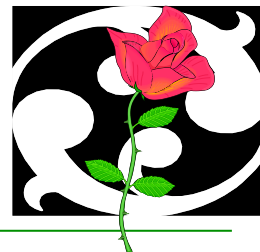


# FRIENDS OF VAUXHALL PARK

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**Ashmole Tenants' Hall, 2 Meadow Road SW8  
Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2013**

**1. Apologies:** Sophie Kotch (Treasurer), Louise Norwood

**Committee in attendance:**

Teresa Clay – Chair  
Polly Freeman – Membership Secretary  
Laura Cook – Secretary  
Helen Monger  
Susan Smith

Lambeth Council officers in attendance:

Natalie Thomsen – Culture & Communities (Cooperative Parks)  
Alastaire Johnstone – Parks and Open Spaces Operations Manager  
Cllr Jack Hopkins

**2. Minutes of last meeting and any matters arising**

All agreed minutes of last meeting.

**3. Report on Summer Fair 2013**

The Chair confirmed that the Summer Fair had been a great success with much fun had by all. The financial report has been postponed until the next meeting due to the absence of the Treasurer.

Polly advised that she is now on the circulation list for all park Events and would advise the membership if anything inappropriate was planned.

**4. Planning Issues**

**Keybridge House Redevelopment**

Polly reported that the consultation for redevelopment of Keybridge House had not been carried out properly. Almost no local groups had been consulted despite the Regeneration Department holding a current list of these groups.

Polly confirmed that Vauxhall Park was not due to receive any S106 money in mitigation for increased use of the park. This money is all due to go to the new primary school being built as part of the development.

Polly also advised that no sunlight survey had been carried out. This was needed to assess the affect of new high-rise buildings on sunlight in the park.

Cllr Jack Hopkins noted dissatisfaction of the Friends and suggested they send a letter of complaint to the Leader of Council, Lib Peck. Cllr Hopkins confirmed he and Cllr Jane Edbrook would also take complaint Cllr Lib Peck.

Polly to circulate Friends of Vauxhall Park's document objecting to Keybridge House redevelopment.

Polly and Helen requested as many Vauxhall Park members as possible attend next planning meeting to discuss redevelopment. Polly to circulate date.

## **5. Maintenance Issues**

The Chair thanked Polly for her fantastic efforts in liaising with Parks Officer Mickey Penny, Veolia and other contractors and spearheading the maintenance of the park.

### **Railings**

Polly reported that the railings next to the path leading up from Fentiman Road had been removed, giving all access to the strip of grass.

Polly seeking new charity to paint railings around dog area as Graham House no longer interested.

### **Lavender**

Polly reported that lavender oil had been produced from some of the lavender harvested in the park. This is rather valuable and is to be sold by a charity and money donated to the park. All agreed that the lavender could be a source of income for the park in the future.

Helen advised of need to propagate lavender plants so lavender bushes could slowly be replaced. This would involve a large amount of work and a working group needs to be organised to tackle this job in the summer.

### **Orchard**

Helen reported that the Orchard is flourishing and she would be pruning it in November. Helen to circulate exact date so other volunteers can help.

## **6. Lambeth Cooperative Parks Programme**

Natalie Thomsen and Alistaire Johnstone from Lambeth Council introduced the Council's proposals for 'Cooperative Management' whereby local people and groups would have more power over running the parks.

It was noted that there will be a c.45% reduction on central government grants to councils over next three years, making the status quo unsustainable as well as being unsatisfactory.

As elaborated on in the Cooperative Parks Programme Information Booklet, Natalie outlined the three models being proposed:

Level One: Council-Led Management

Level Two: Cooperative Management

Level Three: Community-Led Management

Natalie advised that all completed questionnaires should be submitted by 18<sup>th</sup> October when the consultation would end. Using the feedback from this consultation the Council Officers would then make recommendations. The process of developing the new models would take two years.

The Chair also noted that there will be Council elections next year and a General Election in 2015, meaning these proposals are being developed amid great political uncertainty.

The Chair suggested that Level Two: Cooperative Management would be the most appropriate for Vauxhall Park, but had four major areas of concern which are detailed below along with the responses of the Council Officers:

### **a) Accountability of Management Board**

Alastaire assured the Friends that the council was not proposing to divest itself fully of responsibility for public parks in any of the models.

### **b) Decision Making Powers**

Alastaire advised that the decision making powers of the Management Board could not be established until the end of the process. He indicated, however that once the current contracts for grounds maintenance, tree maintenance and facilities management expired, the Board could be responsible for negotiating new contracts with more appropriate suppliers.

### **c) Resources**

Alastaire reported that the Council's budgets are complex and that there were mistakes in the Information Booklet. He concurred that the Council needed to be more transparent about investment and advised that this was the aim of the Capital Investment Programme.

The Chair reiterated that the Council's Capital Investment Plan for Vauxhall Park needed to take into account all the new developments in the immediate vicinity with little or no green space attached to them and the hitherto unjust distribution of S106 money. Helen Monger suggested that the Council consult the Friends of Vauxhall Park's 2005 Management Plan, with figures adjusted for inflation, as this was never implemented. Various members of the committee reiterated their frustration that the Council would not support the Friends in applying for lottery money.

Alastaire confirmed that it might be possible for a Cooperative Management board to take control of the Park's income from the Café, Nursery School, One O'Clock Club and Tennis Courts. Natalie Thomsen to supply Friends with copies of the contracts/financial information for all of these.

In addition, the Chair advised that there might be a possibility of investment from local businesses, including New Covent Garden Authority, CLS Holdings, Vauxhall BID.

### **d) Admin Support**

Alastaire advised that these details could not be decided on until the end of the process.

### **Friends of Vauxhall Park Submission**

All agreed that Level One was not working properly and could only deteriorate further given planned budget cuts. It was agreed, therefore, that the Friends of Vauxhall Park would pursue Level Two: Cooperative Management with the possibility of moving to Level Three.

The Chair and others reported that the current contractor, Veolia, are not qualified horticulturalists and are destroying some of the planting in the park. Alastaire confirmed that, although there are penalties written in to Veolia's contract, they are too small to be effective and very hard to enforce, particularly given the cuts to Veolia's budget over the last few years.

The Chair therefore requested that the Friends take over budgets for gardening immediately. Alastaire to take this request back to the Council.

**Next meeting is the AGM on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2014 at 10.30am in Ashmole Tenants' Hall**

Laura Cook  
Secretary  
30<sup>th</sup> September 2013