



Waltham Forest 4 Dogs AGM 2016

Minutes

7.30 pm, 16 March 2016, back room at The Bell, E17

Present: Mark Fisher, Sarah Mooney, Fabien Ho, Marita Keremezo, Charlotte Cole, Katherine Marshall, Claire Scott-Shala, Hanne Jourdan, Debbie Walker, Carly Clarke, Ed Archer, Peter Gettins, Oslo the dog

Chair's welcome and introduction

Mark commented on how the group has grown and evolved, from the focusing entirely on the council's Dog Control Orders in 2013 to the many issues it covers today. He particularly mentioned how pleased he was by the number of lost dogs reunited.

Treasurer's report

Marita reported that we started the year with £168.62 and ended with £332.13, income mainly generated from activities at the May fair and expenditures mostly in relation to the website and the Paw Friendly campaign.

Activities reports:

Dog control orders

While nothing has changed since the orders were brought in, the areas that feel most/too restrictive today, to those present, are the entirely on-lead St James's Park and the on-lead field in Lloyd Park.

Action:

- To gauge from members the general feeling about these parks, and any others, and then raise with the council changing DCO's for individual parks.

Walthamstow Marsh

This is managed by Lee Valley Park rather than Waltham Forest council. Regular users feel dog owners are disproportionately targeted about behaviour, when there are many other issues that should be looked at: litter, drugs, graffiti, raves.

In particular, there are now signs saying dogs must be on lead when there is no livestock in that particular field.

It was noted that on two occasions recently when women were attacked, it was dog walkers who came to their aide.

And that perhaps the emphasis on dogs is to protect wildlife, rather than simply to penalise. Peter Gettins and Carly Clarke mentioned how positively different, and pro-active, the approach by the Corporation of London regarding possible licensing and other issues relating to professional dog walkers in Epping Forest is.

Action:

- Initially, encourage dog walkers to report other issues on a regular basis. And in fact this can be extended to all parts of the borough, where dog walkers are the people regularly in the parks and on the streets at all times and in all weathers. Charlotte and Fabien to put together a 'how to report problems' infographic.

WF4Dogs events

Katherine reported that last year we had four events:

- Dogs at the beach. We hired a beach hut and dogs were able to run off lead, and a fun day was had by all.
- May Day Fair. Several members met to make bandannas. We sold these and also ran a doggie photobooth, both of which were very popular and we made a profit of £316. Info on BSL and DDA Watch was distributed. It was also lovely that members came up just to say hello.
- Pick Up Poo before the Walthamstow Garden Party. This was less successful, with only four members attending.
- Christmas Pawty at the Rose and Crown. A great afternoon, well attended by a number of different people to last year's. It wasn't a WF4Dogs activity, but Santa's Stockings in aid of RSPCA Chingford were sold and they went down very well.

Actions:

- The next May Day Fair will be a fairground attraction. Money to be raised for charities. Katherine to organise with the help of a team.
- Also, to encourage members to do their 'good doo of the day' and 'pick up an extra poo' – slogan needs more thought.

Paws Friendly sticker scheme

We now have 69 paws friendly businesses on our website, in Waltham Forest and nearby. Hurray!

Website

As well as the businesses, we have dog services, walks and ever expanding emergency advice.

Actions:

- Make front page a welcome page, rather than news which doesn't get updated too often.
- Work out how to get statistics.

Lost & Found Dogs

After a good meeting with the council, Scott Cartwright of the DET emails us fortnightly with info on what has happened to each stray dog in their care. Since this began, the figures are:

13 reunited (41%)

15 rehomed or passed to a rehoming charity (48%)

3 PTS (9.6%)

This suggests the PTS numbers are decreasing – from 17% to 9.6% which is fantastic. We will get complete figures for 2015-16 in April this year, before the next council meeting.

Actions:

- Remind people over the next two weeks about the incoming law. Microchips will help more dogs be reunited.
- Continue good relationship with Scott and council.

Election of committee members:

Mark Fisher stood down as Chair. Marita reminded us all how essential he was in setting up the group as a constituted body. He has everyone's thanks.

Sarah Mooney was elected as Chair.

Marita Keremezo re-elected as Treasurer.

Charlotte Cole re-elected as Secretary.

Katherine Marshall and Fabien Ho were also re-elected.

Two new committee members were elected: Carly Clarke and Claire Scott-Shala.

AOB**Facebook rules**

Generally these were thought to be comprehensive, we just need to make sure people are aware of them.

Actions:

- Discourage posts without a local focus.
- Add to the business posts rule that we will delete the posts immediately without warning.
- For clarity of message, only committee members to be Facebook admin.