

Draft Minutes

Friends of Kennington Park AGM Held at Durning Library Tuesday 5th September 2023

Apologies

Six FoKP members and one Trustee sent apologies; 5 members signed a Proxy Form.

Voting

Marietta reminded the meeting that only current members were eligible to vote.

1. Welcome and Chair's Annual Report for 2022/2023

The Chair, Marietta Crichton Stuart, welcomed everyone to the AGM, highlighting the fact that papers had been published on the website a week in advance of the meeting to give everybody the opportunity to read them and to reduce paper usage. A leaflet celebrating the successful 2023 Kennington Park Festival held in July was distributed at the meeting.

In the introduction to her report Marietta noted that FoKP had now `come of age`, having been founded 21 years ago. She reflected on the many improvements over this period and announced that the park had won its 13th successive Green Flag and received a further 2 Gold Awards from London in Bloom. She also highlighted the progress, and problems, with the Capital Programme particularly the successful opening of an excellent new children's playground. She added that she had also hoped to have celebrated the replacement of the old toilet building in the playground for new purpose-built facilities, acknowledging that the poor condition of the toilets was always identified by users as a high priority for improvement. She explained that, together, FoKP and Lambeth Landscapes had developed and submitted proposals for new facilities to be opened as part of the playground schedule. This goal met an unexpected problem when the Conservation Officer in the Council's Planning Dept. declared that the preservation of the building had priority over the condition and suitability of the toilet facility. He insisted that we should refurbish the existing blocks and preserve the buildings. This had already been explored and rejected because the cost was significant and the only refurbishment possible resulted in a less-satisfactory solution which failed to address some of the major concerns about current abuses to the facilities. A further submission is now being made to try to overcome the objections. Marietta stated that FoKP are determined to secure 21st century toilets and, if necessary, will start a public campaign to secure this.

As well as being FoKP's 21st birthday, 2023 is the 175th anniversary of the Monster Chartist Rally. To mark this important historical event a Chartist Audio Trail based around 5 sites in the park has been created. Designed and presented by members of the Committee the Trail describes key events which occurred on 10th April 1848. It is available on the website and can be accessed in the park through posters displaying a QR code. Later this year we hope to have more permanent markers and an explanatory display board.

The recent projects, and emerging ideas, show that the work of FoKP is future-focused, concentrated on continuing to create improved facilities and on developing new activities and events. This year we again organised an Easter Egg Hunt, the Kennington Park Festival and many informative park walks, including a Dawn Chorus event starting at 5am! The focus on continued improvement is also based

around strengthening partnerships with local organisations, building stronger relationships with community groups and local businesses to help generate new ideas, support and funding. In the context of funding, Marietta addressed the tricky balance for the Council and for FoKP in supporting commercial events in the park which, while generating much needed income, can create inconvenience to park users and occasional damage to the site. The Burberry Fashion Week Show being a particular example of this during 2022/23.

She thanked Committee members for their continued contribution reminding the meeting that a lot of work fell on a small team of volunteers and highlighted the importance keeping up the pressure on Lambeth Council to prioritise further improvements to the park despite the financial challenges it faces. She paid tribute to the work of parks staff and managers, noting the departure of Ian Ross, the Parks Manager, with whom we had developed a good working relationship on many key issues. She paid particular tribute to Reece, the member of the Lambeth team who is most frequently responsible for the condition of the park and who daily faces a mountain of litter.

Marietta thanked Nikki Smiton for all her work as a committee member and Trustee over many years. Nikki had decided to stand down as a committee member earlier in the year and more recently as a trustee due to work and family commitments.

As always, the critical role of volunteers, had been a key factor in FoKP's success especially in relation to the flower garden and the war memorial plants. Marietta acknowledged the excellent contribution of Ruth Morgan in leading the gardening session and the generous financial support given by one of our members in funding Ruth's time. She referred to plans for possible future events, a dog show and tree hugging in the Autumn, an art event in the Spring and summer music sessions. All these will require careful planning and effective management and volunteers are being sought to help deliver them.

A copy of the full report can be found on the FoKP website.

2. `Minutes` of the 2022 AGM and matters arising

The minutes from the 2022 meeting were submitted for approval. **Rachel Papps Williams** proposed that they be accepted and was seconded by **Andrew Horsler**. The meeting approved the minutes and there were no matters arising.

3. Financial Report

The Treasurer, Vilde Aagenaes, had prepared the accounts for the period April 2022 to 31st March 2023 and a draft set of accounts are on the website along with the other AGM papers. Vilde was unable to attend the meeting as she is overseas, but confirmed that the accounts had now been approved by the Auditors and so will signed and submitted to The Charity Commission as required. The Acting Treasurer Sonia Wilson summarised the current financial position as being very healthy due to corporate and individual donations, including one of £5k, increased membership numbers and good events budgeting despite higher expenditure on some activities eg the Chartist Audio Trail, the 20th anniversary edition of Parklife and events such as the Festival.

The accounts were proposed for acceptance by **Jill Gregson** and seconded by **Jill Johnston**. The meeting voted to approve the accounts.

4. Election of Office Holders and Committee for 2022/23

The Secretary briefly took over the management of the AGM and asked the meeting to agree to the re-appointment of Marietta Crichton Stuart as the Chair. This was proposed by **Rob Pateman** and seconded by **Brenda Wheeler**. The meeting unanimously agreed to Marietta's re-election.

The re-appointed Chair then advised the meeting that all the committee had agreed to stand again and said that election would be through a block vote. This was proposed by **Rob Pateman** and seconded by **Kate Belcheva**. The meeting unanimously agreed to the re-election of the committee.

The full committee for 2022/2023 is therefore:

Name	Post
Marietta Crichton Stuart	Chair
Rita Sammons	Secretary
Vilde Aagenaes	Treasurer
Marnie Searchwell	Committee Member
Mark Engel	Committee Member
Alison Liepmann	Committee Member
Sonia Wilson	Committee Member

5. Trustees' Report to The Charity Commission

Rita Sammons outlined the purpose of the report as being to demonstrate that the FoKP is meeting its obligations as a charity and delivering on its objectives. She started her presentation by reminding the meeting of the Charitable Purpose (Object) for FoKP. She added that inevitably much of the content of the Trustees' Report was similar to that of the Chair's Annual Report, covering as it did activities, events, awards, the capital programme, etc.

Rita then advised the meeting that there was a difficult issue to consider on this occasion, relating to the proposed removal of a Trustee who had failed to attend meetings and respond to any communication about events, information, policy and activities. The person concerned is Colin Hunte, who had previously been a Committee Member but whose FoKP membership had been terminated because of failure to pay his fees. This prevented him from staying on the Committee, but he opted to continue as a Trustee. Colin was one of the initial Trustees, but during the last year has played almost no part in FoKP nor met the obligations of trusteeship. At the last meeting of the Trustees it was agreed that, given the circumstances, steps would be taken to secure his removal as a Trustee although he would be given a final opportunity to explain why he had not played an active role. The FoKP Secretary therefore wrote to Colin at the end of July to advise him of the position and to give him the required time period, as stated in the Constitution, to respond identifying any mitigating circumstances. The deadline was 18th August, but no response was received. In the correspondence he was advised that if no reply was received, a proposal to remove him as a trustee would be put to the AGM, the date of which had been previously advised to him.

Rita advised that there is a requirement for the Trustees' Report to include a Public Benefit Statement, which this year the Trustees have defined as follows:

FoKP continues to act in accordance with the required protocols and legislation (required by the Charity Commission). This means that there is appropriate decision making and recording of decisions, and there are protocols and policies in place. These ensure that:

- money is appropriately spent, managed, and reported.
- decisions are made through the committee process and in accordance with our charitable purpose.
- the interest of the park and its users are at the heart of our decision-making and actions.

In relation to **Item 6 of the Agenda**; Rita advised that the removal of Colin Hunte as a Trustee and the resignation of Nikki Smiton, meant that there was no further requirement for any other Trustee to stand down for this year. The required protocol is that one third of the Trustees must stand down each year. All who stand down are allowed to seek re-election immediately and serve for a further 3 years. Trustees can only serve for a maximum of 9 years.

The remaining Trustees were all present at the meeting and were introduced.

- Marietta Crichton Stuart,
- Marnie Searchwell,
- Rita Sammons,
- Rachel Papps Williams
- Andrew Horsler

Rita finished her report by saying that FoKP would continue to look for new Trustees and new committee members so nominations would be very welcome.

The report, the recommendation regarding the removal of Colin Hunte and the continued appointment of the remaining trustees was endorsed by the meeting, having been proposed by **Nicola Brooker** and seconded by **Rob Pateman**.

6. Covered as part of item 5

7. Any Other Business

There was no further AGM business.

The formal part of the AGM was declared closed by Marietta at 8.07pm

Rob Pateman proposed a **vote of thanks** to the committee and Trustees for all their work and this was endorsed by a round of applause.

Special Presentation - Tribute to Gordon Johnston CB 1933 – 2023

Marietta and Rob Pateman led tributes to Gordon Johnston who died a few weeks before this meeting. Gordon had been a long-term supporter of FoKP – he was involved in the early days and subsequently became the Chair in 2006 devoting a very generous amount of his time to the work of FoKP and to making sure that others, such as Lambeth Council and TfL, met their obligations. He was very proud of securing the first Green Flag for the park in 2011. He was closely involved with the development of the Council's 10-year Master Plan for the park published in 2012 and in particular in raising substantial funding from the National Lottery for the restoration of the flower garden. He was also instrumental in securing other funding for table tennis tables, the fitness area, etc and established good links with many organisations, including the Lambeth Parks Forum where he played a pivotal role for a number of years. Even after he was no longer formally involved with the committee Gordon continued to be actively interested in all events and activities, frequently emailing committee members and park managers with reminders of work to be done, priorities to

be managed. He was a very generous supporter of the volunteer gardening sessions over an extended period. In 2010, funding for a rose bed of Guys Gold roses was donated by him and Jill to mark their 50th wedding anniversary. Guy's being significant because that is where Jill did her training.

Marietta spoke of the delight of Gordon and her in designing new gates for the St Agnes Park entrance as part of the flower garden development in which it was possible to incorporate bats and bees into the design.

Gordon's contribution to the success of FoKP and the park was immense, and he will be sadly missed.

The meeting concluded at 8.35pm

Rita Sammons
FoKP Secretary
September 2023