

# FoBHF AGM 2020



## Committee report

The committee report from the equivalent document last year began with the words "It has been another eventful year for the Friends of Blythe Hill Fields". For obvious reasons we are not able to say the same this year.

The year period covered by this report began in Late October 2019 with Tim Part being elected to succeed Nicholas Taylor, who had very kindly stepped in on a temporary basis following Ellie Rogers' departure for a more rural setting. We thank Nicholas for his continued support and his lifetime contribution to the Friends and the Blythe Hill Fields.

We began the year by defining a new strategy and work plan for the Friends of Blythe Hill Fields to help us achieve our objectives for 2020/21 and beyond. This new way of thinking about how we manage the Fields will help in three ways:

1. Enabling new ideas: it makes the group's purpose clearer, focuses everyone's mind, and allows people to own projects that are close to their heart
2. Improving our processes: it will be the basis for our meeting agendas and progress tracking
3. Providing accountability: it will frame the way we report on our activities and provides consistency as the years pass and as the Friends committee changes.

Most importantly, as we noted at the time, it can (and should) evolve - Friends' ongoing input is much appreciated.

This strategy made its first appearance at one of our final activities prior to lockdown - the social event at Rise on Brockley Rise near to the park. This event was part of our ongoing drive to recruit new Friends to the group and encourage new faces to join the Committee. Special thanks go to Zoe, Helen, Jo and Rich for running such a great event which helped to raise our profile and identify new people wanting to get involved.

Around this time, four new bins were installed in the park thanks to Lewisham Council's greening fund, replacing some particularly rusty specimens.

It was unfortunate at this point that our plans for the rest of the year were put on hold due to coronavirus. Children being at home actually made it more difficult for the

majority to find time for extracurricular activities and Lewisham Council / Glendale effectively ceased all activities in local parks. Even as strict lockdown ended and the 'new normal' emerged, we made an early decision to refrain from organising any in-person events in the park to do our bit to prevent the spread of the virus, no matter how strictly we thought we would be able to observe social distancing.

This was a great shame - as well as the cancellation of the Festival we had also been in a position to enter the final stages of our most exciting recent project, building new signage in the park. However, it is with great pleasure that I can announce that I spoke to Peter Maynard, our Council liaison, who will arrange a site walk next week to formally agree a location for each of the signs. The process should move fairly quickly from there.

It seems as the world may approach some semblance of normality in the foreseeable future. The Council and Glendale are certainly ramping up their activities. Also a product of the greening fund, a new wheelchair-friendly picnic bench has recently been installed at the crest of the hill, taking advantage of the views over the city that are the calling card of our park.

We also thank Climate Action Lewisham for their recent tree maintenance and sapling planting event - it is an example of the types of collaboration with partners that will use our resources most effectively.

As we are able to work towards being fully active as a Friends group again, we will look to maintain our close and profitable relationship with Lewisham Council and Glendale. In a happy development, Peter Maynard is now both our liaison officer *and* the representative responsible for inspecting the park on a regular basis, split responsibility for these roles having been in place for many years. We look forward to working with Peter even more in future and wish him a speedy recovery from his recent illness.

We will discuss our plans for the forthcoming later in the AGM, but the highlights will include the aforementioned signage, a Community Garden and applying for Green Flag status.

If this year has taught us anything, it is that we must remain agile - circumstances may conspire against us along the way, but there is still a lot we can achieve. To achieve this we must concentrate on expanding this group of Friends and raising volunteering levels further. "Stronger together" should definitely be our motto for the year.

Thank you all for your hard work and effort this year. The Committee is confident that we are in good hands and that 2021 will see a wealth of new ideas emerge for us to pursue with consistently high energy levels. Here's to a productive year ahead.

Thank you

9th December 2020