



NATURE'S GYM

PRESENTATION TO THE CHARLTON SOCIETY



ABOUT ME



- Studied Countryside and Environmental Management at University of Aberdeen, graduating in 2001.
- Voluntary work.
- Started with BTCV in Lewisham & Bexley in 2004.
- Started working for Lewisham in 2007.
- Set up Nature's Gym with Glendale after BTCV funding in Lewisham came to an end because Lewisham wanted to keep going with the great work that volunteers did.



Lewisham's parks and open spaces

- 47 Parks, 18 Nature Reserves, 7 designated Local Nature Reserves, 5 Churchyards, 37 Allotments.
- 15 Green Flag Parks and 3 Community Green Flag Award Spaces (hopefully more this year!).
- 1st Place 'Good Parks for London' benchmarking in 2017, 2018, 3rd in 2019 and second in 2020.
- Support 25 formalised park user 'Friends' groups.



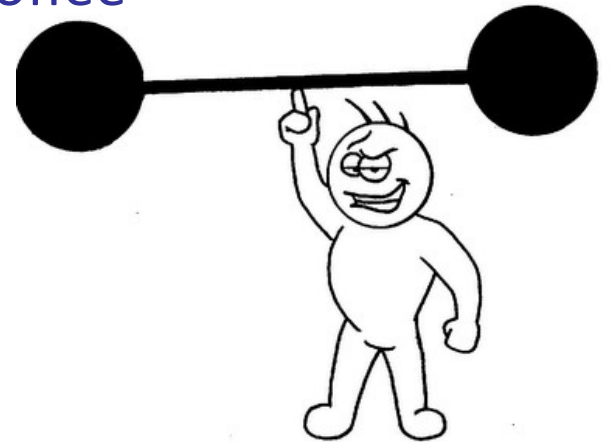
A BRIEF HISTORY

- Nature's Gym started in June 2008
- So far we have;
 - Worked on over 40 different sites.
 - Attracted over 400 different volunteers.
 - Had over 6000 volunteer days, equating to
 - 18000 Volunteer hours = Over £193k worth of work. (based on London Living Wage).



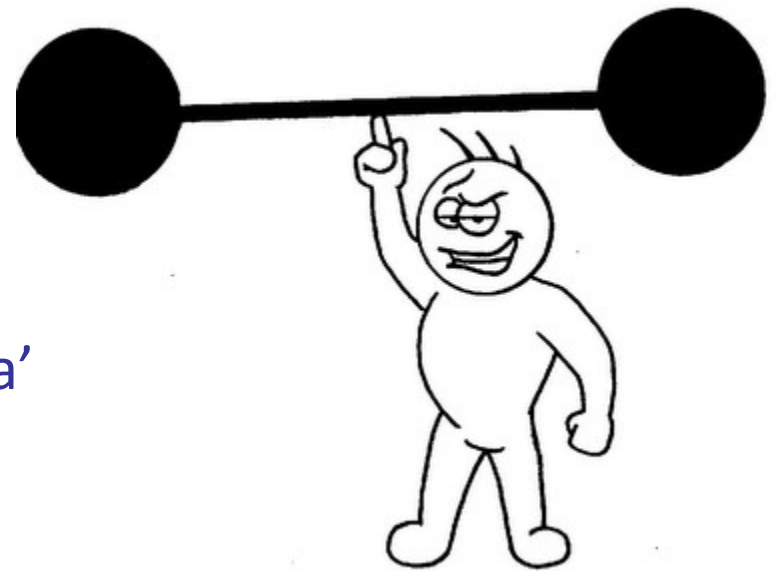
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- The sessions run on Thursdays and once a month on a Saturday between 11am-2pm.
- We have a break half way through for tea/coffee and biscuits.
- We have an average of 14 volunteers to a session.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- There is always a wide variety of tasks;
- You take the work at your own level.
- No experience is necessary.
- You'll learn new skills.
- You'll meet new people.
- It will help you get fit without the 'lycra'
- You may discover new places.



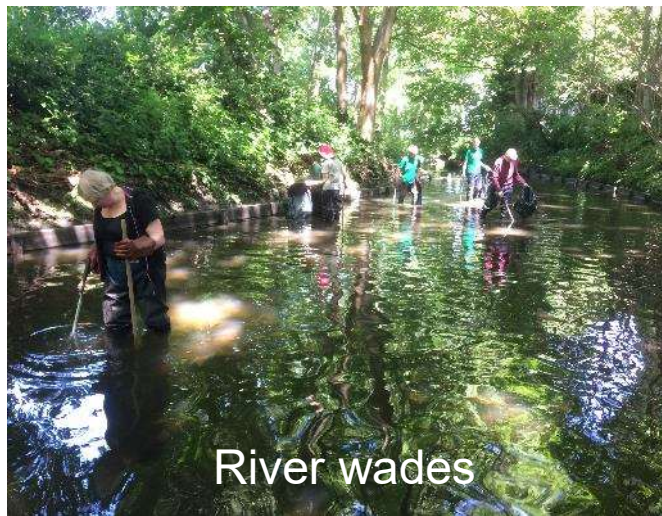
THERE IS ALWAYS A WIDE VARIETY OF TASKS



Creating woodchip footpaths



Building steps



River wades



Tree planting

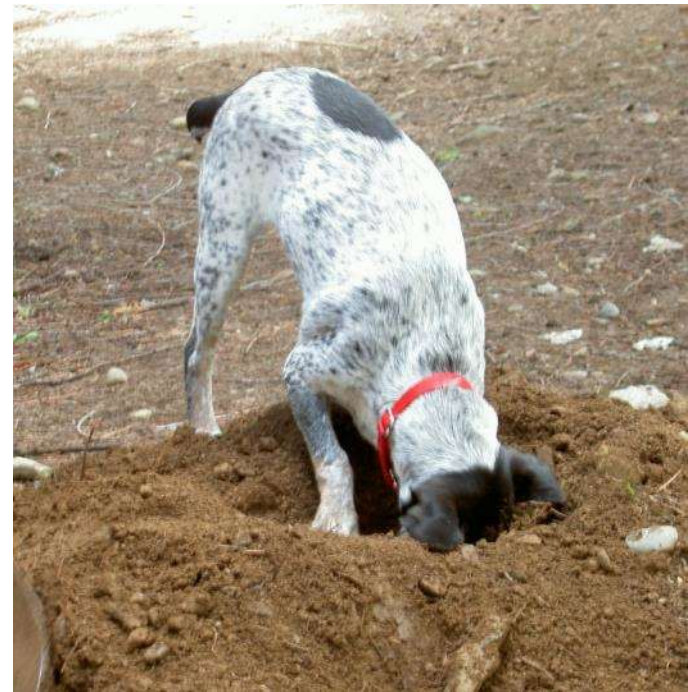


WORK TO YOUR OWN LEVEL!



NO EXPERIENCE IS NECESSARY

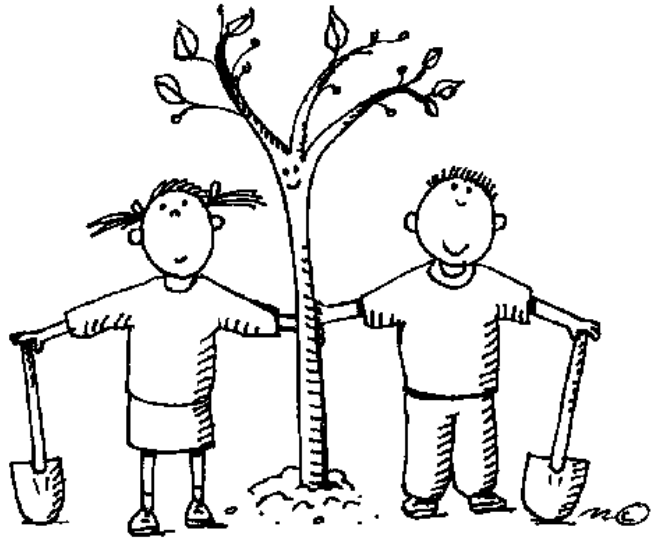
JUST LOTS OF ENTHUSIASM!!



LEARN NEW SKILLS



MEET NEW PEOPLE



GET FIT...



WITHOUT THE LYCRA!

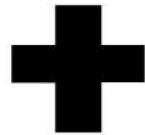


and enjoy a chat over the tea and biscuits at the break!!

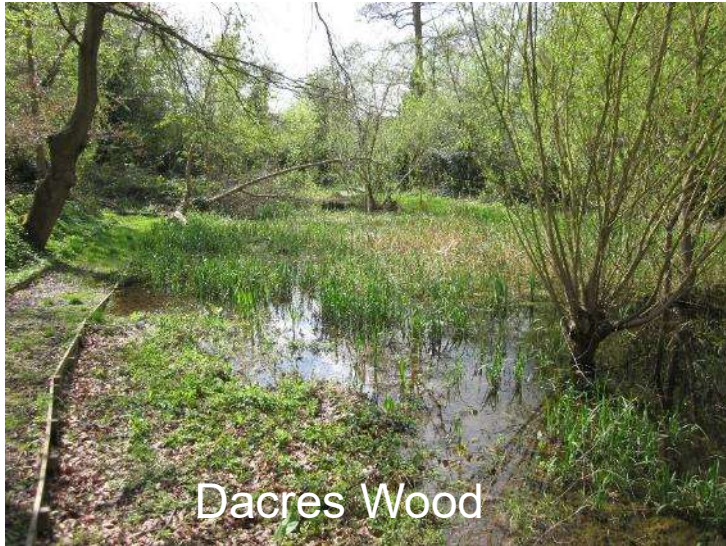


GET FIT... Nature's Gym Health Benefits

- Research has shown that taking part in regular outdoor sessions can improve cardiovascular fitness and therefore reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Working outdoors has proven benefits in tackling other issues such as social isolation and depression.



DISCOVER HIDDEN GEMS OF LEWISHAM — Do you know where they are?



COVID – How it has affected us?

- All volunteering stopped between March – July 2021.
- We were able to start again in August under the 'rule of 6'.
- Cancelled again in November 2020 & January 2021.
- From June 2021 – back to full strength.
- Huge increase in the use of parks.
- Huge increase in the requests and interest in volunteering.



Parks and open spaces strategy 2020–2025

'To be the heart and lungs for Lewisham, connecting
active, healthy and vibrant local communities'



Lewisham's Parks and Open Space strategy has been developed as tool to identify, communicate, map out and monitor a course of actions to reflect the shared vision:

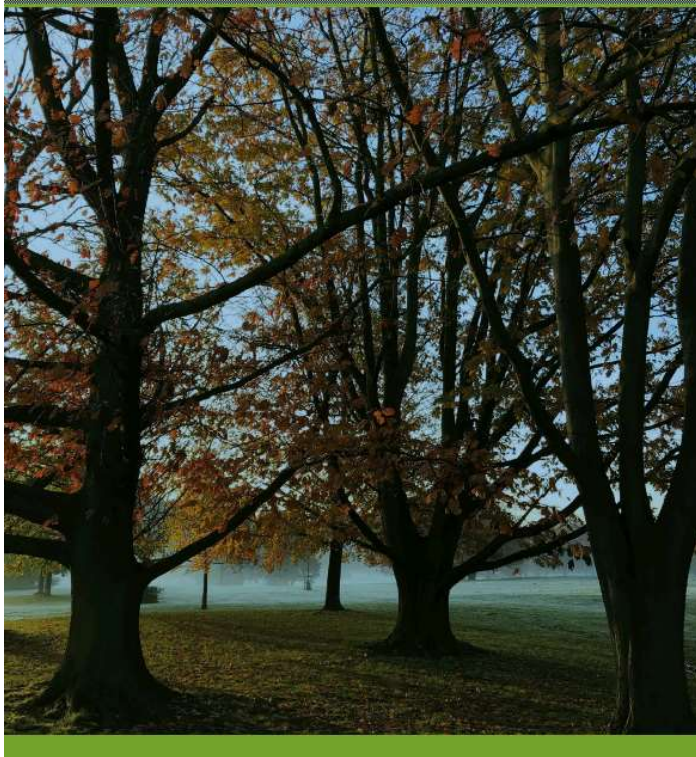
"to be the heart and lungs for Lewisham, connecting active, healthy, and vibrant local communities."

Public responses to the 'Parks and Open Space survey' (November 2018) identified three broad themes or areas of benefit that Lewisham's parks deliver for residents and visitors: Social, Economic and Environmental.



Parks and open spaces strategy 2020–2025

'To be the heart and lungs for Lewisham, connecting
active, healthy and vibrant local communities'



The strategy sets out:

Priority statements – these statements provide the direction of travel that, if achieved, will deliver the positive social, economic and environmental aims and benefits.

“To deliver ‘wellbeing’ by putting parks and open spaces at the heart of outdoor activities and healthy lifestyles for all.”

Goals – these are identified actions that provide the finer details of what this strategy aspires to achieve. These goals or outputs will then be monitored and tracked, to demonstrate progress or identify where further work is required to ensure our parks meet our future needs.

“To protect, develop and enhance the nature conservation, wildlife habitats and species – where appropriate – in parks by supporting nature conservation volunteering initiatives and environmental education.”

“To support and encourage the cultural, physical and mental health benefits and opportunities that our Parks and Open Spaces offer.”

Delivery plan – this sets out the goals, measures and undertakings required. It also provides an anticipated time scale and/or milestone for the undertaking identified.



CONTACTS

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