**Friends of Waterlow Park FoWP AGM Thursday 16 July 2020**

**Via Zoom Webinar**

13 attendees plus the six committee members.

Welcome from **Chair, Fiona Murphy,** who thanked Rachel Lock for hosting the Zoom webinar.

**The keynote speech** (a recorded video) was given by **Sir Christopher Waterlow** who is the great, great grandson of Sir Sydney Waterlow. Sir Christopher began by thanking Friends for their dedication to the welfare of the Park and how delighted Sir Sydney would be to know that, 130 years after his original gift, the Park continues to be so well used, appreciated and maintained.

Sir Christopher gave a brief outline of the derivation of the family name and the origin of the family from North-East France. They were Huguenots and were based near Roubaix. They fled from persecution and eventually came to London where the family set up a printing business, Waterlow and Sons, in the City.

Sir Sydney followed a career in the family printing business and eventually became Lord Mayor of London and a Member of Parliament.

He is best remembered as a philanthropist involving himself in the setting up of housing and hospitals. He donated Waterlow Park to the people as ‘a garden for the gardenless’.

On his tombstone is written ‘Here lies one who loved his fellow men’.

**Meeting Agenda**

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of AGM 16 May 2019
3. Chair’s Report Highlights
4. Annual Accounts
5. Elections to Committee
6. AOB & Close

**Apologies (none?)**

**Minutes from 2019 AGM proposed and accepted. These minutes along with the detailed annual reports were published on the website in June 2020**

**Chair (Fiona Murphy) Report for 1 May 2019 – 30 April 2020.**

FoWP now has a new website with new content. FM encouraged members to add suggestions for the website via the website content form.

The new petanque pitch was installed in September 2019 and was closed in March 2020 because of Covid-19 lockdown however it was re-opened at the beginning of July 2020 and is gaining in popular use.

During 2019 the FoWP committee’s idea of limited areas of the Park for BBQ use was adopted by Camden.

Volunteer gardeners assemble on Thursday mornings to maintain certain areas of the Park. During the last year a bluebell dell had been established with the planting of over a thousand bluebell bulbs. This was done with help from Deutsche Bank who donated funds and a group of corporate, volunteer gardeners.

No fundraising concert was held in 2019.

Last February there was a successful FoWP trip to two gardens - Bennington Lordship Garden, famous for its snowdrops, and the Cambridge University Botanic Garden to see its winter planting.

The FoWP stall at the 2019 Fair in the Square mounted a very successful plant sale and the autumn and spring bulb sales also did very well and swelled FoWP funds.

 Membership subscriptions provide the basis of FoWP funding as do the annual concert and the plant sales.

The Mini-Lark in the Park has had to be cancelled for this year because of the pandemic.

The committee hopes that membership of the Friends will grow and, to that end, is mounting a membership drive.

Fiona thanked the committee for their work for the FoWP.

**Accounts Report – Treasurer Marcia Beer.**

The FoWP accounts are in a healthy state thanks to the members and their subscriptions and the generosity of donors, despite the downturn in income largely from no concert in 2019. The horticulture volunteers also swell the funds with the sale of plants and bulbs. The Friends fund has been used to help with the construction of the petanque pitch and possible future expenditure on repairs to the Park statuary is planned.

The end of the year balance is almost £12,500. Full accounts can be accessed on the website in the Friends section.

**Elections to FoWP Committee.** There are spaces on the committee for three new members.

The committee needs a new treasurer and also a committee member who has good social media skills especially in relation to websites.

**Questions from the floor**

**Catherine Wells (Chair of TAG)** gave a vote of thanks to the Park volunteers and particularly April Cameron who has done intensive watering during lockdown. Catherine also asked April if she would consider leading a walk around the Park to explain and discuss planting.

CW asked what the current situation is about the proposed provision of table tennis. She also praised the new website. Fiona responded with the idea of the addition of a suggestion box on the website.

**Patricia Walby (Horticulture Volunteer)** suggested that as a month’s Zoom webinar has been paid for there was a possibility of organizing another Gardeners’ Question Time with April Cameron, Peter Reader and Patricia Walby, all of whom are garden designers. They would provide recommendations for redesigning gardens focussing on structure, focal points, foliage contrast, sun/shade plants etc. and also make suggestions for planting and managing window boxes window boxes, balconies and patio pots.

**Louise Lewis (**Membership Officer)

The Friends would like to encourage new members especially from the under sixties. And would like to have members from a wider demographic reflecting Park users. There are three committee member vacancies. Volunteers? Proposals?

 **Fiona Murphy (Chair)**

Asked for suggestions for the Park.

**Laure Duhot** thanked volunteer gardeners on behalf of Lauderdale House. She personally welcomed the settingup of the petanque pitch and hoped for table tennis soon.

**Benn Keaveney (Chief Executive of Mind West London)**

Noted the benefit of the use of open spaces to those with mental health problems. He encouraged members of the Friends to consider ways in which the Park could be projected towards those with mental health needs. Benn could ask fund Manager (Mind in Camden) for information on funding for this kind of project.

He also suggested that the tarmac might have one or two basketball nets (joint funded with Mind?)

**Catherine Wells** responded that Camden has a project for ‘health in parks’ which is linked to the National Trust. She also referred to a new mental health development nearby.

CW asked how we can ensure that the Park remains a good space for the gardenless and noted that currently there are many gym groups using the Park without permission. She asked if there was a way FoWP could prevent damage to trees by gym users attaching ropes etc.

**Fiona Murphy** replied that there had been a multiplication of Park users during lockdown. The Friends had lobbied Camden to ensure that the Park remained open during the lockdown.

How do we see the Park 50 years from now? The Committee is considering this question.

**Ian Henghes**

Would FoWP consider establishing Friendship Benches?

**Louise Lewis**

The Highgate Mental Health Hospital uses the Park on a daily basis. LL suggested individual Park chairs arranged 2 metres apart.

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