**DRAFT Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, held virtually,**

**of The Friends of Finsbury Park**

**on October 29 2021**

**Present:**

Jono Kenyon, Beth Anderson, Adrian Essex, Lawrence Singha, Gordon Hutchinson, Diane Burridge, Fran Bernstein, James Noble, John Lawal, Karen Brookfield, Kevin Duffy, Luke Wass, Douglas Palin, Clive Carter, Gina Haskell , Paul Crook, Rachel Jackobs. Sarah Potter, Rob Lloyd, Jackie Hopfinger, Denise Byrne, Barbara Baughan, Liz ?, BPG (?), Mike Hakata, Francesco Mellino, Tony Healey *(Note – meeting held by zoom with some late joiners / incomplete names).*

**1. Apologies:** Apology from Carrie Anker, Louis Wass, Elvidge Culverwell; Katie Dawson

**2. Minutes of the AGM 2020** (previously circulated): These were agreed.

**3. Matters arising:** There were none.

**4. Co-Chairs’ Report** (previously circulated); presented by Clive Carter.

Clive Carter set out the chairs report.

Dianne Burridge noted the campaign to stop Krank Bros request for additional licensing events.

James Noble set out a different view on events, that he supported them, were part of the parks heritage, and provided some benefits to the community. He asked for engagement on the topic. The current chair proposed a meeting.

Dianne Burridge pushed back on the James Noble’s point of view, setting out the impacts they had on this inner city park.

Beth Anderson disagreed that opposition to the events was discriminatory.

Adrian Essex agreed with a need for ‘a debate’. He further asked about the bio-diversity in the park noting that it was currently poor, and how he could get details on accounts (directed to the Finsbury Park Stakeholder forum website).

Tom Graham provided an operational update from recent discussions from a meeting with the council late October (date references are ‘relative’ to that meeting).

Investment

- CCTV. CCTV is expected to be completed within the coming weeks.

- Lighting. There is currently no funding for lighting. Funding will be requested for '22. If successful, it would light a strip between Endymion gate to Seven Sisters, with lighting on paths to Stroud Green Road / Oxford Road.

- Play spaces. A 3rd phase of the playground will take place in H1 '22, providing further inclusive play facilities, and a disability friendly route into the bottom of the space. The old play space near the steel warriors will be removed and returned to grass, and some units in the work out area replaced with newer kit.

- Skate park: We provided an update on the funding the FOFP had obtained (~£50k). The council set out its request for funds in Dec budget. We re-confirmed the location and size (c 1000m2, nr Tennis Courts, covering the existing tarmac area). Action: SF to confirm who in his team we should work with to get more practical, and if successful, a delivery plan for first phase in H1 '22.

- Car access: The council is considering maintaining the current closure to cars, and relocating the disabled bays to just outside the entrance.

- Resource: Simon F set out plans for an imminent restructure that would provide additional resource to the parks.

Safety

- The council does not support locking the park at night; why: it was felt the consultation didn't give full support, and scepticism around effectiveness.

- We agreed to a follow on session with police and council to step through what further steps could be taken.

Environment

- Biodiversity plan: a brief discussion updated to say work was in progress but with no clear steps that will follow.

- Glyphosate: No clear update on the plans to remove the chemical from the park

- FOFP support: reconfirmed our commitment from members to support programmes

Financials

- Whilst the council submitted two applications ('20, '21) for support from the government for lost events income in Finsbury Park, and was successful, this money was not returned to Parks budget

- The parks department are seeking funds for items set out above, with submission at Budget in Dec'21, and confirmation in Feb '22.

- Action: Simon F committed to provide detailed accounts within 2 weeks of meet (12/Nov)

Events

- 2022: The council proposed a relatively intensive programme of works. We expressed extreme disappointment at the large events proposed (e.g. Wireless) and called for a review of the major events policy. We re-confirmed our support for small, well managed events that are <15,000 people and do not require large areas of the park to be closed off to enable setup.

- Cllr Hakata set out his desire for a community engagement on the policy through '22.

**5. Cllr Hakata**

Cllr Hakata kindly joined the meeting for 30 minutes. He provided an update and then took questions. He explained a desire for co-creation with the council on parks. He noted the unprecidented demand, with no abatement. He noted that parks were not statutory, had been chronically underfunded for the past 10 years. He set out his desire to reverse these cuts given the massive benefits they provide for physical and mental health. He was bidding for material funds.

Cllr Hakata set out his view on events policy, and a desire for a review in 2022. He felt it important this took in broad views, looked at inputs, data, and formulated a future position for the council. He felt that there was no debate about having events in the park, rather how many, the form, and what kind. He felt he had no choice but to approve 2022 events as he had been told that there would be a £0.5m short fall in the parks budget. [The chair noted that without accounts it was hard to substantiate this position; nor reconcile to the fact that the parks service had not had events income for the past two years, yet operated successfully and made material investment].

Cllr Hakata raised Glyphosate, and a desire to move away from herbicides. He said that the council was looking at alternatives, but noted some areas he felt their use may persist.

He took a question around the need to approve events, and agreed with the need for financial transparency. He responded to a question on CCTV and said it was imminent. He responded to a question around engagement with other boroughs and confirmed he did. On seating, he welcomed the question as a good example of co-creation and said he would note. Dianne Burridge expressed increduility at the 2022 events programme approval. Kevin Duffy set out FOFP support for well managed, community focused events that were low impact, with light setup time and <15,000 people. He noted Rise, Pride and latino festivals as well as support for them. Cllr Hakata set out his view that parks should not be dependent on event income, and that it should take into consideration the impact on the 3 boroughs. He said for the scale of events there was no clear rationale beyond money. Gina Harkell set out that should events take place, regrettable thought it would be, the council is materially under-charging for the parks use.

Finally, a discussion was held about safety in the park – Denise Byrne noting that it did not feel safe. Mike Hakata said this was a top priority, with engagement from police, and an initiative from council to look at the safety of the park. Whilst not decided, he referenced a potential to remove the fencing and ‘introduce natural surveillance’. He said this was indicative and any proposals would be engaged on.

**5. Treasurer’s Report** (formal account – Small Company – previously circulated)

Douglas Palin provided an update on accounts, circulated separately.

**6. Election of Trustees/Directors/Management Committee**

Tom explained the procedure: 12 vacancies available for nomination; officers to be elected by the committee at a later at a management meeting.

The new committee is as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Proposal** | **Seconded** |
| Beth Anderson | Kevin Duffy | Clive Carter |
| Dianne Burridge | Kevin Duffy | Clive Carter |
| Clive Carter | Kevin Duffy | Clive Carter |
| Eldridge Culverwell | Kevin Duffy | Clive Carter |
| Katie Dawson | Kevin Duffy | Clive Carter |
| Tom Graham | Kevin Duffy | Clive Carter |
| Gina Haskell | Kevin Duffy | Clive Carter |
| Jono Kenyon | Kevin Duffy | Clive Carter |
| Louise Wass | Kevin Duffy | Clive Carter |
| Douglas Palin | Kevin Duffy | Clive Carter |
| Lawrence Singha | Kevin Duffy | Clive Carter |
| Kevin Duffy | Kevin Duffy | Clive Carter |
| Luke Wass\* | Tom Graham | Beth Anderson |

\* Luke, underage of 18, is not eligible fully but can be subsequently co-opted.

\*\* In a discussion subsequent to the AGM, James Noble / Chair Tom Graham reviewed his nomination. We agreed to meet in January to discuss events, and should he wish to participate formally in the Friends, to seek formally nomination properly at the 2022 event.

**7. AOB**

We noted how much the committee still missed Sally Billot, with plans for a bench + tree.