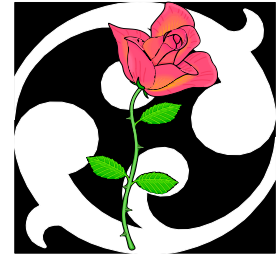


# FRIENDS OF VAUXHALL PARK



Ashmole Tenants' Hall, 2 Meadow Road  
Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2011, 10.30am

**Apologies: Louise Norwood, Emma Robb, Michael Penney**

## **AGM MINUTES**

### **1. Minutes of last meeting**

All agreed action points for last meeting.

### **2. Membership Report**

Polly Freeman, the Membership Secretary, reported that, at present have, 121 members – large number joined at the summer fair. Renewals due. £583 raised through the membership of which the majority (£333) from generous donations given at the time of joining for which the Friends are very grateful. 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. For this subscription members would receive a newsletter twice a year as well as supporting the work of the Friends.

### **3. Treasurer's Report**

Sophie Kotch, the Treasurer, submitted her report. Expenditure was mainly for events for the fair as expected. This year the Friends had also spent almost £3,000 this year on a report for Octave Tower, Bondway and the likely effects on the park which proved valuable at the planning inquiry. In terms of income, the fair was successful this year and had raised marginally more than the outlay. Additionally, The Friends were grateful for the contribution of £300 from the Vauxhall Society to help offset the costs of the shadowing report for Octave Tower. The Friends were currently benefitting from the receipt of funds for benches which Lambeth Council had yet to seek payment for. However, in future, the Friends were unlikely to benefit any further from this arrangement as Lambeth Council now requires expenditure up-front rather than on receipt of goods.

The net financial position showed a substantial sum in reserves. However, the Chair was keen to emphasize that this was necessary for a number of reasons: to be able to self-insure should the fair prove unsuccessful (due to bad weather or other constraints); to react to situations such as Octave Tower which looked increasingly likely at the moment; and to help build up funds to spend in the park when appropriate.

Given the poor interest rates available at the moment, the Treasurer was investigating whether to set up a higher interest account to place into reserves and keep only a much smaller amount as float in a current account, so as to maximize the income for the Friends in the long term. Members present, expressed reluctance at placing too much of the funds available to the Friends in a higher

interest account for more than 6 months or so, as interest rates were likely to go up and because of the need to be able to react urgently without penalty to represent the interests of the park.

#### **4. Chair's Report**

##### **Lambeth Cuts**

The Chair also thanked the two Councillors for their attendance at the meeting (Cllr Ishbel Brown and Cllr Jane Edbrooke). The Chair pointed out that whilst the Council had been successful in securing funding through Green Flags for the park this year, the future finances within Lambeth and hence for Vauxhall Park were looking very bleak. The Chair asked the Councillors present if they had any further information on the likely cuts to the Parks Department. Cllr Brown said that the settlement had not yet been agreed but confirmed that the Park Rangers service would no longer be operating after April. Cllr Edbrooke explained that Lambeth Council had originally expected a cut of about 13% in their finances but that now, they were facing a cut of 27% - as a result they were looking at every alternative to make the local authority services work more efficiently. One of the key approaches, is to seek the voluntary contribution of residents and to see if more efficient procurement through groups such as the Friends might be a way forward.

Ivan McCracken, asked Councillor Edbrooke about the use of S.106 and Ward purse funding, and how the Council was going to ensure a fair distribution of this money. He remarked that the nearest three parks to Vauxhall Park (Spring Gardens, Larkhall Park and Kennington Park) had been recipients of substantial council funding in recent years, unlike Vauxhall Park. Cllr Edbrooke noted that the pillars for the new entrance to Spring Gardens/Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens had received a donation of some £250,000 from a local community group. Whilst she noted that Vauxhall Park had so far made do on the generosity of its Friends group and the very helpful support of the Parks Officers from Lambeth, she stressed that money would be available to achieve a lot within the park, especially given the proposals for the Vauxhall Nine Elms Development Opportunity Area. Mary Acland Hood urged the Friends not to be seduced by s.106 money to fund additions which were not part of our vision for the park and to focus on the core aim of preserving the park.

##### **Running of the Group**

Teresa Clay thanked everyone present – it was a record turnout (of approximately 30 people) and demonstrated the commitment and support of members which was invaluable in securing the future of the park. She thanked Polly Freeman and Sophie Kotch for the excellent work they were doing to maintain the professionalism of the Friends and keep the group working efficiently on behalf of the residents in the area.

The Chair, said that the Friends of Vauxhall Park were dependent on the generous contributions not only of members but the time of the Committee and other volunteers to keep the group active. She asked for members to volunteer to join the Committee in its work and would be happy to discuss after the meeting what that might entail. The Chair, also said that she felt now might be the time to review the Constitution, in the light of the proposals to give voluntary groups a greater role. The Friends of Vauxhall Park would welcome a volunteer to review the Constitution and advise on updating, with particular reference to the new constitution recently adopted by the Friends of Kennington Park which would enable them to claim reimbursement of VAT without the need to be a fully registered charity.

##### **Events**

The Chair noted that the Friends had run its usual schedule of events during 2010.

### Members Party

Members were reminded that the following night the Friends were holding their party at Parco Cafe. This was an event 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 organized this year's event and was thanked for her efforts.

### Easter Egg Hunt

Louise Norwood was thanked for her continued sponsorship last year of this exceedingly popular local event along with support from Sophie Kotch – over 100 local children participated last year. Louise and Sophie were thanked for agreeing to organize the event again this year.

### Summer Fair

Seth Taylor was thanked for ensuring smooth running of the Fair on the day and Polly Freeman for her invaluable coordination in the lead up to the event. 2010 had been a big success and it was agreed to continue with this approach with the addition of new attractions, such as the pony rides. The Committee would get together shortly to agree arrangements.

## **5. Election of Officers for 2011**

All committee members re-elected unopposed. Dates for events agreed as follows (subject to change by the organizers if needed).

### Meetings

Open Meeting – Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2010, 8pm at St Anne's and All Saints Hall

Open Meeting – Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010, 10.30 am at Ashmole Tenant's Hall

Next AGM – Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2011, 10.30 am at Ashmole Tenant's Hall

### Events

Members Party – Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2011, 7-9pm, Parco Cafe

Easter Egg Hunt – Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2011, 10.30 am for 11 am start, in the Park

Summer Fair – Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2011, 2-5pm, in the Park

## **6. Gates, Fountains, Benches, Dog Area, Green Flags and Maintenance**

Ivan McCracken provided an update on the repair of the Gates. The damage had been the result of a car accident on South Lambeth Road. Ivan McCracken had hoped to use David Ball Restoration as they had done the previous work on those gates which were the only original gates left in the park. However, based on Lambeth Council's framework agreement, the job had to go through Interserve in the first instance, as the preferred contractor. Interserve had said they would do the work but then have not followed up – they were also supposed to do the repairs on the lights to the One O'Clock Club which had not been done for the last 5 years. If Interserve do not come forward with appropriate sub-contractor, the Friends could then seek their own quote, but a non-specialist could come in cheaper. It was critical that the work was done by a specialist given the historic nature of the pillars.

The Chair thanked Ivan for his work to date and commented that through the Parks Forum Lambeth Friends groups had formally requested an urgent review of the procurement rules of Lambeth Council, which were a major obstacle to work happening on the ground. The Chair urged the Council to introduce a much higher

threshold for compulsory tendering to cut delays and enable specialists to carry out the work. The Friends would strongly support this on grounds of value for money even if costs were higher.

The Chair commented that the walkabouts had continued intermittently this year but that there continued to be a number of issues unresolved, including the completion of the Pergola over a year on, repairs to the stonework on the Fountain (noting that the Friends had paid for the repair of the Fountain itself during the period when the Council looking for savings had switched off park fountains), the presence of a number of dead trees and new repairs such as the state of the playground tarmac. However, the Friends wished to put on record their thanks and acknowledge the huge contribution of their new Parks Officer, Mickey Penney. Due to his initiative, Vauxhall Park has been able to salvage fencing discarded from another Lambeth Park to move the dog area to the South Lambeth Road end of the park away from the Children's play area – this had been a criticism throughout the Green Parks process and there had been a rising number of complaints about the area.

Work was now underway for this new, much larger area. This work was being carried out by the Lambeth PIT team who were responsible for covering urgent works in 64 parks across Lambeth. It was only thanks to Mickey Penney's intervention that this work has been given some priority, but the work will only be able to happen intermittently so that the PIT team can cover other emergencies in Lambeth. Once the new fencing is in place, the old wooden fencing would be removed – in due course the Friends hoped to create a community orchard with fruit trees and a picnic area there. Members were very enthusiastic about planting fruit trees in this area and were disappointed that the Friends of Vauxhall Park had not been successful this year with Ward purse funding. The Friends of Vauxhall Park recorded their thanks also to the PIT team.

## **7. Planning**

The Chair noted that one of the biggest events for the Friends of Vauxhall Park this year had been the representation at the Planning Inquiry over the proposed development of a site on Bondway known as Octave Tower. The Chair thanked Polly Freeman who had ensured that the Friends were represented every single day of the three week Planning Inquiry in July. The Friends were still awaiting the decision of the Secretary of State due by 14 February, but had noted the helpful intervention by petition of the Kennington Oval Forum.

Helen Monger had represented the Friends at a recent meeting about the Vauxhall Nine Elms Battersea Development Opportunity Area, where a number of points had been made by the Head of Planning at Lambeth, Zbig Blonski and the Councillor in charge of Regeneration for Lambeth Sally Prentice. The meeting had explained that the area should generate approximately £900m of investment from developers for the area. At present 62% had been allocated to a Northern Line Extension with two stops to service Battersea Power Station. 18.5% had been allocated to other transport initiatives; 9% for education; 9% for Open Space; 1% for Community Facilities; 0.5% for Health and 1% for other items. The money, however, would not be available until buildings actually start construction on site - so potentially planning permission can be granted and nothing happen for some time resulting in no funding available through S.106. At the meeting, Helen Monger reported that she had raised concern over the masterplan which showed a schematic Linear Park but with no land actually allocated for that purpose and she feared that this would be overlooked by incremental development until it was too late. The community came out in numbers,

and on the strength of feeling Lambeth Council were going to negotiate with Wandsworth to receive a greater share of the S.106 funding that might come available through the Vauxhall Nine Elms Batters Opportunity Area – at present the proposal is for Wandsworth to get two thirds of the investment as they are the local authority offering the greater proportion of the land. However, those at the meeting pointed out that the greatest impacts were likely to be felt at Vauxhall where a cluster of tall buildings were already scheduled and where the existing population was greatest – therefore Lambeth should see at least 50% of the investment at this part of the site.

Meanwhile, Helen Monger had written on behalf of the Friends of Vauxhall Park, to place an objection to the two towers (known as Kylun Towers) that are proposed on the Vauxhall Island site. The decision had been intended for a meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> January but was now postponed until February due to the need to resolve certain transport issues prior to consideration by the Planning Committee. Further work, would probably be required by the Committee to protect Vauxhall Park from the likely overcrowding, overlooking and overshadowing foreseen by the current proposals. There are likely to be several more planning proposals shortly, but the Friends of Vauxhall Park will only make representations on the ones that directly affect the park – there is one planned for the Sainsbury's site but on balance, that is felt at present to be too far away to directly impinge on the park and is dependent on substantial further design work.

## **8 AOB**

### **Community Mosaic**

Sophie Kotch introduced a local artist, Karen Vost, who is willing to run a project on behalf of the Friends of Vauxhall Park to provide some community mosaics. Members responded enthusiastically to the proposal – in particular looking at perhaps providing picnic tables made with mosaics for the new Community Orchard area. Members were enthusiastic to encourage broad participation not only from children living locally, but also the homeless (a commitment in the Friends Masterplan has been to involve those from Graham House) and other communities in the area. Sophie Kotch and Jill Gregson kindly agreed to look further at costs and practicalities to deliver this project.

**Helen Monger**

**Secretary**

**11 February 2011**