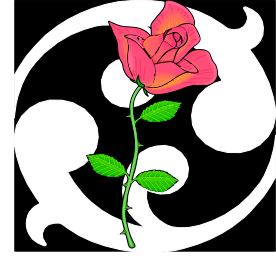


FRIENDS OF VAUXHALL PARK



Ashmole Tenants' Hall, 2 Meadow Road
Saturday 30th January 2010, 10.30am

Apologies: Polly Freeman, Seth Taylor and Lee Hills

AGM MINUTES

1. Minutes of last meeting

All agreed action points for last meeting.

2. Membership Report

80 renewals to date with more due to renew. £390 raised from subscriptions with a further £687 in donations. Would be doing dedicated mailing to Rita Road – as close to park and yet no members. Ratio of subscriptions to donations reflected similar pattern to previous years. All agreed to keep rate of subscription at same level as previous years, taking into account general economic conditions and the keenness to involve the local community and maintain membership levels.

3. Treasurer's Report

Sophie Kotch submitted report. This showed a substantial sum in reserves - £23,334.25. However, all noted that Gates yet to be invoiced and that the Summer fair had been a success this year which could not be guaranteed. All noted the lack of interest currently received and agreed to consider alternative options for improving the income generated on this reserve.

4. Chair's Report

Teresa Clay was grateful to Lee Hills for the regular walkabouts accompanied by Ivan McCracken, Polly Freeman and Helen Monger. Last one focussed on what could be achieved in the park to meet the comments from the last Green Flag assessment. The priorities agreed at the last walkabout on 29 January 2010 were:

- Minor improvements to the beds in front of the lavender garden - tidying up their shape. Ideally would also plant a couple of cherry trees (one as a replacement for a lost tree) to enable a long-term planned succession for a cherry tree walk along the path. [Following advice from James Fraser it was agreed that the Friends should suggest a winter flowering cherry – Prunus Subhirtella 'autumnalis']
- Tree protectors to be placed for the trees moved into the dog area and adjacent.
- Tidying up various hedges
- Re-starting the drinking fountain using some recent funding available from the council for drinking fountains across the borough.
- Mending or replacing the lights on the One O'clock Club veranda
- Replacing the staves for the rose garden pergola with longer lasting and bigger oak staves. Planting new rose bushes where they had become too old and no longer flowered.

Teresa also reported that she had attended a planning meeting on behalf of the Friends about the Octave Tower, 42 Bondway development. She was concerned that the proposals for this wide and tall building close to the park were likely to have a detrimental effect on the amenity value of Vauxhall Park. When Teresa raised objections about the proposals, the consultants on behalf of the developers reported that they were satisfied their proposals were compliant with minimum regulations. James Fraser from Viva Vauxhall was invited to add his comments about the Octave Tower. The planning meeting had been scheduled for 8 February but due to the level of objections was being postponed for a little while longer. All expressed significant concern about the detrimental nature of this development and urged the local councillors present at the meeting, Andrew Sawdon and Rob Banks, to ensure that Vauxhall Park was included as part of the site visit proposals for the planning committee. In addition it was agreed that:

- A link be placed on the Friends of Vauxhall Park Website to the petition at Viva Vauxhall website: <http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/no-to-octave-tower.html> (they need 1,000 signatures at least)
- The Friends identify own independent consultant and commission a report on what would limit be in height to building and would be possible to build a viable development without imposing a shadow over the park's central grass area in the summer – a rare green lung for the local community.
- The Chair to write formally on behalf of the Friends to object to the Octave Tower's likely impact on the park. In addition, the chair is asked to seek ringfencing of section 106 funding from a development on this site for the benefit of Vauxhall Park, to enable the park to adapt to the likely impact resulting from this construction.

All encouraged to write individual objections as well – particularly as this would result in a formal notification of the likely date of the planning meeting.

Teresa Clay also reported that she had attended the Parks Forum on behalf of the Friends of Vauxhall Park. Teresa was concerned that some of attendees were seeking to use the organisation as a campaigning vehicle rather than to share experience and pool knowledge. She would continue to encourage cooperation between Friends groups and the Parks Officers who are working in a very difficult environment faced with numerous budgetary cuts to achieve the best outcome for Vauxhall Park and learn from other's experiences.

5. Election of Officers for 2010

All committee members reappointed unopposed.

6. Events

The Friends have run a schedule of events during 2009:

Members Party

Following last year's success arranged by Helen Monger it had been agreed to repeat this event for a second year (at the Fentiman Arms on January 31st 7-9pm) for paid-up members to thank them for their continued support and encourage renewals. All welcomed to join at the door if not already members. Free drinks and food would be available. Polly Freeman had kindly taken over organizing this year's event and was thanked for her efforts.

Easter Egg Hunt

Louise Norwood thanked for her continued sponsorship last year of this exceedingly popular local event along with Sophie Kotch – over 500 local children participated last year.

Action: Louise Norwood and Sophie Kotch both agreed to organize this year's event for 20 March 2010.

Summer Fair

Seth Taylor was thanked for his amazing arrangements on the day and Polly Freeman for her invaluable coordination in the lead up to the event. 2009 a big success with a revised committee approach to preparation for fair and a change of approach to fundraising.

Action: All agreed to continue for 2010. Ideally would like a single sponsor for the event but would review at 1st planning meeting scheduled for 10th February at Chair's house. All agreed that based on other sporting fixtures would hold it on 20 June 2010.

Bulb Planting

A new event in Friends calendar was trialled in 2009. Helen Monger arranged for 1,000 bulbs (bluebells and snowdrops) planted and 3 trees moved despite foul weather. The contribution of Iain Boulton was invaluable on the day and the match funding on the bulbs by Lambeth Council obtained by Lee Hills was acknowledged as a valuable contribution.

Action: Agreed a similar event in November this year should take place and would agree a date nearer the time. At this event a number of other jobs could be achieved with volunteer labour including the possible moving of a recently planted oak tree without consultation from the Friends and which was not felt to be in an appropriate location.

Meetings

Other dates agreed for 2010

Open Meeting – 10th March 2010, 8pm at St Anne's and All Saints Community Room

Open Meeting – 2nd October 2010, 10.30 am at Ashmole Tenant's Hall

Next AGM – 29th January 2011, 10.30 am at Ashmole Tenant's Hall

7. Green Flag

Ivan McCracken had kindly represented the Friends at the official ceremony in Bournemouth and collected the flag. He noted that because the scheme had become a success, in future the plan was to move to self-assessment to make the scheme viable, though not immediately.

Action: It was agreed to raise the new flag at the Easter Egg Hunt.

8. Fountain and Cafe

Ivan McCracken had lead the negotiations on refurbishing the fountain funded by the Friends whilst it had been switched off as part of a Council wide money-saving exercise. Fountains were now being switched on, but due to delays in this work and lack of maintenance last year, further deposits had built up since the refurbishment work. The fountain as a result was due to be jet-washed shortly at the Council's expense and the intention is to switch the fountain back on in the next week or so.

All noted the sudden death of Henri Laghi, the owner of the cafe. The Friends wished to record their sadness and acknowledged that it was too early to discuss the future of the cafe at this stage.

9. Benches & Tree planting

One bench had recently been placed in the Lavender Garden. However, there had been a mistake in the bench and Ogilvie would be rectifying this. Another bench was on order to be placed overlooking the park and backing onto South Lambeth Road. At the same time the existing bench in that area would be taken away for re-painting and then placed adjacent to the new bench (turning it around from its current position). Helen Monger reported that she was also due to meet a family about ordering a further bench for the park. There were limited places for benches and at some point it was possible that we would no longer need any.

People like to commemorate their loved ones in the Park and it is a good way of getting investment into the park. A number of trees in the past had been planted in memory of people or events – but the Council have taken the view that tree-planting should not be commemorated with a park – to maintain its space as a public amenity rather than a garden of remembrance. Louise Norwood had kindly planted a mulberry tree in memory of her partner without a plaque and all were dismayed to hear that it had been stolen.

Action: All agreed the Friends would purchase a replacement on behalf of Louise and plant it in the original location in the current picnic area. However, all felt it was important to recognize donors. It was agreed that the Friends would also seek a Notice board similar to the one in Kennington Park where a list of donors with Louise Norwood's name as the first acknowledgement along with the Oval Montessori as a long-time and generous benefactor to the Park and the events run by the Friends. In addition it was agreed that the website should ideally have a new page added to acknowledge contributions to the Park and the Friends activities.

10. Friends website

Helen Monger was pleased to report that Martin Stanley had agreed to take on the duty of updating and maintaining the Friends website. - he also edits a website containing information about the Vauxhall and Kennington area.

11. AOB

Cllr Andrew Sawdon reported that there had been complaints about dogs being exercised in the basketball courts and tennis area and consequently leaving dog mess there. Teresa Clay explained that on the walkabout this had been discussed, as Lee Hills, the Lambeth Parks officer had also received some complaints about aggressive and noisy dogs in the park. The Friends had impressed on Lee Hills that moving the dog exercise area to a larger site along the centre of the lawn immediately adjacent to South Lambeth Priority was a priority.

Helen Monger
Secretary
4 February 2010