**Minutes of Friends of Waterlow Park AGM 24 July 2021 held in Lux Garden, Waterlow Park Centre**

42 Friends present.

Welcome from the Chair, Fiona Murphy who also thanked Ben Cook of Lux for facilitating the face-to-face meeting outside in the garden of Lux and for providing sound and screen equipment.

For the first time the Friends of Waterlow Park AGM meeting included a report from TAG.

Sir Christopher Waterlow was there to sell and sign his book on the life of his great-great-great grandfather, Sir Sydney Waterlow. There was also a FoWP plant sale.

Fiona Murphy introduced the keynote speaker, Dr. Ian Dungavell, CEO of Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust who is an architectural historian and conservationist. His talk was titled *Highgate Cemetery: A Landscape for the 21st Century*.

Much of Ian’s talk centred on the competition for a re-landscaping design and a masterplan for the preservation of the Cemetery to combat the effects of climate change, self-seeded trees, and age-related decay. The winner of the competition is due to be announced soon.

Questions from the floor included - Highgate Cemetery and its policy on biodiversity, as well as questions on tree preservation and conservation of the grave monuments.

**FoWP Committee.**

No apologies – all the current committee members were present. FoWP is looking for new committee members.

**Minutes for the 2020 AGM proposed by ? and accepted.**

**The TAG Repo**rt was introduced by Oliver Jones, Head of Green Spaces in Camden and a member of the **T**rust **A**dvisory **G**roup for Waterlow Park. He explained that the Trust is a registered charity with income from the tennis courts and the buildings within the Park. He announced that Sue Tatum has resigned as chair of TAG.

Catherine Wells (TAG committee member and representative of the Dartmouth Park Neighbourhood Forum) spoke on behalf of TAG and explained that as TAG does not hold an AGM and that she welcomed the opportunity to explain TAG’s function. Ian Henghes is acting chair and all on the committee are volunteers except for Gabi Howard (Camden). Fiona Murphy and April Cameron represent the Friends of Waterlow Park. Catherine explained that TAG is a think tank for the Waterlow Park Trust and Camden, it does not oversee Park detail. Issues such as trees and views and signage within Waterlow Park and TCV and Idverde are within its remit. The TAG website has an online tracker to flag current issues within the Park.

TAG is currently looking for a secretary.

**Chair’s Report.**

During the Covid lockdowns the footfall in Waterlow Park was enormously increased, with many people discovering the Park for the first time.

Fiona began by describing the function of the Friends of Waterlow Park and that the membership subscription (still only £5 a year) helps to support the Park’s upkeep and give sense of involvement with the needs of the public and its relationship to Waterlow Park as well as representing Friends views. This involvement provides a hub of support for FoWP activities and especially fundraising. However, because of Covid, the usual FoWP fund raising activities have been cancelled during 2020-21 and fundraising has been largely through plant and bulb sales. The dedicated FoWP gardeners, who grow the plants for these sales, have raised nearly £4000.

**The website**

***www.waterlowpark.org.uk* i**s run by the Friends and is the only dedicated site for Waterlow Park. It not only gives information to anyone wanting to explore the park and what it has to offer, it gives a two-way dialogue with all park users. In the last year it has had further improvements.

**Park survey**

An important initiative during the last year was the publishing of a Park Survey – a professional on-line survey of Park user’s views.

The Results are published on the Friends website and highlighted in the full annual report. This new year FoWP will get back to the things it had already vowed to do, such as pressing on with a biodiversity survey of the whole park, restoring major statues, and doing other things that the answers to FoWP survey showed the public/users would like to see happen.

The FoWP are still intending to organize small groups of musicians staging pop-up music concerts in the park during the summer months. These will take place with the help of two grants awarded by Camden for this purpose. The concerts were scheduled for last winter, but Covid restrictions did not allow them to take place.

Fiona pointed out that the Park is fundamentally a large garden of 26 acres and reported that all through the three lockdowns the Gardening Volunteers – and sometimes corporates - toiled away every week (with just a break in the winter). Fiona emphasized that theborders that they help to maintain look stunning. The FoWP is fortunate to have two horticulturists, April Cameron and Patricia Walby, on the committee who, with the help of volunteers, help with the maintenance of Park planting. During the year they were laying plans to build raised flower beds at the back of Lauderdale House and the results can now be seen. The FoWP applied for, and won, a grant from the Metropolitan Gardens Association for the materials and plants. This grant as well as some very welcome personal donations, helped to cover the costs.

**Treasurer’s Report.**

**Marcia Beer**, the current treasurer, explained that FoWP expenditure for this year was much as usual but, because of Covid, income was much reduced.

The Friends’ financial position was much healthier this year in spite of disruption arising from the pandemic, and this was mainly due to the extremely successful plant and bulb sales, the generosity of donors and the success of committee members in attracting grant income. Membership subscriptions and additional donations from members old and new helped to increase total income by over £5,000 compared with the previous year.

Expenditure in the year under review was comparable to the 2019-20 level but this is partly because the accounts do not yet fully reflect the Friends’ major project which was completed late in May. The refurbishment of the raised beds by Lauderdale House was mainly financed through donations from two members and a grant of almost £500 From the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association.

There were also delays to plans which are still in the pipeline, such as repairs to some statuary. We hope that grant income already received from Camden will be used later in the summer for music in the park on Sundays.

The balance going forward into 2021-22 is therefore just over £15,000.

----------------------------------------------

April Cameron proposed the adoption of the Treasurer’s Report and Catherine Wells seconded.

**Elections to Committee.**

Three FoWP officers due for re-election:

**April Cameron (Deputy Chair)**

Proposed: Ceridwen Roberts and seconded by Carole Machin.

**Fiona Murphy (Chair)**

Proposed by Carole Machin and seconded by Ceridwen Roberts.

**Patricia Walby (Horticulture)**

Proposed by Mary Betts and seconded by Rita Drobner.

Finally, there was a presentation of a gift to Dave Humphrys, who retired this April after 30 (50?) years as Park Ranger. Dave told us that he was putting together stories about Camden Parks which he hopes to publish. He considers Waterlow Park the jewel among Camden Parks.

Fiona gave a final thanks to Ben Cook of Lux for hosting the meeting.

**The meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.**