

Friends of Ruskin Park – AGM Minutes – 22 November 2017

Welcome

Nick Edwards opened the meeting as an established trustee of the Friends of Ruskin Park group following the resignation of our Chair David Whyte. Nick reintroduced Chris Norris and Nicola Bacon to members as other established trustees.

Previous Minutes

The minutes of the previous AGM held on 21 September 2016 were accepted

Trustee changes

Since the last AGM the following trustees have resigned

- David Whyte (Chair)
- Bridget Stutt (Treasurer)
- Vicki Badham
- Gen Maitland Hudson
- Jon Bennett

Nick asked members for the endorsement of new trustees appointed by the trustees earlier this year. The two new trustees are:

- Lucy Hadfield (new Chair)
- David Benson (new Treasurer)

Lucy and David introduced themselves.

All existing and new trustees standing for election were approved

Nick handed over the meeting to Lucy Hadfield to chair the rest of the meeting.

Lucy introduced Chris Norris as vice chair. She also introduced Julie Simpson and Tobias Hardy as likely new trustee appointments. Julie and Tobias introduced themselves.

The Chairs Thoughts on 2018

Lucy introduced her thoughts on Ruskin Park and Friend of Ruskin Park as an organisation.

Ruskin Park is beautiful. It has an important history and green legacy for us to enjoy today. It is a precious resource to this part of London, and it must be valued and cared for.

There are a strong number of active supporters who have made a real difference in so many ways, planting and physical improvements, such as saving the paddling pool, and events such as the fete and bandstand concerts.

It has a high 'footfall' for its area, both human and doggy, which is a both blessing and a curse. Ruskin Park is popular and valued, but perhaps too crowded at times which can degrade the natural environment.

Lambeth Landscapes are doing a good job since they took back management, making it more efficient. National and local public policy doesn't seem to prioritise parks, they're taken for granted and have been a soft touch for austerity cuts. So it is under-managed and under resourced.

Lucy would like to see the following improvements for Ruskin Park:

- The derelict stable block renovated and used for health-enhancing amenities that are accessible to all, and an opening up of this neglected corner of the park
- Better modern sports and exercise facilities meeting local needs, and better management of organised sports. They can happen all over the place at the moment and yet there are big spaces that are unused.
- Improved children's facilities
- More and smarter public toilets, litter bins, notice boards, gates etc.
- More spaces for community groups using the park to meet and gather, and hold events
- More design and cultivation of the landscape, pruning and planting
- More coordinated thinking and planning to make some of these dreams a possibility, which will depend on recurring sources of funding through public/private/charitable partnerships.
- Shared statutory and community responsibility for ensuring the by-laws are enforced.

Lucy provided some insight into the Friend of Ruskin Park organisation:

A major challenge for our small organisation of part-time volunteers is not to get overwhelmed by the number of priorities and possibilities, and trying to please everyone. The trustees have set out our aims and priorities for 2018, and some are actually dependent on more people joining in and taking some responsibility.

FoRP can do even more if more people join us, work together and give their support - time, money, skills and enthusiasm. Volunteering is rewarding, fun and can be life changing. And every bit helps Ruskin Park.

Lucy outlined the need for more help on gardening/landscaping, communications (electronic and traditional), events and people with practical, handy-with-tools type skills.

Annual Report 2016/17

Lucy introduced the FoRP Annual Report as published on our website and provided to the members in attendance.

This is our first report as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

Lucy thanked all of our key contributors over the past year. Most notably our outgoing Chair David Whyte who has contributed a huge amount to the park and FoRP as an organisation at a very difficult time and Andrew Makower who has led the volunteer effort for the paddling pool for the past two years and the Bandstand concerts.

David Benson summarised the accounts and took questions

Lucy submitted the report for approval and adoption.

The report was approved.

AOB and Questions

Sponsor a tree campaign was suggested as a way of replacing trees some of the older trees. FoRP and Lambeth feel we need a strategy first. This is currently being worked on by the tree group who are mapping out all of the trees in the park.. The next step will be to define a strategy for replacement of trees, what type of trees we want in the park and how we should be managing this.

Sponsor a park bench was suggested as a way of replacing many of the benches that are damaged or have disappeared from the park. Lambeth Parks were unaware of missing benches and asked that if anyone noticed things in the park going missing or have any safety concerns please report these to Lambeth by emailing -

parks@lambeth.co.uk

Lambeth have requested there is a masterplan in place for benches for Ruskin Park to ensure they are put in strategic areas and are of the agreed standard.

A question was raised about the Power Networks work in the park amid concerns they may damage some of the trees. The tree group will discuss with Power Networks contractors to address concerns.

Lara from Lambeth Council highlighted that S106 funding had been secured for repairs to the bandstand

Cllr Jim Dickson thanked the FORP trustees and volunteers for their efforts in Ruskin Park over 2017. He confirmed that the water bill for the paddling pool over summer would be paid for by Lambeth.

The meeting closed