



Minutes of the Friends of Waterlow Park Annual meeting and AGM 11 JUNE 2025

Fiona Brown (Chair of the Friends) welcomed the members and introduced the **keynote speaker, Professor Jeff Duckett**, a distinguished botanist and research associate at the Natural History Museum who spoke about Waterlow Park, exploring its botanical richness, history and future in the context of climate change. The main themes of his presentation emphasised the variety of the Park's topography and habitats – a 'living landscape':

- Botanical curiosities (ancient coppiced hazels) and hidden histories (possible pre-urban woodland)
- Effects of climate change and air quality legislation leading to increased species of lichen and moths
- Management and planting – mini-forests were critiqued and more wild flower meadow advocated as well as improved signage
- Biodiverse and attractive ponds and wet areas, many of which benefit from protection of fences from the pollution danger if dogs enter the water
- Challenges and hopes for the future – advocated visiting in the early morning to enjoy tranquillity and seasonal changes, stressing the importance of public access, responsible dog ownership, avoidance of litter and respect for the environment which would help ensure the Park remained a haven for both people and wildlife.

Ian Henghes outlined the WP Trust Advisory Group's role as a forum for discussion, coordination and advocacy and gave a short report on its work over the past year. He highlighted:

- Views and heritage protection
- Public art and cultural initiatives
- Development threats and advocacy
- Accessibility and facilities improvements
- Community engagement and participation

Fiona Brown, FoWP Chair, made a presentation which recapped the year in the park in images (view on the website).

Friends of Waterlow Park AGM Attendees: 40

1. Apologies Noted
2. The minutes of the 2024 AGM were presented and approved
3. Annual report of the Friends of Waterlow Park – **Fiona Brown**

Highlights of 2024-5 (full report available on the website)

The Chair opened the AGM by reflecting on a successful year for the Friends of Waterlow Park, emphasizing community engagement, steady financial health, and a range of impactful projects. The group's core mission—supporting the park through fundraising, volunteering, and advocacy—remained central throughout 2024-5. The report covered:

Fundraising and Financial Highlights

Community Events and Volunteer Activities

Heritage and Park Improvements

Barbecue Policy and Park Management

Communications and Outreach

Committee and Governance [see item 5 below]

Looking Ahead and Conclusion

4. Treasurer's report for 2024-25 – Marcia Beer

The accounts were presented [available on the website]

The Friends had another successful year financially. Total income increased by 3 per cent with membership income and donations rising by over a third. But by far the largest part of our funds come from the activity of the energetic band of volunteers as detailed by the Chair. As always, the Friends' committee is very grateful to the volunteers and committee members who organize them and for financial support from members and other park users.

Total income of £9313 was broadly in line with the previous year. Once again Camden Council gave us a grant towards the series of summer concerts from their community fund and we are very pleased that they have continued for 2025 too, allowing us to attract talented young musicians to play for people using the park on August Sunday afternoons.

Rising costs have contributed to increasing expenditure on our activities, but the Friends have been able to almost double the amount invested in new planting around the park (over £2000 last year) and to meet most of the costs of putting on the concerts. Remaining expenditure is composed of smaller items required to ensure the smooth running of the organization and to allow us to participate in local events – these include publicity to inform members and the public about our activities, insurance and office costs.

5. Elections to the FoWP Committee

The FoWP committee structure provides for four officers and up to six other members, with roles spanning events, biodiversity, volunteering, finance, and membership. This year saw the resignation of the long-serving secretary, Carol Machin, creating a vacancy. The Chair thanked her for her considerable contributions over six years.

The constitution allows for committee members to continue after completion of their two terms of office until replacements are found. This is now the situation for 5 of the remaining 6 committee members. This was accepted by the meeting. The Chair encouraged members and/or others interested in joining the committee to make themselves known now or outside the meeting.

The AGM closed with a call for continued involvement and collaboration, ensuring Waterlow Park remains a cherished resource for all. The meeting closed at 8.15 p.m. MB/ FB