

**FRIENDS OF
VAUXHALL PARK**

**Draft Minutes of the AGM of the Friends of Vauxhall Park held on Saturday
13 November at 10.30 a.m. at the Bolney Meadow Community Centre, 31 Bolney Street, London SW8.**

**Present:**

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| Trustee/Committee Members in attendance | Friends present |
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| John Roome (Chair) | Sharon Turner |
| Polly Freeman | Veronika Tugendraich Garwolinkski |
| Lyn Woodcraft (Treasurer) | Jill Gregson |
| Charles King-Farlow | Rob and Laura Jaeger |
| Tessa King-Farlow | Jane Wenlock |
| Faith Boardman (online) | Doone Roisin |
|  | Liam Jarnecki |
|  | Andrew Prentis |
|  | Belinda Taylor |
|  | Robert Harwood |
|  | Mandy Knight (Secretary) |

1. **Welcome and Apologies**

John Roome welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Councillor Claire Holland, Councillor Sonia Winifred, Kevin Crook (Lambeth Council), Charles and Liz Vyvyan, Ivan and Meridy McCracken, Louise Norwood, Helen Monger, Matthew Gwyther and Sarah Chambers.

1. **Minutes of the last meeting (7 November 2020)**

John Roome had noticed a couple of typos, but as with no other amendments, the minutes were agreed.

1. **Matters Arising**

**Water pump**: The water pump was in action for the Summer and for the September event, but the Council have now turned it off for the winter months.

**Dog area gates**: The project manager, Rob Kelly arranged for adjustments to the gates.

Other matters arising appear under agenda items.

1. **Chair’s report and future park activities**

John Roome reported that the last twelve months have seen an extremely successful year for the park. The key element was the official re-opening of the park in September, and he thanked Polly Freeman for her the design and organisation of this event. The local MP Florence Eshalomi opened the afternoon, which was based around local children cutting a 120m long ribbon. The FoVP funded the whole event at a cost of just over £4,600 and an estimated 2,000 people attended the afternoon events.

Last month, the park was awarded the London in Bloom 2021 gold in the London Park of the year category, its highest award. Over the last year, Trustees worked hard with our group of volunteers to move the park up from the 2020 silver gilt by making sure the park met all the key criteria including the creation of a conservation area for wildlife. A lot of the work in this area was done by the Friends of Battersea Park, Andrew Prentis, and a local student Charlotte van Reenen. This area will be planted once the Council has erected barriers, possibly bicycle racks, on the other side of the fence to stop footballs from landing in the area. The park has also retained the Green Flag Award, which recognises and rewards well-managed parks and green spaces.

The WhatsApp gardening group has 52 volunteers. In the third quarter of 2021, volunteers put in around 250 hours of work in gardening activities. The next group gardening day will be on Saturday 27 November to get the park ready for winter. The lavender is still too young to be distilled but was harvested by around 100 volunteers in early September and Ruth Morgan raised £100 from helping people make lavender bags from dried lavender flowers at the summer event.

Trustees have escorted Councillors Clare Holland and Sonia Winifred around the park as well as Kevin Crook from Lambeth Council, which has been useful in escalating the snagging problems that still exist in the park. However, progress remains slow in fixing these. The key items from the snagging list that still are waiting to be fixed are:

* Replacement of around 150 lavender plants that have died
* Removal of four dead trees and the planting of several others
* Turning on of the drinking fountains
* Enhancement of some aspects of the fencing for security reasons
* Painting of the tennis courts.

In February, Ardian and Mimoza Neziri took over the running of Parco Café from Domingo Alves. The Friends have maintained the borders and planters and made the whole area more attractive and welcoming. Tessa King-Farlow, Charles King-Farlow and John Roome completed a massive overhaul and tidy up of that area the day before the AGM.

Future events are under consideration. A further family bulb plant session will be taking place soon. Other possible events are the East Egg Hunt and another park event at a lower key.

John Roome finished by thanking Anne Rogers, who has left as Membership Secretary after five years following a move out of London, Sarah Chambers who has taken over Anne’s role, Tessa King-Farlow for her knowledge and leading the volunteers and trustees in the gardening sessions and the gardener Martin Little for his continued hard work.

Robert Hardwood endorsed the splendid job that Martin Little does in the park. He asked if Lambeth’s contract with Martin was permanent. Polly Freeman explained the contract has been rolled forward. Originally Martin was engaged for two years, but during the refurbishment, he moved to another park for a year, so technically he should remain as the gardener in Vauxhall Park for at least another year.

Tessa King-Farlow commented that as Lambeth Council put new beds in the Fawcett Garden, Lambeth Council should maintain them. However, the community payback people who helped Martin three times a week in the past, will not be returning. In addition, although there are 52 volunteers on the WhatsApp gardening group, only six volunteers turn up regularly. Therefore, the FoVP cannot take on the new beds in the Fawcett Garden permanently, but will temporarily look after them over the winter months.

1. **Receipt of annual report and accounts and current financial position**

Lyn Woodcraft reported that in the year up to 21 October 2020, subscriptions fell compared to 2019. Lavender oil sales had inflated the 2019 figures. A big expenditure in 2020 was the restoration of the Human Sundial which cost £2,340 and overall we made a loss of £1,445.24 that resulted in the bank balances decreasing to £37,851.74.

For the year ended 31 October 2021, the summer re-opening event saw a surge in membership and donations, but we will be reporting another loss, due to the funding of the reopening event at the cost of around £4,600. The bank balances remain at nearly £35,000.

The plan is to hold the AGM next year so the financial figures for the most current year can be reported soon after the financial year has closed.

Robert Hardwood asked about the new developments such as Keybridge House, where FoVP could approach residents to become members. John Roome explained that work on this has started with the help of a Keybridge House resident, Doone Roisin. However, John Roome agreed that the FoVP needed to make more approaches to other new developments in the area as well as other estates with the move to have a more diverse membership being a key focus.

1. **Membership report**

John Roome reported that there are currently 82 members compared with 65 a year ago. The increase in attracting new members is primarily because of the FoVP stand at the reopening of the park event run by Anne Rogers, Lyn Woodcraft, Jill Gregson and Mandy Knight. The totals received within this accounting year are £316 for membership and £963 in donations.

1. **Report from the representatives of Lambeth Council**

Polly Freeman read out a report from Kevin Crook (Lambeth Council) on Phase II of the refurbishment of the park – the refurbishing/rebuilding of the green building.

The main points from Kevin Crook’s report:

* The Council has released £200,000 for the building and the area behind it, which the FoVP can supplement by any fundraising it can realise with the help from the Council’s Fundraising Officer.
* A steering group has been set up with the following members: Ed and Julia Gambarini and Polly Freeman will represent the FoVP, while the Lambeth Council representatives will be Councillor Philip Normal, Kevin Crook, Michael Wynne (Client-side capital lead), Theresa Hoare, James Monteith, Kevin Wallace, and the Project Manager from the Capital Studio – possibly Rob Kelly. As everyone will not be able to make the meetings, there will be a smaller core group.
* The project manager will pull together costed options for full/partial demolition, new modular building vs. refurbishing existing, and commission playground designs from manufacturers.
* The steering group will agree on what the building should include and may set a budget for the playground

Polly Freeman explained the current green building included an area for the mothers and babies’ group but this had moved elsewhere within the borough. The rest of the building includes tool sheds for Community Payback (now vacant) and the FoVP and an area including a toilet for the gardener Martin Little.

The provisional phase II plan includes a kiosk, serving just tea and coffee, which Ardian, and Mimoza of Parco Café will be given the opportunity to run. There would be space for Martin including a toilet and basic kitchen, one toilet facing into the park for general park users, one facing into the playground for children and their carers including baby changing facilities, secure area for storing FoVP equipment. There will be no community space in the future and the building will be smaller. The work might start on the building by next summer.

1. **Election of Trustees**

Charles King-Farlow explained that, as required by the FoVP constitution, after each AGM three trustees retire but may offer themselves up for re-election. The three trustees to retire at this meeting are Faith Boardman, Matthew Gwyther, and Charles King-Farlow and all three are seeking re-election. In addition, Doone Roisin has been put forward as a trustee. John Roome asked the members to vote on agreeing to elect the four trustees en bloc and everyone voted in favour. He then asked the members to vote on the single resolution and the members voted in favour of re-electing/electing the four trustees.

The full list of trustees are as follows:

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| --- | --- |
| John Roome (Chair) | Charles King-Farlow |
| Polly Freeman | Tessa King-Farlow |
| Lyn Woodcraft (Treasurer)  | Louise Norwood |
| Faith Boardman | Doone Roisin |
| Matthew Gwyther |  |

Robert Hardwood asked if a member could be a committee member but not a Trustee and Charles King-Farlow explained that there is no difference between committee members and trustees. Only Trustees could be committee members under the rules of the FoVP constitution following the change in 2016 to a charitable incorporated organisation to qualify for gift aid and limit the liability of the trustees.

Robert Hardwood asked if becoming a limited liability organisation would mean submitting annual accounts to Company House. Charles King-Farlow said this was not the case as the FoVP constitution is a standard Charity Commission Incorporated Organisation. The document constituting the FOVP uses the word “Trustees” for individuals who are effectively the board of directors responsible for running the charity.

**9 Any Other Business**

**Big Wheelie Bins**: JR reported on an email received by Peter Bolevyle regarding the rubbish around the bins every morning and evening. Peter proposed 1,100-litre wheelie bins should be placed at the exits on South Lambeth Road. However, the consensus of the room was that bigger bins attract more rubbish. The meeting discussed whether colourful signage on the bins asking people to take home their rubbish if overflowing would work. Polly Freeman said it had not worked in the past, but we will try again, and put signs on the picnic tables as well.

Polly Freeman explained the waste collections during the summer occur on Saturday and Sunday, when Martin Little is not there, but are not as frequent in the winter.

**Trustees:** John Roome reminded members that if anyone wishes to join as a Trustee to let him know. The committee meets three or four times a year. There can be up to twelve trustees.

**Temporary borders for new planting areas**: Veronika Tugendraich Garwolinkski asked if there has been any solution to children treading on planting areas in the playground and climbing trees. Polly Freeman said that much of the behaviour had been due to the lockdown, and things are now calming down and not happening as much. The small fence around the model village had been successful in directing children where they could play without damaging the planting. Therefore, the FoVP will consider putting a temporary border to areas that need protecting.

Polly Freeman thanked John Roome for what he has brought as Chair of the FoVP.

John Roome thanked everyone for attending.