

## **Chair's Report - AGM 2024**

### **Our Purpose**

The Victoria Park Friends works to preserve the park as a valuable public resource. We focus on its history, environmental importance, and role in public recreation. We serve as a platform for discussing park ideas and advocating for its best use by everyone. We achieve this through events, activities, and the bandstand season.

### **Major Events Policy**

This winter, we opposed a proposed increase in large park events in the Tower Hamlets' Major Events Policy. Compared to other London parks averaging 6 major events, in 2025, Victoria Park is proposed to host 12 events of 20,000 or more attendees, with 8 of 50,000. This raises concerns about the park's sustainability and its environmental impacts.

### **Local Plan Concerns**

We responded to consultations on the Tower Hamlets Local Plan, expressing concerns about insufficient open space in the borough. We believe development and the increase in the commercial use of the park will reduce the space available, especially in the summer holidays, with the park being a vital space for local children.

### **Community Engagement**

We've prioritised increased community engagement. This year's AGM is on Saturday, May 25th, for better accessibility. We also hosted an open session on May 4th and conducted an online survey, revealing that 75% of respondents oppose increased major events due to environmental concerns.

### **Communication & Participation**

We have an active Facebook group, Twitter presence, and regular member communications to encourage participation in Victoria Park.

### **Looking Forward**

We plan to meet with park management and senior officers to discuss ongoing concerns regarding park maintenance and upkeep, especially considering the proposed budget cuts and staff reorganisations.

We're also excited about this year's Bandstand season, for which we've organized 11 afternoons of music with the support of Victoria Park Community Rangers and sponsorship from Savills estate agents.

We are here to listen to you and what you think about the park. Please don't hesitate to reach out and get involved.