

AGM Papers – Recommendations, Comments and Feedback

Introduction

Thank you to all members who commented on the AGM papers and/or raised specific questions in relation to the agenda items. The questions and comments relating to Agenda items 3-6 and those raised as Any Other Business, were reviewed by Marietta Crichton Stuart and Rita Sammons, FoKP Chair and Secretary, respectively. This document is a summary of the recommendations, the issues raised by members and the Committee's response. It has been approved by the full FoKP Committee and so represents the formal record of the 2020 AGM,

AGM Recommendations

For Agenda Items 3-6 here specific recommendations were included, it was stated in the information circulated as part of the Virtual AGM Papers, that, to help facilitate the AGM process, FoKP members would be deemed to have agreed to the recommendations unless they stated otherwise.

No objections were received and so all recommendations have therefore been approved, as set out below. Questions and comments raised, have also been recorded below.

Agenda Item	Recommendations
3. Financial Statement	Report and Financial Statements for Year ending 31 st March 2020 - Endorsed. The re-appointment of the Auditors for a further year - Endorsed
4. Draft Minutes for AGM 2019	Approved. One omission noted – Nichola Shingler to be added as a committee member.
5. Election of Committee	Re-election of all officers and committee members - Agreed
6. Chair's Report -Projects and Priorities	The priorities for significant investment - Agreed Outline plans for 2020, 2021 and beyond - Agreed Focus on fundraising including securing the input of experts - Agreed

Comments and Issues Raised by FoKP members on Agenda Items 3-6

The following points, which are in no particular order, were raised in responses submitted to the AGM papers.

Congratulations on achieving Charity Status – several members acknowledged this achievement.

Congratulations on the Virtual AGM Report Format – positive feedback on our efforts to make the reports easier to assimilate.

Lack of Progress on Reinstatement of the Dog Walking Area – unfortunately, this has been a much more time-consuming and difficult issue than envisaged. This is largely because it appears that Lambeth Planning Department's agreement on the reinstatement was made without any consultation with the Parks management team. As a result, there are differing expectations about what needs to be done in order to reinstate the area fully and whether reinstatement must be "like for like" and who will meet the costs. The FoKP Chair has initiated and attended many meetings over the last 18 months and has worked hard to ensure that Parks managers are involved in the discussions. NLE's plans for layout, tree species, benches, fencing, etc., have not all accorded with practical park management issues and user aspirations and this has resulted in something of a stalemate. FoKP are continuing to press for an early resolution.

£800k receipt to Lambeth Council from the sale of the Old Park Keeper's Lodge to NLE – this is another issue that has been going on for some while and has taken a lot of our time. The latest position is that Council's Cabinet met on 20th July to consider the Capital Programme Budget which includes monies for parks. At this stage we are not aware of the outcome, but the Council Leader has replied to our recent correspondence with him indicating that an amount proposed for Kennington Park is in excess of the £800k. We wait to see the detailed report of the meeting and the subsequent management review of the priorities. We are in touch with the Assistant Director about setting up a meeting in late August. We also received a broader comment about the Council's finances given the current Covid-related increase in demand for services, costs, etc and the reduced return on their investments. We are not yet aware of the position, but as a committee we do share these concerns.

Why is there no costing for FoKP Projects and Priorities – the resources we have as a volunteer committee are limited and there are many issues which require our attention. Detailed costing will therefore not be undertaken until we are clear about Council funding and have had the opportunity to do further research into funding streams. The Parks Dept appointed a fundraising manager last year and, prior to the pandemic, she was very helpful in identifying possible funding. Since then most of these have, understandably, been diverted to Covid-related activity. Once Council funding and priorities are known we will review what is possible and seek further support from this officer or possibly seek to identify a dedicated fundraiser to help us.

Involvement of park users in reviewing FoKP Projects and Priorities – subject to the progress we make with the Council about funding, we do plan to try to involve park users and community groups in defining the projects in more detail. What we can do, will depend very much on what

the Council considers to be a priority. For example, if the budget needs to be dedicated to maintenance and improvement then this is a practical issue which wouldn't benefit from community input. If funding is available for new developments, and in particular, if we are seeking grant support, we will be undertaking surveys to try to secure feedback from park users.

Obligations arising from Charitable Status - becoming a charity does require us to abide by a more specific set of requirements but in practice FoKP was already meeting most of these, eg holding an AGM, auditing our accounts, etc. As the AGM paper states, we considered carefully which model was most appropriate and all the Trustees understand what is expected of them. Our research shows that access to funding, and, in particular, corporate social responsibility support is more widely available to registered charities and this was one of the key reasons for our decision to seek Charity Commission registration.

Financial Report – Origin of Restricted Funds – the origin of these funds is not clear from the available documentation. Consequently, the committee considered that up-to-date criteria should be developed in order to ensure that the monies are used in accordance with the spirit of the original donations. Prior to these being established the money was ring-fenced and not being used.

Committee Roles and Responsibilities – comment was made that some roles which previously existed were no longer in use. The nature of a volunteer organisation is that roles need to be adapted to fit the skills and availability of the current volunteer committee members. This means that over time, roles will change and activities that were once allocated to an individual are taken up by another person or by the committee as a collective responsibility. This year has been particularly unusual because of the volume of work to secure charity status and to develop the history boards which we hope to be on display in the park soon. The lockdown meant that several events did not take place, but the committee has continued to review ways in which it can attract funding, increase membership and be responsive to local community wishes. We are also seeking support from members and others and have received offers of help in recent weeks, relating to fundraising, event organisation and gardening. We also work with user groups, for example the Playground Users Group, to help test ideas and seek volunteers.

Recognition of the Chartist William Cuffay – support was expressed for the idea of marking the role of Cuffay in the planned commemoration of the 175th anniversary of the Chartist Rally of 1848

Agenda Item 7

Any Other Business

Some members raised points not covered by the AGM reports. A summary of these is below:

Park Use – positive responses to seeing so many different people and groups using the park during the lockdown period coupled with a hope that it will continue and increase local people's awareness of the park

Litter – the depressing sight of the piles of litter that accompanies heavy park use has been a feature of a lot of recent contact and indeed is a common issue among London Parks, particularly since the arrival of Covid-19. We have been in regular dialogue with park managers about this and have been supportive of their initiatives. Suggestions from members included availability of more large bins (particularly near the ends of the Midnight Pathway), use of different pizza boxes by the café, better collection system, and greater use of banners about taking litter home, with more challenging/directive wording. Two large recycling bins and some smaller wheelie bins have recently been located opposite the café which will hopefully significantly reduce the issue relating to pizza boxes and hopefully the wider litter problem.

Rats – concern that the litter problem is increasing the number of rats. The more obvious presence of rats in certain areas of the park has been a matter of some concern to us for a while. At first, we thought this was probably associated with the tunnelling work for NLE. But rats have, in recent years, increasingly been a problem in many parts of London. The parks management are aware of the issue and have clear policies about the methods which should be used to treat rats and other vermin. We hope their campaign encouraging people to take their litter home (which we support and share on social media, and in our online and paper publications) will encourage people not to leave rubbish in the park. We will continue to monitor the issue and continue to pressure the council to act as necessary.

Engaging with the new MP – we have already contacted Florence Eshalomi, our new MP, and plan to invite her to one of our events once we are back in action.

Thanks to the Committee – recognition and thanks for the efforts made by the committee.

Thanks to Lambeth Parks Department - recognition and thanks for the efforts made by the parks team who have been under considerable pressure over the last few months. Particular mention has been made by many about how lovely the Flower Garden is looking and how well the Orchard (previously known as the Green Link) is developing.

Thanks to the Park café - for their efforts in staying open during the Covid 19 lockdown period

Our Thanks to You – the committee would like to thank all the members for their continued support and ideas.

Please note that this document will form the formal minute of the 2020 Virtual Meeting as it records all actions and responses on the AGM recommendations and the issues raised by FOKP members