**Friends of Waterlow Park (FoWP) Report to TAG for the period**

**22 May - 08 October 2021**

**EVENTS**

**AGM 24 June 2021 at LUX.**

An al fresco AGM took place in LUX’s delightful garden, with keynote speaker Ian Dungavell CEO of Friends of Highgate Cemetery updating us on progress and near announcement of the winners of the architectural competition. The AGM Report is on the FoWP website. The Friends also hosted an annual report from TAG as part of the AGM and a chance for Sir Christopher Waterlow to sell his new biography of Sir Sydney. The Friends later obtained a page and a half spread on the book in the Camden New Journal. A delegates’ snack box by Pink was available for all guests. Attendance was much better than previous years. A presentation was made to recenty retired Park Ranger Dave Humphrys in recognition of his long service in Camden and to the Park. A special thanks goes to LUX for their hospitality and setting up the stage and seating for the outdoor presentation.

The first Summer season of free Pop-Up Proms in the Waterlow Park North Pavilion went ahead from 1 August to 19 September with a second grant of £750 from Camden Community Festival Fund, otherwise funded by The Friends and staffed by the garden volunteers and committee. The weather wasn’t very kind and audiences ranged between 50 to 200 each Sunday. Concerts lasted about an hour; the line-up was very varied from Classical to Steel band to Eastern European. Camden Events were very pleased with the initiative and may well up their grant if we go ahead again next year. Considerable thanks go to committee members Patricia Walby, aided by Ginnie Ciummings, for putting on the eight concerts. A large pic and caption appeared in the Ham and High publicising the concerts.

For the July Highgate Festival FoWP provided an art installation in the park aviary displaying birds common to the park, with links to their birdsong. This arose out of Helen Rapley’s idea for a bird feature in the aviary. It probably took about as much work as the concerts and again was down to Patricia Walby and helpers, with artwork donated by two art teachers, Jess Copsey and Oona Brown from Glasgow School of Art.

**Horticulture**

A bulb sale will be held tomorrow (9 October) on the Lauderdale House lawn to raise funds for park planting. Nearly £6,000 was raised (before costs) through plant and bulb sales in the financial year to 30 April 2021.

**BIODIVERSITY**

The Biodiversity Group works with Jevaughn Bailey (Camden) and Greg Hitchcock, Camden  Conservation Officer. The Audit of the plant types in the park and their contribution to biodiversity has started. A map with a grid has been devised by Ian H to help with the process and volunteers are being sought.

Meanwhile we note that Camden aimed to publish a borough-wide Biodiversity report in early 2021. We hope re. Waterlow Park this will include closing access to the wildlife area around the Upper Pond next year for its plant recovery.

**PARK AMENITIES**

Following our recommendation that the toilet block be fully opened to the public this Summer we were pleased to see this happen. We still would like to hear if and when Camden plans to modernise the toilets.

We would like to ask Camden today if the suggestion of creating disabled access to the Swain’s Lane gateway is likely to be undertaken in 2021/22.

Restoration of the drinking water fountains is already with TAG for action; could we ask for a report on progress?

**SPORT**

Happily idverde has now agreed to resurface the Petanque pitch thanks to efforts by Camden. No progress has been made on a decision about installing basketball nets.

**STATUARY**

The repair and cleaning of the shepherd and shepherdess statues and the eagles, to be funded by FoWP, has been put on hold since 2020 but we understand since some of our committee met with Camden and their specialists there is now a new survey on what works are permissible. We have obtained a quote of £15,000 for cleaning and restoring Sir Sydney’s statue. Could we ask Camden if they can improve on that? We would consider fundraising for the works, once we have the OK to go ahead.

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FoWP/Reports/FB/081021