



# MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2016

8 pm on 19 October 2016 at The Honor Oak, SE23

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## In Attendance

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James Cross, Ellie Rogers, Dave Lowry, Leo Stevens, Marcel Jenkins, Jo Miller and Zaria Greenhill.

Apologies: Cathy Ashley, Jim Smith, Svea Polster, Anne Scott, Annie Maunton, Sydney Couldridge, Alex Roberts, Josh Smaller Zaria Greenhill, Gavin Bolam, Nicholas Taylor, Graeme Crow, David and Andrea Pearson

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## Welcome

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JC welcomed everybody to the meeting. The Friends' 10<sup>th</sup> AGM!

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## Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

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The minutes for the last meeting were completed by ER and will be posted on our website and Facebook page, having been circulated previously to all attendees. Comments can be made regarding accuracy via our website.

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## Update from the last AGM

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JC provided a summary of the Friends' activities over the last year. A copy can be found at Appendix A.

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## Elections

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Following an election process in which nominees were proposed and then seconded, the following were unanimously elected:

Chair - James Cross  
Treasurer - David Lowry  
Secretary - Ellie Rogers  
People & Wildlife - Zaria Greenhill  
Website - Jo Miller

JC explained that due to personal circumstances Jim Smith and Sydney Couldridge were unable to attend the AGM, but wished to stand as committee members. It was agreed that a further elections for committee members would be held at the Friends meeting in November.

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### **New website**

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It was proposed at the General Meeting in September that a new website should be commissioned. It was agreed that JM would oversee this. It was agreed that we would like a website that can be more interactive with Facebook etc, that would be a repository for documentation and photos, and which can be updated by all. JM suggested that brief be drawn and it was agreed that this would be done via email.

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### **Financial statement**

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DL presented the financial statement for the year. He explained that following the General Meeting in September, further payments in respect of the Festival had been identified and accounted for/processed for payment. DL produced the 2015-16 accounts, which can be located on our website. DL noted the following points:

- There was no funding from Crofton Park Ward Assembly and the Rotary Club, however, funding was up on 2015 due to the kind sponsorship of Sebastian Roche, Hunters, The Animal Clinic Catford and the Blythe Hill Tavern.
- Hot drinks did not generate a profit, but enhanced the day.
- The BBQ did well, but not as well as in previous years.
- The cakes looked splendid and did very well.
- The raffle was a very good source of funds.
- Expenditure has been similar to previous year. There had been a small increase in sundries due to the weather and there was the cost of cleaning the tents prior to the festival.
- DL confirmed that he would write to complain to the tent cleaning company about the shrinking of the tents. MJ will find out how much replacement awnings would cost.
- Insurance will be renewed on 25 March 2017.
- There is a balance of approximately £7,000 on account. It was confirmed that the Friends would like to invest some money into upgrading the playground.

The accounts were reviewed and agreed.

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### **People & Wildlife**

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ZG updated the group about the meeting between the Friends, Glendale and Peter Maynard on 11 October. She explained that PM is content for us to delineate wildlife areas with sticks, but that Glendale must be consulted.

ZG updated the group regarding the purchase of 12 bird boxes. The Friends will invite members to adopt a bird box, in return for a donation. The date for the event was discussed and whether a TEN would be required from Glendale. It was agreed that ZG would obtain the boxes and see how easy it is to put them together before deciding the format of the event.

ZG explained that she would like to organise a whip planting and maintenance session. There was further discussion about planting additional bulbs, wild flowers etc on the Fields. It was agreed that £35 would be spent on bulbs and that ideally these will be planted in November. It was agreed that whilst beautiful, wild flowers are difficult to plant and grow. The process is onerous and the soil is unsuitable. ZG suggested a cutting share in the Spring/summer.

ZG reported that she has been in discussion with the Council regarding the trees, which are diseased. The affected trees will be lopped and she has requested that any wood can be used for a new stag beetle loggery.

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## AOB

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The following points were discussed:

- Neighbourhood Plan - ZG explained that the authors of the Crofton Park Neighbourhood Plan had been in touch. They would like us to reply/make comments. As part of the plan, Blythe Hill Fields would remain unchanged, but the 3 Peaks Challenge will be formalised. It was agreed that we invite the planners to our meeting which will be held at the end of November.
- MJ explained that the Co Op Bank account, opened for the Big Lottery funding, needed to be closed. This was discussed and agreed.
- ZG raised the issue of the Lewisham Parks Forum. It was agreed that we would like to continue a relationship with the Forum. ZG will attend the next meeting in February 2017.

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## Future meeting dates

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It was agreed that these would be agreed by email.

ER  
9 November 2016



## Appendix A

Friends of Blythe Hill Fields

Review of 2015/16

This year has been very productive, in terms of park improvements, partnership working and increase in awareness and involvement from local residents.

**Park improvements:** Eight fox proof bins have been installed, a real team effort between the friends, Glendale, and support from Crofton Park ward assembly that addressed a serious issue in the fields. Two new benches were also ordered, one now installed and the second in due course.

**Festival:** Despite the worst weather in the build-up ever recorded was well attended and ran just about smoothly. I loved the fact that during the two spells of heavy rain, people just ran for cover, and came back out to continue to enjoy themselves rather than head home. The new approaches to the reduced funfair and redesigned friends tent also worked well. Dave will update on the figures. A big thank you to all involved especially new recruits including Alex who did an excellent job with the raffle having not attended the festival previously. Also thanks to our sponsors, whom are essential to keeping the festival afloat.

**User survey:** this was the first survey undertaken for some years and was down to the hard work of Ellie. The survey stands us in good stead for demonstrating the local support for park improvements. Further updates from Ellie.

**People and wildlife:** new trees were planted, a stag beetle loggery (not a buggery) was built in the December cold when we also held our first carol singing event that even warmed the heart of the Christmas humbug that I am. It really brought everyone together at a time when the fields are generally quiet. There was also a bat walk and a number of community meet ups to help establish some barrier between Glendale's mowers and the hedgerows. The Friends also took part in the governments consultation on the future of London parks, such as the fields and their importance to community and biodiversity. Also we must not forget the cohort of tree adopters, and all-round waterers who planted them and kept them going through a very wet, then very dry summer. Thanks to Zaria for co-ordinating and leading on all the people and wildlife aspects.

**Filming:** the fields continue to be a popular choice for promo and advertisement makers, this drew a lot of interest on our facebook page and also added to the coffers as for each item of filming we were able to secure a donation.

**The trim trail:** I see this being used more and more as the year has progressed, and the fields are often a hub of activity most mornings and evenings as people come to the park to use it and enjoy the views.

**Partnership working:** it was great to have our first LBL representative at our last meeting, Peter Maynard. (organised by ellie, thank you) and an update from the walkabout will follow. As funding is cut its never been more vital to seek and maintain relationships with the management of our park and help us stand out from all the other friends groups and user groups in the borough.

**Member ship:** We were joined at the last AGM by a new treasurer, Dave Lowry, whom has taken on the role with much enthusiasm and is trusted with all our financial dealings. A big thank you to Marcel for his previous work in this role and the handover support he continued to provide.

2016 also saw the revision of our constitution, where we looked at our purpose and structure. The revisions at time of writing were being prepared for presentation and vote in at the next meeting and should be in place late 2016. It can be found on our website.

We have 456 members on our facebook page. Our online mailing list which signifies membership of the group also has a healthy 417 members up from 390 in 2014/15. We also have 336 followers on Twitter. If you are not connected up and following us it's the best way to find out information and support what we do.

We have seen several new faces over the last year, whether people new to the area, regular festival attendees wishing to assist more or those with an interest in trees and ecology. Its not always easy to commit with the pressures of modern life and we always need new members but I feel that we are steadily moving in the right direction.

Thanks to all involved and here's to a successful 2016/17.

James Cross

October 2016



# MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING

7.45 pm on 19 October 2016 at The Honor Oak, SE23

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## **In Attendance**

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James Cross, Ellie Rogers, Dave Lowry, Leo Stevens, Marcel Jenkins, Jo Miller, Zaria Greenhill and Carl Higgins (Glendale representative).

Apologies: Jim Smith, Svea Polster, Anne Scott, Annie Maunton, Sydney Couldridge, Alex Roberts, Josh Smaller, Gavin Bolam, Nicholas Taylor, Graeme Crow, David and Andrea Pearson

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## **Welcome**

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JC welcomed everybody to the meeting.

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## **Minutes of last meeting and matters arising**

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The minutes for the last meeting were completed by ER and will be posted on our website and Facebook page, having been circulated previously to all attendees. Comments can be made regarding accuracy via our website.

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## **Constitution**

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JC confirmed that the revised constitution has been sent to all members. No comments or queries have been raised. The constitution was unanimously agreed and adopted and is shown at appendix A.

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## **Carl Higgins, Glendale**

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CH explained that Glendale had received a request that a bark chipping pathway is installed to the perimeter of the Fields, linking up the Trim Trail equipment. MJ explained that the trim trail was purposely located away from the perimeter of the Fields, so that there was no defined route, and was set on matting to prevent flooding. CH explained that there would be an initial cost for the installation and then yearly ongoing maintenance costs. These costs are unlikely to be funded by Glendale/Lewisham. ER explained that the group had performed a user survey recently and that whilst there was some

support for a perimeter path, there was also a similar level of those against it. Furthermore the survey shows other priorities. It was agreed unanimously that we do not want to pursue this suggestion any further.

CH took the opportunity to report back on a number of issues raised by the Friends:

1. 66 Codrington Hill – concerns had been raised about the building works and the effect on the Fields. CH explained that this matter had been passed to the Planning Department at Lewisham Council.
2. Damage to the swings – the swings etc. will be fixed in due course as the replacement parts are on order. We discussed how best to reduce damage to the swings etc. in the future. ER will put a post on Facebook etc. and put up posters in the park, inviting users to report any damage to the local SNT.
3. Birdboxes – ZG explained that the Friends wish to purchase some bird boxes which can be adopted and then installed on the Fields. We discussed the procedure for arranging this with Glendale etc. CH will report back to Chris and Judith at Glendale.

**ER**

25 October 2016



## Appendix A

# Constitution of the Friends of Blythe Hill Fields

**19 October 2016**

(the "Constitution")



[www.blythehilfields.org.uk](http://www.blythehilfields.org.uk)



## Constitution of the Friends of Blythe Hill Fields

### 1. Name

The name of the Association shall be THE FRIENDS OF BLYTHE HILL FIELDS (the “**Friends**”).

### 2. Aim

The aim of the Friends shall be to promote the increased use, access to and enjoyment of the public park known as Blythe Hill Fields in the London Borough of Lewisham for the benefit of local residents and other users of this essential open space (the “**Aim**”).

### 3. Objectives

3.1 Acting as a forum for the community, the Friends will work with partners such as Lewisham Borough Council and their parks contractor (currently Glendale), to maintain existing facilities as well as develop and install new ones for the benefit of the whole community (the “**Objectives**”).

3.2 The Friends’ equal opportunities policy is published on its website and underpins all its meetings and activities (the “**Equal Opportunities Policy**”).

3.3 In order for the Friends to achieve its Objectives it may, as appropriate:

- (i) Raise money;
- (ii) Open bank accounts;
- (iii) Take out appropriate insurances;
- (iv) Organise events and activities; and/or
- (v) Exchange information and/or work with other similar and local groups.

### 4. Membership of the Friends

4.1 Membership of the Friends, which is conferred by admission to the Friends’ mailing list, shall be open to any individual, regardless of disability, political or religious affiliation, race, sex or sexual orientation who is:

- (i) In agreement with the Aim and Objectives of the Friends and the Friends’ Equal Opportunities Policy;
- (ii) Interested in supporting the development of the Friends, its Aims and Objectives and participating in its activities;
- (iii) Willing to attend General Meetings of the Membership and abide by the Friends’ Membership Rules and Code of Conduct at Meetings (as set out in Appendix 1);
- (iv) Willing to contribute to the running costs of the Friends as necessary, by fundraising or minimal subscription (together the “**Membership**”, separately a “**Member**” or “**Members**”).

## 5. Committee

- 5.1 The Friends shall have a committee of a minimum of four and a maximum of fifteen elected members (the “**Committee**”), comprising three elected officers (namely the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer (the “**Executive**”), plus a maximum of twelve committee members (“**Committee Members**”), who shall all be elected at the Friends’ Annual General Meeting (“**AGM**”) or if agreed by a majority of at least two thirds of those present and voting at a subsequent General Meeting of the Membership.
- 5.2 The Committee shall continue the work of the Friends between General Meetings of the Membership and be able to take decisions on behalf of the Friends (which shall be reported to the Membership at the next General Meeting).
- 5.3 The members of the Committee shall normally be elected for a period of twelve months from the AGM and shall need to be nominated for re-election, if they wish to stand, at the following AGM. Casual vacancies during the year shall be notified as soon as possible to the Membership and be filled at the next General Meeting.
- 5.4 Duties of the Committee are outlined at Appendix 2.
- 5.5 The Committee may as necessary, in order to fulfil the aims of the Friends:
  - (i) Co-opt onto the Committee up to two individuals in an advisory and non-voting capacity; and/or
  - (ii) Set up Sub-Committees to work on particular events or issues, such as the annual Festival and wildlife/biodiversity issues, who will report back to the Committee and/or to the next General Meeting of the Membership.
- 5.6 If in the reasonable view of a Committee Member, a Member is acting in contravention of the Constitution (including the Code of Conduct at Meetings (as set out in Appendix 1B)) then the Committee Member may propose that the Member is excluded from the Membership (“**Exclusion**”). Any such Exclusion shall be determined by at least a two-thirds majority vote of those Members present and voting at a General Meeting of the Membership.

## 6. Meetings and Voting

- 6.1 The Committee shall meet as required during the year. General Meetings of the Membership shall take place four times per year, or as required. Other Membership meetings may be called from time to time by the Friends’ Secretary to deal with urgent matters.
- 6.2 Dates of General Meetings shall normally be circulated by email and posted on the Friends’ website, as will the Minutes of meetings.
- 6.3 Each Member present shall have one vote. Voting in a Membership meeting shall be by show of hands and agreed by at least a two-thirds majority vote of those Members present and voting.
- 6.4 At least three members of the Committee must be present for a Membership meeting to take place.

## 7. Finance

- 7.1 The Friends’ financial year shall run from 1 October to 30 September each year. A statement of income and expenditure will be prepared at the end of each year for presentation and agreement at the AGM. Where possible, the statement and the financial records should be independently inspected prior to presentation at the AGM. Following the AGM, the statement shall be published on the Friends’ website or wherever practical.
- 7.2 Any bank accounts opened for the Friends shall be in the name of The Friends of Blythe Hill Fields and must have four signatories, the Chair, Treasurer and two other Committee Members. To avoid conflicts of interest, the signatories should not be related. The majority of financial transactions shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer.
- 7.3 Any cheque issued must be signed by the Treasurer and one other signatory. There will be a delegated responsibility to the Treasurer for debit card and online banking transactions up to £150 beyond which email authorisation from another signatory will be required.
- 7.4 The Treasurer shall keep an accurate record of all income and expenditure through the year which will become the basis of the annual statement. For major events e.g. annual festival, a separate statement of income and expenditure shall be prepared as soon as practically possible following the event for presentation at a General Meeting.

## **8. Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

8.1 The AGM of the Friends shall be held normally in the month of October of each year, and not later than mid-November.

8.2 All Members shall be given at least fourteen days' notice of the AGM and shall be entitled to attend and vote.

8.3 The business of the AGM shall include:

- Receiving a report from the Committee on the Friends activities over the year;
- Receiving a report from the Treasurer on the finances of the Friends;
- Electing and/or re-electing members of the Committee;
- Considering any other matters as may need to be decided.

8.4 At least four Committee Members must be present in order for the AGM to take place. In the event of the AGM not taking place, a new date must be set by the Committee and a re-notification of the new date shall be circulated by the Secretary, in addition to a note explaining that the original AGM was not quorate so did not proceed.

## **9. Alterations to the Constitution**

9.1 Any changes to the Constitution must be agreed by at least a two-thirds majority vote of those Members present at a General Meeting of the Membership.

## **10. Dissolution of the Friends**

10.1 The Friends may be wound up at any time if agreed at a Special Meeting of the Membership by at least two thirds of those Members present and voting. In the event of winding up, any assets after all debts have been paid shall be given to another Friends with similar aims.

## **Appendix 1**

### **A: Membership Rules for Members of the Friends of Blythe Hill Fields**

1. To attend all meetings wherever possible and send apologies to the Secretary if unable to attend.
2. To support the Committee in furthering the Aims of the Friends.
3. Take on other activities/specific projects to further the Aims of the Friends.
4. To ensure the Secretary has relevant contact details including an email address where possible. Minutes will only usually be circulated on the Friends' website. Any Member wishing to receive the minutes in paper copy must contact the Secretary.
5. To abide by the Code of Conduct at Meetings.

### **B: Code of Conduct at Meetings**

1. At all times, Members will respect views, opinions and suggestions of all others present.
2. Members shall conduct themselves in a polite and courteous manner. All Members will be given a chance to speak; speaking over another member is not acceptable. Members who speak over another during a meeting will be given a warning. Any further repetition, the Chair shall ask the Member to leave that particular meeting.
3. At no time during a meeting shall swearing be acceptable. Members who swear during a meeting will be given a warning. Any further repetition, the Chair shall ask the member to leave that particular meeting.
4. The Chair reserves the right to keep meetings moving and may need to close discussions in order to complete a meeting agenda.

5. If in the reasonable belief of a Committee Member a Member has acted in contravention of the Constitution or its Appendices, then that Member may be referred by the Committee and removed from the Membership (see 5.6 of the Constitution above).

## **Appendix 2**

### **Duties of the Executive**

#### **CHAIR**

- Chair meetings of the Membership and Committee;
- Direct the strategy and future priorities of the Friends, in collaboration with Secretary, the Committee and the Sub-Committees;
- Represent the Friends at functions/meetings that the Friends has been invited to;
- Act as spokesperson for the Friends as and when necessary;
- Take the lead in co-ordinating fundraising, particularly in relation to the annual Festival.

#### **SECRETARY**

- Prepare, in consultation with the Chair, the agenda for General Meetings of the Membership and meetings of the Committee and the Membership;
- Find and book appropriate meeting spaces;
- Take, circulate and store minutes of all meetings;
- Collect and circulate any other relevant information within the Membership;
- Prepare and arrange circulation of the Group's Newsletter;
- Supervise the mailing list which comprises the register of Membership.

#### **TREASURER**

- Supervise and be responsible for the financial affairs of the Friends;
- Keep good and proper accounts of all the Friends' income and expenditure;
- In particular, play a key role in establishing the budget for the annual Festival and in controlling the Festival's income and expenditure;
- Provide financial reports as soon as practical following large events such as an annual Festival and at the AGM;
- Undertake to have the Friends finances independently inspected each year in advance of the AGM;
- Undertake to seek financial advice on the Friends behalf as necessary.

**The original Constitution of the Friends was adopted at a General Meeting of the Membership on 9 March 2006 (the "Original Constitution"). Following the change of name from Blythe Hill Fields User Group to Friends of Blythe Hill Fields, the Original Constitution was re-adopted at a General Meeting on 13 November 2008. This version of the Constitution was adopted by the Friends on 19 October 2016.**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

**James Cross**

Chair