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NEWS FROM TOWER HAMLETS COUNCIL AND YOUR COMMUNITY

It's win or bust for park lodge appeal

Fundraisers have one week to hit £59,000 target... or lose the lot

BY JAMES MARTIN

A SPITALFIELDS community group needs to find £18,000 in just a week to reach an all-or-nothing fundraising target to renovate part of a nature reserve.

Shuffle is seeking backers for its plan to redevelop the Lodge - a rundown former house in the grounds of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park. With just over a week to go, the local group was a shade under £18,000 short of its fundraising target of £58,399. Because of the rules of

the 'Spaxhive' funding scheme, if the full target is not raised, none of the money pledged so far can be collected.

The money will go towards both renovating and extending the Lodge, part of which will be a new office for the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park. The volunteer organisation manages the park, which is now a nature reserve having closed for burials in 1966.

A year-round community café and events space are part of the redevelopment plans. Additionally, a lab will be built for science and conservation workshops aimed at children and adults.

Cemetery Park manager Ken Greenway said: "Our park offers residents unrivalled access to nature and enjoyment of the natural world."

"These funds would help us build a much-needed green hub for the park, where art, nature and traditional skills can be taught and celebrated."

"As the only woodland in the borough, we want to create a hub for learning and training

around how you manage and care for biodiversity.

"We need this space to enhance the health and wealth of tomorrow's generation."

Mr Greenway, who has been with the Friends for 13 years, said the expansion would benefit the whole community.

He added: "7,000 children from local schools already visit the park each year to learn about wildlife."

"We also want businesses

to use the park as a place to have meetings in affordable office space.

"We would like to improve what we already offer. We want to run workshops and apprenticeships in traditional crafts - and to extend our forest school to help children enjoy nature."

"The extension would give somewhere for indoor classes and a place to get changed into wellies and waterproofs."

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Shuffle Festival organisers Lizzy Dulah and Kate MacTiernan in the Cemetery Park

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