

Draft Minutes of Friends of Waterlow Park AGM 15-6-22 at 7.p.m. held at Lux.

Attendance: 25 members and 6 committee members. Apologies for absence – Ginnie Cumming (committee member), Ceridwen Roberts, Catherine Budgett-Meakin (FoWP members)

Fiona Brown, Chair of FoWP, introduced the keynote speaker, **Greg Hitchcock, Nature Conservation Officer for Camden** (policy and planning),

Greg Hitchcock was appointed by Camden in 2020 and previously worked as Conservation Officer for North- West Kent.

His talk focused on the current ecological emergency caused by both global warming and pollution and the value of creating space for nature and recording species numbers to help halt their decline. Greg highlighted Camden's initiative to create wildlife and biodiversity corridors via parks, gardens and cemeteries.

Waterlow Park is a valuable part of the biodiversity corridor network essential for species survival and 'greening the grey'. Camden is working with neighbouring boroughs on this project. The recently formed Waterlow Park Biodiversity Group hopes to provide valuable information towards this goal. Further details are available from the Camden website:

www.camden.gov.uk/wildlife-areas

AGM 2022

Minutes of FoWP AGM 2021 were submitted and accepted.

Chair's report [extracts] The full report is available [here]

Achievements 2021-22

- **The horticulture volunteers worked Mondays and Thursdays** even in deepest winter and through their enormous efforts grew and nurtured plants for sale, raising well over half our gross income for the park.
- **The Shepherd and Shepherdess statues and plinths were given a professional clean.** We campaigned for this project and the work was partially funded by the Friends who contributed £1400. The Eagles are next for a mend and a clean.
- **2021 We added music to the park in the form of eight free concerts in the summer.** A Camden grant helped towards the costs.

In August 2022 FoWP has arranged a further four concerts on Sundays with the help of another grant from Camden.

- **A Biodiversity Survey has started as promised.** Volunteers were invited to contribute by surveying a patch of the park, signing up on the Friends' website.
- **We created an ambitious art and sound installation of park birds** in the disused aviary next to LUX for the Highgate Festival 2021. It is hoped to use this space for future projects.

- **The public toilets this year will receive a serious aesthetic upgrade.** Although announced outside the reported year, we have word from Camden that after our considerable representations this is currently in hand.
- **Petanque** - Idverde has adjusted the pitch (Note, *comments from the floor of the AGM indicate that the surface still needs the addition of fine grit and a heavy roll*).
- **Basketball net** Camden has agreed to a basketball net trial on the lower tennis court.
- **Additional Future Plans**
 Identification labels on trees.
 A disability entrance onto the High Street.
 A drinking water fountain.

Biodiversity

- We have made a start on our biodiversity surveys which record plant species in the park and also some of the invertebrates. More volunteers are needed and would be very welcome. You can find us in the park on most Saturdays, check which days via info@waterlowpark.org.uk on the website and for the link to the full W.P. Biodiversity Report.
- The Biodiversity Group is currently working on drafting a Biodiversity Strategy specific to Waterlow Park.
- **Increase of footfall** in the Park during lockdown has led to new regular Park users. The maintenance of the Park was continued during lockdown by Camden park staff, IdVerde gardeners and FoWP volunteer gardeners.

Public Engagement

- **Public engagement and consultation:** a temporary Nature Education Area was proposed in the small, wooded area in the northeast of the Park while the Upper Pond is closed for a period of regeneration; this received negative responses (some of these based on misinformation) and as a result the proposal has been abandoned.
- **Other Communication**

We do our best to keep members up to date through newsletters, not too many for your sake, and are always there to answer questions and listen to views via the special form on the website. **You are free to address chair@waterlowpark.org.uk or info@waterlowpark.org.uk and it will be forwarded to the appropriate committee member.**

Representing you

As well as all the visible activities, in the background, we maintain a good relationship with Camden, we have two representatives on the Waterlow Park Trust Advisory Group, we maintain the website and a Twitter account to put out FoWP and local announcements, which you can see on the website.

Membership Report

Income from membership subs (and small donations) was up last year by two hundred pounds. With the price of membership at only £5 that's quite an achievement! Interestingly we have over 500 people on our mailing lists but only 170 are members of the Friends (145 paid up for this year). So it would be great if we could convert some of our mailing list subscribers to be fully fledged Friends BUT we are nevertheless pleased to be talking to as many park users as possible, as that is one of our chief objectives: as *'a forum for people to discuss their concerns for and interests in the park'*.

Horticulture

Increase of footfall in Park during lockdown has led to new regular Park users. The maintenance of the Park was continued during lockdown by Camden park staff, IdVerde gardeners and FoWP volunteer gardeners.

Thanks to the two groups of volunteer gardeners who meet on Monday and Thursday mornings the herbaceous borders (shady borders adjacent to the kitchen garden) and the borders in the Lauderdale House Garden as well as the rose garden etc. are planted and tended by the volunteers.

The volunteers also grow seedlings for the regular plant sales that contribute to FoWP funds – gross earnings this year were £4,101.

Kitchen garden reported that there are currently no vacancies for plots but that plot holders are dismayed by the pilfering of produce and suggest locking the garden at night.

New signage in the orchard and kitchen garden has been installed and Camden has promised three new benches in the orchard.

The Upper Pond is temporarily closed for a period of regeneration.

FoWP thanked the Park head gardener, **Mark Walters**, for his work on the Waterlow Park over many years. Mark has moved on and is replaced by **Victor Chinkit**.

Finance Report from the Treasurer, Marcia Beer

The year-end accounts reflected the increased activity during the year. Overall income was £7794 with bulb and plant sales contributing more than £4000 of this total. Subscriptions and generous donations from members and organizations as well as grants for specific projects made up the rest.

The largest item of expenditure [£3754] was on the ambitious series of free concerts in summer 2021. A total of £4097 was directed towards horticultural work in the park and towards raising plants for sale and for use in the park.

The total going forward into 2022-23 is a healthy £14,117 which will provide the resources needed to carry out the activities described in the Chair's presentation. The full Finance report and accounts are available [here](#)

Elections

Ginnie Cumming was re-elected for a second three-year term of office as a Committee Member

Marcia Beer was re-elected for a second three-year term of office as Treasurer

Carole Machin was re-elected for a second three-year term of office as Secretary

The meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.