**FRIENDS Of
VAUXHALL PARK**



Draft minutes of the Friends of Vauxhall Park’s AGM on Saturday 25 June 2022 held at 10.30 a.m. at St Anne and All Saints Church Hall, Miles Street, LondonSW8 1RL

Present:

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| Trustees |  | Friends and others |
| John Roome (Chair)Polly FreemanTessa King FarlowCharles King FarlowLouise NorwoodMatthew GwytherFaith Boardman (through the Internet) |  | Jill GregsonSusan SmithCouncillor Isla WrathmellCouncillor Martin BaileyLaura JaegerRob JaegerSarah MacDonaldJim McCrossanMitra Gyn?Mandy knight |

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Liam Jarnecki, Lyn Woodcraft, Helen Monger, Charles Vyvyan, Sarah Chambers, Robert Harwood, Marguerite Wong, and Jane Wenlock.

John Roome welcomed Councillors Martin Bailey and Isla Wrathmell to the meeting.

1. Minutes of the last meeting

These were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

1. Matters Arising

The only matter arising is the subject of trustees, and this is taken under agenda item 9.

1. Chair’s report and future park activities.

The last AGM was eight months ago in November, this meant the accounts were out of the synch by a year, so we have decided to hold this and future AGMs at this time of year.

*The key positives since the last AGM*

These include:

* *Exemplar Park*: Ian Ross, Head of Parks and Leisure for Lambeth Council, said on a recent visit to the park that Vauxhall Park was an exemplar park for the borough.
* *The massive effort by volunteers*. Volunteers spent 300 hours over seventeen volunteer sessions during 2022. In addition, there has been ad hoc gardening by Tessa King-Farlow, Charles King-Farlow, and Jill Gregson.
* *Conservation.* There are eight bird boxes and three bat boxes.
* *Management of the tennis courts*. Club Spark, part of the Lawn Tennis Association, has taken over the booking system for the courts and a new keypad system for court access is imminent.
* *Parco Café***: T**he cafécontinues to be a major success no doubt helped by Tessa King-Farlow making it a more welcoming area with potted plant designs and the FoVP maintenance of the beds on both sides of the café.

Since the local elections in May, the park has moved into the new Vauxhall Ward. John Roome and Polly Freeman met with one of the new councillors, Liam Jarnecki, to brief him on our activities. This change of ward has confused people, but Councillor Martin Bailey explained the re-arrangement of the Ward map was not straightforward.

*Phase One Refurbishment*

The Trustees continued to work with Lambeth Council on clearing the outstanding items from the snagging list. The major items that have been cleared since the last AGM are:

* The installation of cables in the knee-high fences around the flower beds outside Fawcett Garden. These help to keep the dogs out of the beds.
* The recent painting of the tennis courts.
* The commissioning and turning on of the drinking fountains.
* The planting of additional trees.

However, there are some key items that remain unresolved and there are several that we must accept will not happen due to a lack of funding. The main items we still hope to resolve are:

* Replacement of the vandalised equipment in the children’s playground: John Roome and Polly Freeman have escalated this issue with Claire Holland, Leader of Lambeth Council for funding to fix this problem which is estimated to cost £18,000
* The bike rack between the children’s playground and the conservation area fence: Footballs keep going into the conservation area, which has prevented the planting until 2023.

Unfortunately, Martin Little, the park’s gardener broke his arm on 20 May and is unlikely to return until August/September. Since his absence, there has been no replacement for his activities other than litter picking and maintenance of the water fountain. While we were helped by the wet period in early summer, the current dry, hot weather has meant we need Lambeth Council support for regular watering, otherwise, the park will suffer damage, and trees and plants will die. In addition, Martin’s absence has led to an increase in anti-social behaviour. The trustees have raised this concern with the Council, which resulted in Ian Ross visiting the park on 20 June, to determine how best to cover Martin. No action has been taken. In addition, Lambeth removed the Community payback people for health and safety reasons, which is a shame as at least they could have helped with the watering.

The meeting discussed how the friends could help with the watering given that the park hose is heavy as well as the issue of who would be liable if the hose causes an accident. Laura Jaeger and Sarah MacDonald volunteered to do some watering and agreed to meet John Roome at the Green Building after the meeting so he could explain the equipment and hand over the keys. **(ACTION: JOHN ROOME//LAURA JAEGER/SARAH MACDONALD**).

Other suggestions included:

* whether one of the two gardeners at Larkhill Park could be moved temporarily to Vauxhall Park until Martin’s return.
* Involving local schools to adopt a tree.
* Asking people passing the ornamental fountain to remove any twigs from the fountain base.

John Roome agreed to raise the matter with Claire Holland, failing that Florence Eshalomi MP. **(ACTION: JOHN ROOME)**

Previously mentioned at the last meeting, Lambeth will be withdrawing funding for Martin probably by end of their financial year in April 2023. The meeting discussed ideas on how funds could be found to cover Martin such as approaching the developers of the skyscrapers. Unfortunately, Vauxhall Park is not within the Vauxhall BID area so the levy raised on businesses cannot be spent in Vauxhall Park. Martin Bailey reported that there is a discussion going on about whether this anomaly should be rectified, given that Vauxhall Park is now in Vauxhall Ward.

*Future activities*

*Awards:* The London Bloom award assessment has been pushed back to 14 July due to the rail strike. Matthew Gwyther with the help of Polly Freeman is putting together the application for the Green Heritage Prize, part of the Green Flag Scheme, the award is supported by Historic England and relates to local sites of importance. Matthew Gwyther explained that his line in the application will be the role of women in the creation of the park. Sadly, many of the historic items in the park were destroyed in the 1950s.

*Lavender harvests*. For the first time since it was planted, the FoVP plans to harvest the lavender over a weekend in September.

John Roome ended his report by thanking the volunteers and Martin.

1. Phase II works

Polly Freeman and Faith Boardman are part of the steering group for the next phase of the project to deliver a new building. Polly Freeman reported that Lambeth Council has agreed that the project will demolish the existing building and replace it with a new sustainable building half its size. The project will also redesign the play area for children under five at the back of the building, but this will not be funded by the Council

The new building will be a wooden-clad building with sustainable features. It will include a kiosk with a canopy serving light refreshments including tea and coffee etc, which we hope Ardian and Mimoza of Parco Café will be asked to run. There would be space for Martin including a toilet, a basic kitchen, and a secure store for his tools, one toilet facing into the park for general park users, one facing into the playground for children and their carers including baby changing facilities and a secure area for storing FoVP equipment.

Polly Freeman reported that the provisioning schedule for phase two is that Lambeth will put in a planning application and demolish the current building in September, start the build in the Spring and open in summer. While the building is being removed the cement plinth it sits on will remain as it will be the base for the new building and the kiosk seating area. A budget of £200k has been allocated by Lambeth to the building part of the project but Polly Freeman thinks this will be insufficient

The play area will be funded by monies raised by FOVP. Polly Freeman will be applying to Lambeth’s Changing Lives Fund. Once the costs are known, the FoVP can start fundraising. The design will be specifically for the under-fives and neurodiverse children,

1. Receipt of annual reports and accounts (year ended 31 October 2021 and current financial position.

John Roome reported that income had increased from £1,313.11 in 2020 to £1,657.30 in 2021. Expenditure also increased due to the one-off successful opening of the park financed by the FoVP, which cost £ 4,645.17 but was well worth it, bringing expenditure by year-end to £5,581.12. Cash position in 2021 was £33,927 down from previous years. The FoVP expenditure from these funds are spent on materials and plants.

**7** Membership report.

The FoVP has eighty-two members, the same as last year. Membership income is £1,300 so an increase is due to an increase in donations.

8 Report from Lambeth Council

Unfortunately, no one from the Parks Department from Lambeth Council was able to attend the meeting or provide a report.

9 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. However, one trustee, Doone Roisin has resigned as she is returning to Australia, so only two trustees retire at this meeting, and they are John Roome and Louise Norwood. Charles King Farlow proposed their re-election, and this was seconded by Tessa King-Farlow and following a vote of the Friends both were re-elected.

John Roome asked if anyone else would like to become a trustee. Jim McCrossan said he was interested but would like time to consider it. Charles King-Farlow invited Mr McCrossan to the next Trustee’s meeting. Laura Jaeger and Sarah McDonald also expressed an interest and John Roome will discuss it further with Laura and Sarah. **(ACTION: JOHN ROOME/MANDY KNIGHT**)

John Roome requested a committee meeting of Trustees to be arranged before the end of July. **(ACTION: MANDY KNIGHT)**

10 Any Other Business

* *Fields in Trust Competition for UK’s Favourite Parks 2022*: Polly Freeman asked everyone to vote for Vauxhall Park. In this competition. Polly will post details on the FoVP’s social media. **(ACTION: POLLY FREEMAN/FRIENDS)**
* *Sponsorship of benches:* PF said the park now has enough benches and they look good. However, she has decided to shut the scheme down as the park now has enough benches. PF asked members to think of other ideas for sponsorship. **(ACTION: FRIENDS)**

Jill Gregson asked those present for a vote of thanks to the trustees for all the hard work during the past year. John Roome thanked Revd Fraser Dyer for the free use of the church’s hall.