

**Friends of Bishop’s Park Annual General Meeting at the Palace Gardener**

**At 6.30 pm on Thursday 16th November 2023**

Present

Sarah Jane Johnson (SJJ) Chair

Sara Borthwick (SB) Treasurer

Catriona Rooney (CR) Membership Secretary

Roger Weston (RW) Deputy Chair

Victor Ho (VH)

Alex Laird (AL)

Georgie Stewart (GS)

Angela Fane (AF) Secretary

Harriet Lewis (HL)

Apologies

Pauline McCormack (Parks LBHF)

Craig Bracegirdle (Met Police)

James Ballantyne (ID Verde)

Steve Bolton (Butterfly Conservation)

Minutes of last meeting on Thursday 5th October 2023

The Minutes were approved.

The Chair introduced the guest speaker, Phoebe Shaw Stuart (Ecology Lead in the Environment Department at Hammersmith and Fulham Council) who gave a short presentation about butterflies, both in the Park and in general. (The advertised speaker, Steve Bolton from Butterfly Conservation, had been unable to attend). We learned that there are 59 species of butterfly and 23 species of bee in the borough. Nettles, ivy and honeysuckle are all very important for their habitat. There were suggestions from the meeting: ban fake grass and insist on more soil in back gardens. Perhaps we could all grow more pollinator friendly plants, or participate in the annual Fulham Society Front Gardens competition! We also learnt the results from the Hogwatch Survey that had taken place in the park earlier in the year. Sadly there are no hedgehogs to be found in Bishop’s Park, but the cameras recorded 11 different bird species, 3 of which are on the amber list.

It was pointed out that the recent Fawkes Festival had caused a great deal of damage to the newly - planted grass in Bishop’s Meadow. Phoebe Shaw Stuart suggested that feedback about this should be given to the Council. Councillor Amanda Lloyd Harris said she had had discussions about this event already. A question was asked about insecticides and the AGM was told that their use in the Park was much reduced.

Chair Report

The Chair (SJJ) reported that Rowena Vaughan had retired from the role of Chair in June, having been involved with the Friends for over ten years. She was owed a huge thank you. The committee agreed. SJJ said that she was passionate about local concerns being joined up and she would be delighted to hear from anyone who uses the park in any capacity so we can grow a strong community and tackle problems such as anti social behaviour. She thanked the gardening group, the litter-picking group and the duck food group for their invaluable support as well as Victor Ho, the committee photographer who has produced some delightful postcards and seasonal notelets to sell - all profits will go towards projects around the park.

As for the future: there are plans for planting a small area of wildflowers in the Moat Garden to attract bees and butterflies. A bat walk has been proposed by Simone Turner (Ecology Officer LBHF Council) and there is a planned collaboration between the Friends and the Ecology Department to map all the trees around the park too. Thanks to Bishop Compton, a keen botanist and one time resident of Fulham Palace, there is a rich selection of trees in the vicinity. A new drinking fountain will replace the one by the entrance to the sandpit, once the possibility of frozen pipes has passed. Work to provide a water source in the Moat Garden will hopefully be completed by Thames Water in the spring. SJJ thanked Harriet Lewis from the committee and her husband Andy who have spent a lot of time researching the possibility of replacing the bins around the park, a matter the Friends sincerely hope will be addressed as soon as possible by the Council. The Events team are putting the market out to tender so hopefully this will return to the Events Circle. And finally, a long - term initiative is to come up with something to put on the two empty plinths in the rose garden. Any suggestions please do not hesitate to contact the Friends.

Gardening Group report

AF reported that a small group had met monthly throughout the year and had done a lot of work in the rose gardens, deadheading and weeding. She was due to have a meeting with Pauline McCormack in December to discuss the potential gift of money from the Friends to improve the planting scheme in the Park.

Membership Report (CR)

CR reported that membership was down slightly. Some people have moved away, or perhaps died. There are 79 paid-up members and 21 she had now chased up, along with 14 associate members.

Treasurer’s report (SB)

2022 was again a positive year in terms of income with £2195 received, similar to the figure of £2069 for 2021. Income from subscriptions increased slightly, from £1025 in 2021 to £1107 in 2022.

Book sales came in at £250 for the period, continuing the sale of copies printed and accounted for in 2021.

Net proceeds for the year from the sale of duck food at the Tea House were £333.

We closed the year with a £1754 surplus that brought our cash position at year end to £9343.

The positive trends continued in 2023, with sales of the books printed in 2021, and the impact of the duck food sales, an initiative started in the summer of 2022.

Re-election of the Officers

Sarah Jane Johnson offered herself as Chairman. This was proposed by Amanda Lloyd Harris and seconded by Melanie Healy. All the officers offered themselves for re-election and this was passed nem con.

Report from Graham (local ward officer ET 161) from the Law Enforcement Team

Email: palacehurlingham\_southwards@lbhf.gov.uk

Graham had brought some personal attack alarms and some cards, which he handed out. He told the AGM that he cared passionately about the Park and was concerned principally with drug taking, rough sleeping and anti-social behaviour. Questions were asked about door-step scams and what could be done to prevent them.

Report from Simon Ingyon – LBHF Parks and Leisure

Simon thanked the Gardening Group and the Litter-picking Group for all their efforts as well as Irwin Mitchell solicitor volunteers who had been very helpful. The Council have received two tenders for the railing refurbishment project. They will select the best tenderer and work will begin hopefully soon in the New Year. Works are likely to take 9-12 months. All the money from Fulham Football Club is going directly to spending in the Park. £1.5 million would be invested in the Park.

AOB:

Simon Ingyon was asked to respond to an email from the one of the members asking about the new rules about dog walking, how it is to be policed and whether signage could be improved. He replied that The Law Enforcement Team will make sure more formal signs will be put up at the entrances to the Park. Dog walkers can be challenged to establish if they are carrying dog-poo bags.

Georgie Stewart from the committee proposed thanks to Pauline from LBHF Parks and to the ID Verde team – in particular Malcolm who is always so helpful.

It was noted that Pryor’s Bank Pavilion is in poor condition. A condition survey is being carried out.

The meeting closed at 8 pm