



Friends of Ruskin Park – AGM Minutes 03 December 2019

In attendance

Lucy Hadfield (Chair)
Chris Norris (Vice-Chair)
David Benson (Trustee)
Susanne Currid (Trustee)
Julie Simpson (Trustee)
Tobias Hardy (Trustee)
Natalie Redston (Committee)
Cllr Becca Thackray
Andrew Cadey – Campbell Cadey Architects
Ruth Campbell – Campbell Cadey Architects
Lara Mifsud-Bonici – Lambeth Parks
22 other members

Apologies

Erica Walker (Trustee)
1 other member

Welcome

Lucy Hadfield welcomed everyone to the meeting and listed apologies received.

Previous Minutes

The minutes of the previous AGM held on 20 November 2018 were accepted

Trustee changes

Since the last AGM the following trustees have resigned

- Nicholas Edwards
- Tobias Hardy

Lucy asked members to endorse the new trustees appointed by the trustees earlier this year.

The new trustees are:

- Susanne Currid

The Trustee appointments were endorsed

Lucy Hadfield stood down and stood again for re-election.

Existing trustees standing for re-election were approved. Lucy will remain as Chair.

Committee Changes

Lucy advised that Natalie Redston has resigned from the committee and will be standing down at the end of the year.

Annual Report 2017/18

Lucy introduced and proposed the draft FoRP Annual Report as [published on the website](#) and provided to the members in attendance. She began by reviewing our activities and achievements over the year, and appreciation for those who made them happen. Most, but not all, related to activities the organisation had set out to do last year, and what was expected as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

There were substantial challenges this year with the paddling pool and litter-picking however despite this our activities were maintained. Lucy thanked Suzanne, Erica and all the volunteers for these two areas as they make such a difference to well-being and their work is not taken for granted.

We have maintained strong governance and communications. Lucy thanked our trustees, particularly Chris and Dave and other leaders, particularly Russell for our strong unmistakable brand.

Lucy highlighted key achievements under the following:

- Green projects and volunteering
- Events
- Partnership working with Lambeth

Green Achievements

Thanks to leadership from Susanne Currid and Chris Norris, this year FoRP secured several grants and managed a substantial number of enthusiastic volunteers who worked to improve the wildlife garden, the community garden (by working with the independent Ruskin Park Community Garden Group) and the pond. Corporate volunteering has also increased and so many parts of the park are seeing improvements.

Events

Our annual fete was the biggest to date, and for the second year running we were able to arrange a Frost Fair and Harvest Festival. Lucy thanked Julie Simpson, for her hard work on these, and partners, In Your Market.

The bandstand concerts were held throughout summer with excellent music. Lucy thanked Sharon Moloney who has commissioned the bands for many years and is standing down this year.

The John Ruskin at 200 Programme was ambitious, enlightening, inclusive and fun. Our namesake is still relevant and an inspiration to our aims. Congratulations was offered to the photography competition winners and entrants and to the poets, whose work is captured in a booklet which was made available at the meeting. Lucy thanked Mary Paterson for leading this programme.

Lambeth and Partnership Working

FoRP have seen improvements in Lambeth's attention to operational maintenance in the park and are very pleased that we now have a regular forum with senior Lambeth Landscapes staff to review progress, deal with problems and to look to future planning. There have been two important outcomes:

- Becoming a pilot health park and
- The development of a master or strategic plan for our park's sustainability and improvement. The strategic plan was discussed in more detail later

Some things haven't gone as well as we would have liked:

- The water courses in the park have changed and the pond levels have dropped alarmingly. Lambeth are currently looking into how this can be addressed
- We have decided to stop the wheat growing project for several reasons, but we remain committed to promoting growing food in an urban environment in partnership with the Community Gardening Group
- UK Power Networks' work was frustrating but now completed and they are funding new gates at Denmark Hill entrance, which will be coming soon

Lucy encouraged the FoRP membership to read the report in full. She highlighted that volunteering capacity is critical to the success of the organisation. We have advertised on our website for more people to commit their time and talents, and to join a going concern. She asked all members to consider and support the proposed priorities for the year ahead, as set out on page 16 of the report.

Accounts

Dave presented the financial statements as set out in the annual report.

FoRP's main income comes from our highly successful Summer Fete, bandstand tea surpluses and donations which come in across the year. Overall FoRP will start 2020 in a strong position and ready to continue to use the funds we have to improve and encourage use of the park. We have allocated £14,000 of our reserves to a discretionary funding pot, of which half is allocated to pay for quick win items in the park that can be easily implemented and half to pump-prime strategic projects.

As an example, FoRP will use some of these reserves for the new water fountains being installed in the park.

Deferred income has increased as FoRP have been awarded a grant from the Postcode Local Trust, but as we have not started to deliver on this project the entire amount will be recognised in income in 2020.

The accounts were submitted for approval and questions.

The accounts were approved.

The Annual Report was submitted for approval and adoption.

The Annual report was adopted.

Lucy opened the meeting to questions. Members asked:

1. Communication – could there be signage which would explain the various works / projects in the park and why they are being undertaken. Chris explained that the Master plan will include signage. Additionally, we are also looking to hold open meetings in the park where the public can come along and ask questions. The next one is likely to be scheduled in Spring.
2. Security in the park – members asked if security is something that is being looked at. Lara from Lambeth Parks was asked to respond. Specifically, on the matter of locking the park at night, Lara noted that most of the incidents that have occurred in Lambeth parks occur in locked parks rather than those left open. Lambeth are also exploring lighting options along the main walkway. FoRP have collated the responses provided by members of the public and submitted to Lambeth to inform their public consultation. They will respond in due course.

Campbell Cadey Masterplan Strategy – Presentation

Andrew and Ruth from Campbell Cadey provided members with an overview of the work carried out with FoRP over the past 18 months; and now also with Lambeth. Their work aims to identify and collate a number of the significant issues around Ruskin Park, highlighting possible strategic areas to move forward in order to make proposals that can enhance the user experience and magnify the beauty of the park.

Ruth highlighted two key aims:

- To make the park accessible and safe
- For the park to be an engaging and joyful place to be

The [Masterplan](#) work was well received by the group. Time for Q&A was held post the presentation, and the points below were raised:

- Will the playing fields be better maintained? What is mentioned in the Masterplan?
- Refuse and rubbish including recycling needs to be included within design
- Concern about the impact on birdlife and wildlife in general if dogs are allowed through the current dogs on lead area
- Importance to have solitary spaces free from dogs was highlighted
- Is there a tree management plan? Will it link in with the Masterplan strategy?
- Request for more exercise equipment that can be utilised by all ages to be included. (The Trustees pointed out that the Steel Warriors equipment is designed to be used by all and that free sessions are currently being provided in the park to show people how they could utilise the equipment).
- Members were keen to understand more of the mentioned park attendant proposed to be onsite.

AOB

Lara from Lambeth Parks advised that the final work for UK Power Networks is scheduled to start on 09 December and will require the main entrance to Denmark Hill to be closed for a maximum of two days. Notices will be posted around the park to inform the public.

The meeting closed