



Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 23 Nov 2022

Meeting minutes

Attendance: Mike Williams (Chair), Rich Ibell (Treasurer), Sailesh Patel (Secretary), Kevin Sutton (Head of Festival), Jim Smith (Logistics), Catherine Walsh (Volunteer engagement), Inma Ferrer (Social media) Helen Raggatt, Jo Miller, Graeme Crow, Nicholas Taylor

Apologies: Dani Bizley, Katherine Hughes, Alice Casey

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Agenda Items:

1. Welcome

2. Festival review and looking ahead

Another outstanding festival – excellent weather meant big attendance with the Fields almost at capacity.

Areas to strengthen:

- Exiting festival, including pack-up - need more people on hand to support
- Volunteer capacity, which will continue to be coordinated by Catherine
- Kevin to share SWOT analysis in due course

- Use of social media and website to solicit community feedback and to recruit volunteers (priority in Jan/Feb/March period)
- Use of planning stage to adequately scope and incorporate any new elements, e.g. FOBH bar

Other info:

- Date for 2023 Festival proposed for 2nd or 9th July TBC – post-meeting confirmed as 2nd July
- Marchetti have been in touch to discuss planning required for a pop-up makers market; agreed that responsibility is Marchetti's but FOBH happy to share lessons
- An Easter egg-hunt may be an option, under the banner of the Friends [More details Treasury budget approval required]

3. Accounts

Highlights:

- Signage costs increased slightly due to inflation and material cost increases
- £4k which has been set aside for greening fund purposes has now been reinstated to the balance sheet
- Going into 2023, approx. £20k is on the balance sheet
- Card transactions during the festival were mainly attributed to the BBQ and Friends tents

4. Lewisham Friends' Forum

Nicolas attended the Lewisham green spaces forum; present at the meeting was Vince Buchanan from the Council.

Key takeaways:

- The Council is encouraging Friends groups to sign up to the standard Charter agreement in exchange for liability insurance. We agreed in principle that we should sign this Charter.
- The Chair to review the updated Charter to consider benefits and any consequences of alignment. (Post meeting update: this has been signed and provided to the Council.)

5. Park project updates

New signage

- Signage to be installed on 29th November.
- (Post meeting update: These have now been installed, with strong positive feedback from the community.)
- A secondary benefit of realising the new signage is that this project can be used as evidence to help support other funding application

Biodiversity plan and wildlife garden

- The plan is intended to provide a clear framework for improvements to meadows, trees and the wildlife garden, to be shared by all parties, including the Friends, Lewisham and Glendale.
- Development timeline to be circulated to committee in due course.
- Mike is hopeful that this will include a more clearly defined mowing management plan with Glendale, along with more strategic planting of things like trees, shrubs and new meadow plants.
- Big City Butterflies has offered plants, expertise and community engagement to support biodiversity improvements. Many of their recommendations have been incorporated into the first draft of the plan, for example, planting disease-resistant varieties of Elm to encourage White Letter Hairstreak butterflies, which are currently in decline. BCB requires the project to start by autumn in order to meet their funding requirements and continue participating.

Community wildlife garden

- Community garden will be a priority for potential Green Flag accreditation; plans are currently being developed pro bono by Hayley and Holly of HH Gardens and plans will be shared with Lewisham Council in due course.
- Once the garden and biodiversity plans have been firmed up with council feedback, we will need to develop budgets. Funding should be included to allow for replacement planting and some maintenance.
- (Update: these initial plans have now been shared with the council and are also on the website.)

Dark Sky Accreditation

- The International Dark Sky Association has changed their criteria to make them more stringent, which means we may no longer be able to get Dark Sky Accreditation. (Update - after meeting with the local rep, this is the case.)

There is potential for other types of accreditation, but the new DSA criteria could be onerous.)

Memorial trees and Freddy's Blossom Walk

- Seven new trees have now been planted as part of Freddy's Blossom Walk, including an Ash and six native cherries. They will be maintained by the family in conjunction with Street Trees.
- A number of other memorial trees have been planted with several more in the pipeline.

Greening Fund updates - older kids trim trail and signage

- We have been allocated £10k by the Greening Fund and it needs to be delivered within constraints, including accessibility and using the Council's approved suppliers.
- While this funding must be spent by early 2024, we're hopeful that we will be able to top it up with additional fundraising.
- Once we submit a brief to the Council, they will ask for proposals from suppliers for us to respond to.
- A new subcommittee headed by Helen Raggatt will develop a brief for the older kids' trim trail / play zone.
- A further £2k from Greening Fund has been allocated to additional noticeboards, which also needs to be spent by the Spring. There's a hope that we can find an alternative to noticeboards within funding constraints since the new signage does this job admirably already. Mike to Liaise with Graeme to develop a proposal.

Benches

- Five new memorial benches are being installed.
- Sites for new benches are now full, so we have proposed to Glendale that any new memorial bench request should become memorial picnic benches. The benches near the playground are damaged and need to be replaced, plus there could be more of them.

Lock up and storage options

- Our current lock-up and storage arrangements may be coming to an end, so we need to source alternatives. (Rich and Mike to investigate options.)

6. Improving access to committee meetings

- We have an aspiration to make meetings more accessible to people who can't attend during the regular slots, for example, working parents.
- Proposed that we have some meetings earlier in the evening and also hold more meetings via Zoom.

7. Proposed new committee portfolios and subcommittees

- A brief for the older kids' trim trail to be developed by a new subcommittee, led by Helen Raggatt. Rich Ibell and Alice Casey are also on this subcommittee.
- Helen will also be coordinating litter picks via WhatsApp. She has asked for volunteers to run regular spots through the summer as well as responding to ad hoc, eg picnic dumping next to bins.
- Mike will also be setting up a Biodiversity group via WhatsApp to encourage engagement in the garden and biodiversity projects. Catherine and a number of new recruits have expressed an interest in being involved.
- Catherine expressed an interest in developing an Arts subcommittee (to support and encourage cultural activities and improvement in the Fields)
- We may add to the number of portfolios as biodiversity plans develop.

8. Election of committee members

The committee voted on current and proposed new appointments and the following members and posts were confirmed;

Mike Williams, Chair

Rich Ibell, Vice Chair

Kevin Sutton, Head of Festival

Sailesh Patel, Treasurer

Dani Bizley, Secretary

Catherine Walsh, Volunteer Coordinator

Members: Helen Raggatt, Graeme Crow, Jo Miller, Alice Casey Inma Ferrer, Jim Smith, Nicholas Taylor.

9. AOB

- Kevin and others to explore potential for additional funding sources.
- Sailesh (with Dani) to consolidate the Friends digital documentation and other assets, so that we have better collaboration and control over activities and resources.
- Rich and Sailesh to transition Treasury duties – please bear with us in the meantime!

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