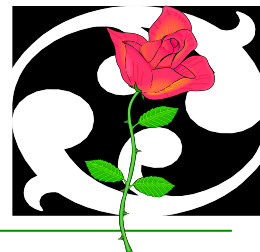


FRIENDS OF VAUXHALL PARK



Annual General Meeting

Wheatsheaf Hall, Wheatsheaf Lane, SW8 2UP

Saturday 17th January 2015 at 10.30am

1. Apologies for absence:

Helena Lewis (Treasurer), Cllr Claire Holland, Cllr Jack Hopkins,

Committee in attendance:

Teresa Clay – Chair (acting)

Polly Freeman – Membership Secretary

Laura Cook - Secretary

Louise Norwood

Tommy Candler

Sophie Kotch

Helen Monger

Councillors in attendance

Cllr Jane Edbrook

2. Minutes of last meeting and any matters arising

All agreed minutes of last meeting.

3. Membership Secretary's Report 2013-14

Polly Freeman reported that there were 96 members who brought in £1128. All agreed to keep subscriptions at same level (individual £3, unwaged £2, family £5, group £5), particularly as two thirds of income is from donations.

Polly reminded everyone that she sends regular emails and biannual newsletters and called for suggestions of information to be included. Polly also stated that it was time for membership renewal and that the annual members evening would be held on Sunday night where people could join on the door.

4. Treasurer's report and accounts

It was agreed that funds of c. £25k in the Business Account should be moved into a fixed rate account to earn better interest. A reserve of c. £8k would be kept for events such as the Summer Fair and Easter egg hunt.

The following profit was reported for 2014:

Easter egg hunt c. £100

Summer Fair £792.79

The Chair thanked Polly and Helena for all their work on membership and accounts.

The Chair asked for suggestions for how to use some of the funds to mark the 125th anniversary of the park. Tommy Candler suggested a maze clearing picnic. Another suggestion is an outdoor gym. Polly Freeman reminded everyone that the results of the masterplan were awaited and this would focus priorities for future expenditure.

5. Chair's report

Highlights of 2014

- Achieved Green Flag for 7th year in succession, marking high standards of cleanliness, facilities and planting.
- Held very successful and popular events: Easter Egg Hunt and Summer Fair
- 3 new picnic benches with mosaic tops provided by volunteer effort.

The Chair gave a vote of thanks for the huge amount of volunteering in the park: 3 groups which meet regularly to work on entrance beds including Tessa King-Farlow, Anne Rogers, Robert Harwood, David Hankin and Tommy Candler; Community Payback who undertake tidying and minor maintenance; Metropolitan Public Gardens Association who have donated huge number of bulbs, planted by volunteers.

The Chair thanked all those who have kindly donated to park: Foreign Office donated £100, Winkworth donated £2000 for the Summer Fair, KOV Forum sponsored GoKarts & Bouncy Castle at the Summer Fair to encourage youth participation and cater to an older age group.

Cooperative Parks

The Chair reported that Lambeth have planned 20 million of capital investment into parks for the next 3 years from April 2015-March 2018. The council is proposing to put in £9 million from existing capital receipts. The Council anticipated at least £2m from S106 money, with the remainder needing to be raised both through CIL and direct fundraising by parks. The new playground forming part of the masterplan will be funded by the council but no other public money has been allocated to Vauxhall Park. The Chair noted that £600k from capital receipts had been earmarked for parks in the north of the borough, so Vauxhall Park would need to share this sum with Kennington Park and Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens. Because of the work carried out by Helen Monger and Polly Freeman, just over £500k had already been earmarked through S106, DIFS and CIL from developments in Nine Elms to go direct to Vauxhall Park. However, receipt of these was dependent on the buildings being delivered and the council passing the money onto the park, which could take some time.

6. Election of Officers for 2015

The Chair confirmed her resignation. All other officers were confirmed. All committee members were also confirmed.

In the absence of anyone stepping forward, Cllr Jane Edbrook volunteered to take on the position of Interim Chair until a resident volunteered. Cllr Edbrook was asked by Christina Burnett whether this might constitute a conflict of interest. Cllr Edbrook confirmed that there was no conflict as ward councillor. The meeting accepted her offer to be appointed as interim Chair.

7. Schedule of Events for 2015

- Members' Party – Sunday 18th January
- Easter egg hunt – Saturday 28th March
- Summer Fair – Sunday 21st June
- Meetings – Tuesday 17th March, Saturday 26th September
- Next AGM – Saturday 16th January 2016

All agreed these dates pending Polly Freeman checking dates for major sporting fixtures that might clash with the Summer Fair.

8. Development of Masterplan

Polly Freeman summarised the developments of the Masterplan. Kinnear Landscape Architects were appointed in the Summer with a brief to make a more efficient use of space and re-design the playground. This was needed in the light of the new developments proposed and the likely increase in population. They consulted during the Autumn with a consultation event in December, when they presented their draft plans. Kinnear are now analysing all consultation responses and will present revised plans in the next couple of months. The playground will be replaced after the Summer holidays.

Kinnear are planning to do a bus trip around playgrounds in local area and beyond as part of further consultation work, with the hope of eliciting comments from children and young people. The intention is for the equipment in Vauxhall Park to compliment that in other local playgrounds. The fenced off area might be reduced in size to make better use of space.

The Masterplan includes a menu of projects, which can be commissioned individually as and when money becomes available.

A proper tree survey has been taken out as part of the Masterplan. Some of the low-grade trees and older, less safe trees might need to be removed.

The next stage is a meeting of Steering Committee on 23rd January when the Masterplan will be debated. We hope to have a finalised Masterplan by next meeting on 17th March.

The Chair thanked Polly Freeman and Helen Monger for their huge amount of work in developing the Masterplan.

9. Maintenance Issues

There are supposed to be regular monthly meetings with the Parks Officer from Lambeth. Our current parks officer, Mickey Penny, had not initiated any meetings so there was nothing to report. However, the Friends noted this was a core responsibility. Cllr Edbrooke agreed to take this up with the Lambeth Parks Department.

However, Mickey Penney and Polly Freeman were able to arrange for Community Payback to paint some of the railings and they are currently helping with park maintenance such as leaf clearing.

On a separate note, it is not clear how often the mobile gardening team come in or exactly what they do – they are part of the Veolia contract which is coming to an end and being retendered. If anybody has any concerns, these need to be reported to Polly Freeman who can take them to the council.

At the latest Safer Neighbourhood meeting, Vauxhall Park was made one of the priorities dealing with both antisocial behaviour from clubs and also dog walkers leaving mess behind. Cllr Jane Edbrook reported that fining has been devolved to a private company to enforce fixed penalty fines for fouling in parks as the council doesn't have the manpower to enforce this. Cllr Edbrook to provide more information.

10. Cooperative parks

The Chair reported that following Lambeth Council's consultation on cooperative working in parks, Vauxhall Park has opted for Stage 2, with the Friends organisation and the council working in tandem to run the park. The Friends are wary of taking on too much responsibility due to limited time and opportunities for generating income to cover costs. The Chair repeated that we would need rent from the café and nursery school to fund maintenance, we can not work perennially on volunteer effort.

The Friends are hoping to adopt a model of maintenance where there is a contract for basic maintenance such as grass cutting and leaf clearing with more control over the more specialised gardening, run by a local tasking group.

The Chair noted that, having suggested this model for several years, it is great that it might now be a real possibility. The Garden Museum at Lambeth Palace are keen to share some of their expertise and manpower with local parks. It was suggested that we could also use skills of local gardening colleges while giving their students practise.

Concerns were raised about the poor quality of gardening. Although there are sanctions in the contract with Veolia, the council does not have the manpower to enforce them. Michael Keane has volunteered to scrutinise the contract, looking at value for money and enforceability of fines, as this is something he has done in his professional life and could deliver savings for the council. Councillor Edbrooke agreed to look into this and provide Michael Keane with the necessary documentation.

11. Fawcett Garden

Polly Freeman talked about potential plans for an Sensory Garden, which would be fragrant and tactile. A group, including Patrick Roberts who is a design engineer and recently blind, visited Lambeth Palace Garden for inspiration. Given the Park's links with Henry Fawcett, the blind postmaster, it was agreed that we could create a garden that would be a ground breaking centre of excellence. The work would involve implementing voice activation, to tell people how to navigate around Vauxhall Park. This would require a power source that would need on-going funding and would also rely on smartphone technology. Substantial fundraising would be necessary. As Vauxhall Park has some reserves, it was agreed we could also apply for matched funding.

All agreed that a Sensory Garden was worth pursuing and would need to be considered as part of the Masterplan. A dedicated group would be needed to drive it and could possibly link to the work on disability being done at the Tate South Lambeth Library.

The Chair invited those who might be interested to talk to Polly Freeman and Christina Burnett.

12. AOB

Michael Keane volunteered to correct the information on the website about Henry Fawcett statue.

Laura Cook (Secretary)
10th February 2015