

Draft Minutes

Friends of Kennington Park AGM Held at Durning Library Tuesday 6th September 2022

Apologies

Seven FoKP members and one trustee sent apologies; 5 members signed a Proxy Form.

1. Welcome and Chair's Report for 2021/2022

The Chair, Marietta Crichton Stuart, welcomed everyone to the AGM, highlighting the fact that papers had been published only on the website to reduce paper usage. She thanked Winkworth for their ongoing sponsorship in support of the publication of the annual FoKP Newsletter which was distributed at the meeting.

In the introduction to her report Marietta noted that FoKP had been established 20 years ago to support what was then a `sad, shabby park with a poor reputation`. She highlighted the improvements delivered since that time including fitness and leisure facilities, children's play space, infrastructure improvements, the erection of a war memorial marking the civilian casualties from WWII, the design and completion of The History Hut with its colourful informative boards and the awarding the Green Flag for the 12th year in succession. She also noted London in Blooms awards and the Green Heritage plaque, received for the second time earlier this year. She reflected on the lows of the pandemic, the loss of events and income, the increase in litter and the challenges it posed to parks staff while recognising that the park attracted many new users and greater financial contributions from members and supporters helping to offset some of the loss. Membership numbers are now at a high point having reduced during the lockdown period. The reintroduction of events in the park including the inaugural 2021 Festival, already repeated in 2022, and inaugural Easter Egg Hunt.

Marietta stressed that while acknowledging past achievements, the work of FoKP was very much focused on the future, on continuing to drive capital development, improve partnerships with local organisations, build stronger relationships with community groups and local businesses bringing in new ideas and funding and keeping up the pressure on Lambeth Council to develop and improve the park despite the financial challenges it faces. She thanked Committee members for their continued work highlighting various projects and activities and thanked previous committee members, Rachel Papps Williams and Nichola Shingler, who had both stood down during the 21/22 year, welcoming the contribution being made by new members Mark Engel and Alison Liepmann. She also paid tribute to the work of parks staff and managers, particularly to Lucian and Reece from the gardening team. Highlighting, a recent article in a national newspaper about the critical role of volunteers in maintaining and developing parks she provided estimates of the amount of time volunteers have contributed to key activities in the park, particularly watering trees during the drought, regular gardening sessions and supporting events such as the Festival. She acknowledged the work of Ruth Morgan in leading the gardening session and the financial support made by one of our members.

In conclusion, Marietta highlighted the forthcoming inaugural Dog Show and the 175th anniversary of the Chartist Rally which will occur in 2023, asking for ideas about ways in which to mark this.

A copy of the full report can be found on the FoKP website.

2. `Minutes` of the 2021 AGM and matters arising

The minutes from the 2021 meeting were submitted for approval. **Andrew Seaton** proposed that they be accepted and was seconded by **Gordon Johnston**. The meeting approved the minutes and there were no matters arising.

3. Financial Report

The Treasurer, Vilde Aagenaes, presented the accounts for the period April 2021 to 31st March 2022, identifying an income of £4600 from grants, donations, etc compared to £2805 in the previous year and an expenditure of £7723. She explained that much of the deficit related to expenditure on The History Hut and display boards, the majority of which had been funded by Lambeth Council and Surrey Cricket Club in previous financial years – a delay in design and development having been caused by the pandemic. She confirmed that the Auditors had reviewed and approved the accounts, stating that they showed £4600 of restricted funding and £10,500 of unrestricted funding. She advised that Gift Aid refunds had been claimed and were being processed.

The accounts were proposed for acceptance by **Helen Pott** and seconded by **Priscilla Baines**. The meeting voted to approve the accounts, and these will be signed by the Chair and submitted to the Charity Commission

4. Election of Office Holders and Committee for 2022/23

The Secretary took over the management of the meeting and asked the meeting to agree to the re-appointment of Marietta Crichton Stuart as the Chair.

- **Proposer - Jill Johnston**
- **Seconded – Andrew Horsler**

The meeting unanimously agreed to Marietta's re-election.

The newly re-appointed Chair then advised the meeting that all the committee had agreed to stand again. As a result, she suggested a single vote for all the committee, which was agreed.

- **Proposer: Sally Gainsborough**
- **Seconded: Andrew Seaton**

The meeting unanimously agreed to the re-election of the committee

The full committee for 2022/2023 is therefore:

| Name | Post |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Marietta Crichton Stuart | Chair |
| Rita Sammons | Secretary |
| Vilde Aagenaes | Treasurer |
| Marnie Searchwell | Committee Member |
| Nikki Smiton | Committee Member |
| Mark Engel | Committee Member |
| Alison Liepmann | Committee Member |

5. Trustee Report to the Charity Commission

Rita Sammons outlined the purpose of the report as being to demonstrate that the FoKP is meeting its obligations as a charity and delivering on its objectives. She summarised the report highlighting several aspects of the work and activities undertaken over the year:

- **Activities and events** – a wide ranging programme of events open to members and non-members including the launch of The History Hut, the KP Festival, Easter Egg Hunt, etc in addition to smaller events such as the Bat Hunt and regular activities like volunteer gardening. Large scale events like the KP Festival are delivered in partnership with many local community and professional groups helping extend connections and promoting the park
- **Awards** – awards such as London in Bloom , Green Flag , etc both involve volunteers in preparing for the inspections and help show that the park is cared for, encouraging others to visit and support our activities
- **Constitution and operating protocols** - this year the committee have considered ways in which FoKP can clarify some of its operating practice while continuing to meet the requirements of the Charity Commission and the expectations of its members. This resulted in a report to the Trustees about areas for improvement which were endorsed and are now included in an Operating Protocols document. This will be kept under review as requirements and regulations change
- **Capital development** – reported in more detail later in the meeting, work with the council and other local organisations to deliver planned improvements in leisure facilities, children’s play and infrastructure, is an important part of the ongoing commitment to the development of the park. There are 4 major projects in place and additional work involves the cleaning of the war memorial and restoration of railings and the restoration of the facilities in the dog exercise area now that this part of the park has been return to our use following completion of the North Line Extension to Battersea.
- **Partnership working** – with the council, other public bodies, businesses and community organisations helps us achieve many of our ambitions and demonstrates an open, collaborative approach.

It is a requirement that the report includes a Public Benefit Statement, which the Trustees have defined as follows:

Public Benefit Statement

Despite these difficulties, the committee and individual officers have continued to act in accordance with the required protocols and legislation by ensuring that:

- money is appropriately spent, managed, and reported.
- decisions are made through the committee process and in accordance with our charitable purpose
- the interest of the park and its users are at the heart of our decision-making and actions

The report was endorsed by the meeting.

6. Appointment of Trustee

The Charity commission require 1/3rd of trustees to stand down each year, which in the case of FoKP is 2 trustees. Rachel Papps Williams had previously given notice of her resignation as a trustee. Colin

Hunte was the second trustee to stand down, but Colin sought re-election. In addition, Andrew Horsler sought election as a Trustee. Andrew had previously served as an FoKP committee.

Marietta put the re-election of Colin Hunte and the appointment of Andrew Horsler to the meeting, which was unanimously supported.

7. Lambeth Council's Capital Development Programme

Rita Sammons reminded the meeting that after an extended period of negotiations, over £900k had been made available for a development programme to take place over the 2-3 year period starting April 2021. The priorities that FoKP have set for investment are:

- Restoration of the iconic 1970s skatebowl
- Extension and updating of the children's play area
- Creation of a Youth zone for activity and socialising
- An extensive maintenance programme including new toilets, improved pathways, etc

The Council have appointed a single project manager for all the projects and where possible work will be integrated eg the installation of a new toilet block alongside the re development of the children's play area, the repair of the pathways by the skatebowl and also the children's area.

In relation to the skatebowl, Rita advised that following some early progress difficulties were now being experienced with the Phase 1 work due to the complexity of the task and the restrictions to operations because of concerns for the trees. The hoped-for simpler solution had not proved possible as the adjustable support mechanisms were too badly damaged. The alternative option is to fully underpin the bowl. Unfortunately, two attempts to procure the right contractors have been unsuccessful and the project manager and the engineer are considering new approaches. FoKP have also been seeking independent advice to try to make progress. We hope that progress can be made soon.

The trees have also been a matter of concern in reaction to the planned development of the children's play area. Rita indicated that it had been hoped that the area could be significantly extended by removing the old toilet block and incorporating the picnic area into the play area. The council's tree team have blocked this opportunity by preventing development on the picnic area due to potential damage to tree roots, etc. As a result plans have been fundamentally altered. The existing play area will be completely redesigned, although some equipment will be kept, and the small area in front of the entrance gate will be incorporated and used as a buggy park and seating area. The Council have recently restored a number of play areas so have good experience in this area. The contract will be released soon and the work is expected to be undertaken in Spring 2023.

Once the two projects above are underway, consideration will be given to the design of the youth zone and consultation with relevant groups will take place. As previously reported, the cost of all the plans will exceed the likely budget and so grant funding, crowdfunding and corporate support will be required.

8. Any Other Business

There was no further AGM business.

AGM Presentation:

Helen Monger, Director of London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust, opened her presentation by highlighting her connections with Vauxhall Park and her involvement in various developments giving her a good insight into many of the issues faced by FoKP. She stressed the importance of all London parks and gardens working together to campaign for parks to be made a statutory service in order to help protect their ever-diminishing budgets. She also emphasised the need for us to ensure that the parks historic register accurately reflects the importance of Kennington Park identifying a number of important details that were missing eg no reference to the extension, nor to the involvement of JJ Sexby an important figure in parks development. Marietta agreed to action this asap. Helen stressed the importance of protecting mature trees because of the contribution they made to the environment despite some of the campaigns currently in place to plant new trees.

Helen then described a local campaign she had been leading trying to stop a major development in Victoria Tower Gardens and the difficulties and challenges that had arisen. Despite extensive advice from several expert sources that the project shouldn't go ahead the Government were fully supporting the project. Consequently, she and her team had been involved in legal challenges which were still ongoing despite decisions in their favour. Although there were unlikely to be direct parallels for Kennington Park, she advised taking all possible steps such as Fields in Trust to help protect the park for the future.

A number of questions were raised and following Helen's responses, Marietta thanked her for her presentation. This was applauded by the meeting.

Vote of Thanks

At the end of the meeting, Gordon Johnston proposed a formal vote of thanks to the committee for all their hard work during the year. This was applauded by the meeting.

The meeting closed at 20.53

Rita Sammons
FoKP Secretary
September 2022