

**FRIENDS OF
VAUXHALL PARK**

**Annual General Meeting**

Wheatsheaf Hall, Wheatsheaf Lane, SW8 2UP

Saturday 23rd January 2016 at 10.30am

1. **Apologies for absence**

Councillor Jack Hopkins, Councillor Claire Holland, Ivan McCracken, Robert Harwood, Jane Wenlock, Sophie Hunter-Kotch, Teresa Clay, Helena Lewis, Laura Cook.

 **Committee members in attendance:**

Polly Freeman – Membership Secretary and Acting Co-Chair

 Helen Monger – Acting Co-Chair

 Tommy Candler

 Henrietta Sitwell

 Grainne Sherry

 Byron Green

 Louise Norwood

 Charles Vyvyan (Incoming Chair)

 Clare Church (Incoming Secretary)

 Charles King Farlow (Incoming Committee Member)

 **Lambeth Council Members in Attendance:**

Councillor Jane Edbrooke – Cabinet member for Neighbourhoods

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

Minutes (on website) were approved and there were no matters arising not already on the Agenda.

1. **Membership Secretary’s Report**

Polly Freeman reported that there had been 101 members in the year 2014-15. To date in 2015-16 there are 33 paid members. Polly intends to send out chase-up with newsletter in February.

1. **Treasurer’s Report and Accounts**

(Helen Monger gave this report on behalf of Helena Lewis)

The Treasurer reported a bank balance as at 31/10/15 of £31,782.16 (breakdown of £13,981.60 in current account and £17,800.56 in business account).

The largest income had been from the Summer Fair (£2031.76 profit) and thanks were expressed to Polly Freeman for all her hard work organising this and to Winkworth Kennington for their generous sponsorship. Income from membership subscriptions and donations remained steady. Thanks were also expressed to Louise Norwood for her organisation of the Easter Egg Hunt, which had fantastic community participation and made a small profit this year, and to Ruth Morgan for her production of oil and bags from the Lavender harvest which also provides additional income

The main expenditure had been on purchasing gazebos to use at the Summer Fair, with a small amount spent on flowers for the beds beside the Fentiman Road entrance to park.

1. **Chair’s Report**

(Polly Freeman and Helen Monger have been acting as Interim Co-Chairs and Polly gave this report)

* 1. **Review of Year**

Easter Egg Hunt – thanks to Louise Norwood for leading.

Summer Fair – thanks to Winkworth Kennington for sponsoring, Helena Lewis for organising and counting floats and monies, Louise Norwood for organising the children’s events, Jill Gregson for organising stalls, Susan Smith for the plant stall and all other volunteers for making it a huge success. The 2016 Summer Fair is planned for 26th June.

Lavender Harvest – thanks to Ruth Morgan for producing oil and donating a percentage of her profits.

Gardening Group – led by Tessa King Farlow, have made a huge difference especially to South Lambeth Road entrance beds and thanks were expressed for their hard work.

* 1. **Committee Activities**

Polly and Helen have attended Lambeth Parks Forum which represents all ‘Friends’ groups of Lambeth Parks. Lively and useful discussion group. Has been chaired by Collette Thomas who has championed Lambeth’s open spaces, she is standing down and they are looking for a new Chair.

Thanks extended to Laura Cook who is standing down as Secretary of FOVP due to other commitments.

Helen and Polly would be attending the next Parks Forum meeting on 9th February at the Durning Library to hear the latest proposals for Parks Management following Culture 2020 consultation.

* 1. **Lambeth Council Culture 2020 and Cooperative Parks**

From Lambeth’s consultation it is clear that there will be minimal budgets for maintaining parks and open spaces. FOVP is continuing to explore the idea of a cooperative management model led by Vauxhall One and covering five of Vauxhall’s open spaces. Many meetings have taken place with Vauxhall One and Lambeth Council and discussions are ongoing at present. Vauxhall One now has a new Chief Executive, Bernard Collier and meetings will take place in due course to continue to move this idea forward.

* 1. **Masterplan and Playground**

Work has been done on a new Masterplan, replacing the one from 2006, and also on plans for the new playground. Kinnear Associates have been appointed to oversee both these projects and there has been wide consultation on them. Sue Foster, Lambeth’s Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and Growth has been involved in meetings and a bigger budget has been promised for the playground to reflect the demands that the new developments in Vauxhall will place on it. Lambeth Council have announced that they would like the scope and detail of the Masterplan to increase so while this is being reviewed and details awaited, both these plans remain under development. The existing draft Masterplan as it stands will go on the website whilst we await the final document.

Developments in the area around South Lambeth Road and beyond to the river are beginning to take shape and FOVP are awaiting £325,000 promised as part of the planning representations from Downing’s student block. Due to the playground plans not being finalised it is likely that the contractors will not be able to commence work after the summer holidays as planned. Members were urged to keep pressure on local councillors to ensure that this project remains a priority and the ring-fenced monies for the park are used as soon as possible to demonstrate the positive side to the new developments for the community. FOVP also has an expectation of £200,000 from CLS but that they have yet to break ground. Dan Thomas has replaced Joe Lewis as the project officer for this work and we look forward to completing the work with him.

* 1. **Park Maintenance**

During the course of 2015 Theresa Hoare replaced Mickey Penney as our new Parks Manager. Thanks and appreciation was extended to Mickey for all his hard work especially when it came to sourcing things such as picnic benches and railings, and for guiding the park through seven Green Flag Awards. Theresa has quickly built up a good working relationship with FOVP and monthly walk arounds are continuing to try and ensure that maintenance is kept a priority. The Community Payback scheme is working well and continues to provide a basic service for routine maintenance and tidying of the park.

* 1. **Developments**

All developments in the immediate area now have consented planning permission except for one site at the back of the railway tracks. FOVP continue to make representations to planning and will carry on being involved in the ongoing gyratory development discussions, particularly around a pedestrianised link to Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens . Regular meetings have taken place over the past year with planners and developers to try to ensure that the concerns of local residents regarding maintaining and improving the Park and other the open spaces are heard.

1. **Election of Officers for 2016**

Nominations were received as follows:

Chair – Charles Vyvyan

Treasurer – Helena Lewis

Membership Secretary – Polly Freeman

Secretary – Clare Church

All the above were approved by the meeting along with the re-election of existing ordinary committee members.

\*At this point in the meeting Charles Vyvyan took the Chair.

1. **Schedule of Events for 2016**
* Easter Egg Hunt – Saturday 19th March in Vauxhall Park (Louise Norwood leading)
* Summer Fair – Sunday 22nd June in Vauxhall Park (Polly Freeman leading)
* FOVP Meetings – Tuesday 8th March, Saturday 24th September
* Next AGM – Saturday 21st January 2017
* Members Party – Ideas to be put forward and discussed at next meeting. Louise Norwood suggested following on after the Nursery End of Year party (Early July) as she already has some entertainment booked.
1. **Proposals for a New Constitution and Charitable Status**

Charles Vyvyan outlined the fact that that FOVP currently has a constitution but no corporate structure. This makes it difficult to own property, enter contracts and raise money without having potential personal liability issues. Given the current political climate and need for FOVP to be able to do these things as part of a management cooperative it was proposed that the best solution would be to become a charitable organisation. This would remove any personal liability and allow the organisation to move forward in a more professional way whilst enabling ownership of property etc. as well as Gift Aid to be claimed when raising money. The current Officers of FOVP would become Trustees of the charity. The current assets and bank accounts would be moved into the new charitable organisation.

The meeting unanimously agreed to this proposal.

1. **Cooperative Parks**

Faith Boardman (Treasurer of Vauxhall One and Chair of Vauxhall City Farm Trustees) reported that a partnership of the two organisations she was involved in had carried out a consultation regarding the new cooperative parks management plans. The responses had been broadly positive and many had been made on behalf of community groups. They are now working on plans for the structure of the organisation and reviewing legal implications. FOVP would have representation on the Board. It was hoped that this cooperative would commence in April but this is not looking likely due to the amount of details still to be clarified. It is hoped that it will be up and running within the next financial year.

Councillor Jane Edbrooke replied to this and clarified Lambeth Council’s position. After 1st April grounds maintenance in the park would continue with current level and same staff as previously. However, as with all other parks in Lambeth, the staff would no longer be employed by Veolia but rather by an in-house team. Safety and security are priorities so Vauxhall Park would continue to be closed at night as it is now - which some other parks would no longer have after the management changes. Some of the CIL money from developers may be used to ensure that the level of service in Vauxhall Park does not drop dramatically, where other parks levels of service may drop more. She highlighted that from 2020 all Local Authority funding from Central Government will cease and this is why there is exploration as to alternative ways to fund and protect ‘non-statutory’ services such as parks and open spaces. The council will try to prioritise Section 106 money to help with investment in green spaces.

 Cllr Edbrooke also updated the meeting that the One O’Clock club is moving out of the park and so thought needed to be given as to how to use that space within the park. This along with minor issues regarding the Parco café lease needed to be part of a wider masterplan review but that Lambeth Council remain committed to upgrading Vauxhall Park so that it is ready to deal with the significant population increase resulting from the adjacent developments.

1. **Maintenance Issues**

Polly Freeman reported that as outlined in earlier good relations have been built with the new Parks Manager.

There are plans to raise up the Fawcett memorial so that it is more visible as it is currently obscured by mud.

The Orchard trees have been trimmed and are all reported in good health, minor work needs to be done in there.

Ad hoc community Gardening Groups continue.

Green flag had been awarded successfully again this year.

Community Payback have cleared a lot of leaves and also helped with this year’s lavender harvest. A request to be made to ensure any bags of leaves are left out on the tarmac to be collected so that the trucks collecting them do not drive over the grass area.

There is a need to replace the Lavender garden as it is coming to the end of its ‘shelf life’. This is quite an expensive project and so sponsorship would be sought. The re-planting will be done in phases.

Tessa King Farlow enquired about the removal of the brick block structure beside the Fentiman Road gate. Polly reported that British Gas need to confirm it is safe and it can then be removed.

Louise Norwood highlighted the need for the gate into the playground (beside fountain) to be replaced, as do the gates to the Lavender garden which do not close properly.

1. **AOB**

Polly Freeman reported that both the Oval Safer Neighbourhoods Police team and Vauxhall One wardens were aiming to do both regular patrols of the park helping safety and security. Polly also reported on the campaign to save South Lambeth Tate library and how joint working had been done with them to develop storytelling sessions in the park.

Tommy Candler raised the possibility of developing a ‘Fawcett Garden’, this would be dependent on finance and management issues but remains part of the development plans. Tommy also raised the issue of tree pruning. Many of the parks trees are not in good health and in need of maintenance whilst others require to be replaced. The cost of this work is around £40,000. This is currently under discussion as part of the new management plan. The hedge on South Lambeth Road is also in need of replanting or infilling. Polly reported that she had asked for compost to be taken to aid growth but unfortunately this had not been done.

Charles Vyvyan highlighted the fact that the move to charitable status would allow FOVP to tap into more fundraising sources. Volunteers to serve on a small fundraising sub-committee were requested by 8th March.

Next Meeting Tuesday 8th March 2016 8pm at Wheatsheaf Hall