**FRIENDS OF
VAUXHALL PARK**

**Minutes of Members Open Meeting**

**1st October 2016 at 10.30am**

**Ashmole Tenants Hall, London SW8**

**Committee in Attendance:** Charles Vyvyan – Chair

 Polly Freeman – Membership Secretary

 Charles King-Farlow

 Clare Church – Secretary

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Helen Monger, Louise Norwood, Tommy Candler, Sara Frith, Jessica Peace, Jess Halstead, Vin Yorke

1. **UPDATE ON MEETINGS WITH LAMBETH COUNCIL AND MASTERPLAN/MAINTENANCE**

**2.1 Meetings**

Charles Vyvyan and Polly Freeman have had a number of meetings with most members of the Lambeth Parks team. Most frequent meetings are with Theresa Hoare (Parks Officer). Other meetings have taken place with Kevin Crook (Maintenance), Dan Thomas (Projects) and also Raj Mistry and Adrian Smith who are more senior in the Lambeth team. Effective relationships have been established and need to be maintained and strengthened by continuing regular meetings.

There have also been meetings with Councillor Jane Edbrooke and Councillor Jack Hopkins the former and current Cabinet Members with responsibility for parks and open spaces. As they are both local ward councillors they are aware of the issues facing Vauxhall Park.

**2.2 Masterplan**

Following on from Lambeth’s rejection of the previous masterplan produced by Kinnear Associates a new consultant was appointed and tasked with producing a plan by end of December 2016. The new consultants are Adams and Sutherland and it is hoped that they will produce a list of costed projects which can then be worked on in order of priority and funding availability. The top priorities will be the new playground and then essential works to the paths, trees and general maintenance. It was stressed that the report will be completely independent of Lambeth Council and this is vital. Polly Freeman has had a walk around Vauxhall Park with Liz Adams from the consultants and given all the relevant background information, she is very sympathetic and understanding towards out position. Once the report is completed it should enable the FOVP to decide where to use Section 106/CIL money from developments against the costed projects.

**2.3 Maintenance**

Kevin Crook has put together a comprehensive Parks maintenance specification for all Lambeth Parks and it is hoped that there will be a dedicated gardener in the Park again from New Year which should improve the standards of planting etc. Some tree and hedge works have been carried out including the willow tree in the Lavender Garden and the tree between the fountain and the train in the playground.

British Gas have agreed to come and remove the brick structure behind the entrance gate from Fentiman Road and then this area can be planted up appropriately.

There are plans to renew the lavender garden as it is coming towards the end of its life span. This renewal planting will be carried out in phases.

The fountain had not been working over the summer as the pump had been lost over the previous winter after being stored away. A new pump was ordered but has only just arrived so this will not go in until after the upcoming winter months.

1. **REPORT ON COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22ND SEPTEMBER**

Charles Vyvyan reported on the most recent meeting of the FOVP committee which had been dominated by a presentation of the interim report of a scoping project by Ben Pollard and Marcus Willcocks. The purpose of the project had been to try and establish the future direction of the Friends of Vauxhall Park with a focus on Community Engagement and Funding. The committee was currently considering whether to further develop the report and spend more money to complete the project. The final decision is expected by 2nd October.

Faith Boardman highlighted the importance of funding due to the ongoing Council budget cuts and Teresa Clay emphasised the importance of trying to show that the park is truly representative of the local community which has been difficult for FOVP to do historically.

There is a Parliamentary Inquiry at present to try to make funding of Parks a statutory obligation for Local Authorities but this will be a lengthy process and may not ever reach fruition. We have made a submission to the Inquiry.

Charles Vyvyan is continuing to try and engage other neighbourhood partners and has had talks with the American Embassy amongst others.

1. **REPORT ON SUMMER FAIR**

The 2016 Summer Fair had been another huge success with around £2000 profit. This was mainly due to sponsorship and thanks were extended to Winkworths estate agents who gave £2000 and also printed posters/flyers, as well as Fire nightclub (football sponsorship), Counter brasserie (food donations) and Tommy Candler and her partner Alan (Punch and Judy sponsorship).

It is was noted that the Fair is an important event to allow FOVP to reach out to the wider community but that it was becoming increasingly difficult to organise due to lack of volunteers. Polly Freeman who did a fantastic job of organising again this year will not be in a position to run next year so a new organiser or team of people will need to be found. Huge thanks was expressed to Polly, Helen Monger, Louise Norwood and other committee members for supporting and organising the essential events such as the Fair and Easter Egg Hunt.

1. **GARDENING GROUPS/LAVENDER HARVEST**

**5.1 Gardening Groups**

The two gardening groups supported by Tessa King-Farlow have been managing the entrance beds on South Lambeth Road. Tessa and Anne continue to look after the Fentiman Road entrance. These beds are vitally important as they create a huge impact to users entering the park. Thanks extended to Tessa and all involved.

In past years CLS had sponsored the flower beds around the model village but the sponsorship amount that Lambeth wanted had become so expensive that FOVP have now taken these on.

**5.2 Lavender Harvest**

79kg of Lavender was cut during the harvest and 2 members kindly volunteered a van to transport this to the Still at Carshalton. 3 litres of oil was produced which can now be sold. There was a suggestion of trying to sell in Parco café in addition to Bonnington Square.

1. **DATES FOR 2017**

Provisional Dates were set as follows:

AGM – Saturday 21st January at 10.30am

Members Open Meetings – Wednesday 8th March (evening) and Saturday 30th September (morning)

Easter Egg Hunt – Saturday 1st April

Summer Fair – Sunday 18th June

Members Summer Party – early July (date to be confirmed)

1. **AOB**

Appreciation was expressed to Helen Monger, Polly Freeman and all other committee members for keeping the park running and in the best shape possible in difficult circumstances.

Suggestion made of trying to involve local schools in FOVP to generate more local interest.

Tennis courts are in need of attention, there is no maintenance and usage is variable and poorly managed.

Perimeter fence around the park is not safe/secure in many places and people are able to get in to the park. May be possible to get funds from TfL to redo or get sponsorship for sections of it from local businesses.

A question was raised about the decoration of park benches with flowers etc. PF reported that the most problematic bench was the one in the corner of the lavender field which was given in memory of someone who died very suddenly at a young age. The family, who live nearby, use it as her memorial as she is buried far away. They have been asked to reduce the decorations as it restricts it being used as a bench but to no avail. It is hoped that, with time, the amount of decorations with reduce. This bench highlights the problem that can occur with memorial benches.