flatts Park, Halton in Bloom, and LCC in the Civic Hall

**Feedback** indicates that members enjoy visiting sites, which they may not have visited before, hearing first-hand of the work going on and picking up ideas and tips to take back to their own group.

We are grateful to our **Speakers** for enlightening us and giving us chance to ask questions:

- Dr Anna Barker (Uni of Leeds) and Helen Forman (West Yorkshire Combined Authority) took us through their research 'Safety of Women & Girls in Parks'
- Vicki Baker told us about Biodiversity Net Gain
- John Preston of TCV introduced us to Leeds Green Activity Providers, linking with social prescribing.
- Becky Meers, Manager of LCC' Events team talked us through planning events on our sites

At each meeting the Council has been represented by a **senior officer**, which is a major incentive to attend meetings and ask questions directly. Our thanks to Polly Cook, Emma Trickett and Tony Stringwell.

The '**Just a Minute**' slot on the Agendas is for Members to tell the meeting of any successes, asking/offering help or contacts. A web-designer's name was offered, help with chairing meetings, installing bird boxes, and the hubs with litter-picking equipment to borrow. Not forgetting LCC's Rangers team who are skilled and knowledgeable.

Over the year, **we have promoted:**

Love Parks Week, Bees Needs Week, RSPB's Big Birdwatch, Butterfly Conservation's Count, Heritage Open Days, LCC's seed gathering and tree planting, including the opportunity to suggest planting sites.

We have shared news of **funding opportunities**

We have identified **training needs** and co-ordinated or passed on contacts for: Fruit tree pruning, Bystander/Anti-Harassment training, Emergency First-Aid, Safeguarding, Community Food-growing.

We have contributed to **LCC's consultations** re car park charges at the major parks and bowling green closures.

We've also **reminded Councillors** that we're here, willing to help and ready to welcome new groups.

**The Committee:**

- has worked to 'tidy up' the Forum's **Constitution and Benefits** to Members, along with bringing the **Membership** records up to date.
- Tom Bliss represented us at the **National Federation of Parks & Green Spaces'** AGM, and suggested setting up a national Research Group (terms yet to be agreed).
- Tom has been working with groups to assess the **Accessibility** of their sites. Results are being fed back to LCC.
- Several Committee members are members of other groups concerned with green spaces, eg food growing and climate change, so there's a good flow of information to the Forum.

*Speakers' presentations, funding details, Council contacts and Minutes of meetings are all on the website, along with a list and map of our Members [www.leedsparksforum.org](http://www.leedsparksforum.org)*

Lynda Kitching

Chair

Jan 2024