



Annual General Meeting, Temple Bowls Club: 16 January 2024

Name	Role
Lucy Hadfield	Trustee (Co-Chair)
Kate Malleson	Trustee (Co-Chair)
Sarah Salter	Treasurer
Chris Norris	Trustee
Mandy Millward	Trustee
Céline Gilbert	Trustee
Kathy Erasmus	Trustee
Julie Simpson	Committee member
Jemima Ashdown	Committee member
Claire Vinycomb	Committee member
Jo Broadbent	Committee member
Abimbola Oke	Committee member

Welcome

Lucy Hadfield, co-chair, introduced the FoRP Committee members' present and welcomed Lambeth colleagues

- Kevin Crook, Assistant Director Neighbourhoods
- Lara Mifsud-Bonici, Senior Parks and Sports Development Officer
- Cllr Deepak Sardiwal.

All members and non-members present were welcomed.

Apologies for absence

Diamond Ashiagbor, Sara Robertson-Jonas and Tom Smith.

Minutes of last AGM, 17 January 2023

The meeting approved the minutes.

Trustee changes

- Resignations: Michelle Warbis and Andy Ruck during the year
- Chris Norris and Mandy Millward were reappointed as trustees
- Jo Broadbent was appointed as a trustee

- Meeting approved the appointments.

Chair role: Lucy Hadfield has been a trustee and chair for five and a half years and this past year, shared the role with Kate Malleson which has spread the load. She will now be stepping down with Kate continuing. Céline Gilbert has agreed to be interim co-chair.

Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23

FoRP's accounting year runs from September to August. The annual report explained the purposes, intentions, gave an assessment of the year and strategy for the future. Thanks to Chris Norris who lead on the report.

The chair presented a summary of the report. Highlighted reflections were:

- Our aims and objectives remained the same as previous years
- Our biggest asset are our volunteers who have given so much and are heartily thanked for their contributions over the past year
- For 2024, we want solid continuity, capital programme execution, gardening, events, day-to-day activities
- Continue to speak for diverse park users
- Work collaboratively with Lambeth Council
- Keep in financial good health.

There was also a call for more volunteers and new committee members to fill gaps.

Financial accounts: Sarah Salter

New software is now in place as is a paid-for accountant to assist with the accounts; Sarah is not an accountant.

The meeting was directed to the financial activity pages in the report.

Lambeth Council funds the summer bandstand concerts. Other funds come from the National Lottery grant for garden improvements and the National Grid contributed towards the summer fete. Other, individual donations have been received for unrestricted use e.g. tree planting. More funds in the restricted funds than before, these will be used for future gardening activities. The bench scheme also raised funds.

Lucy thanked Sarah for her work on the finances which were approved and will be passed to the Charity Commission now.

The formal business of the AGM was concluded.

Special interest projects

Chris noted the priorities for the year:

- tree planting
- Labyrinth and Community Gardens continued improvements
- tree donation scheme planned.

Céline and Mandy reviewed some of the year's other achievements and future plans including

- Community garden: more volunteers including younger people, increased interest, a very social space, Harvest Festival with music from volunteers, sharing of food, stall at the fete raised funds.

- Park gardening: Labyrinth Garden has been the main focus with Urban Canopy's involvement. Regular volunteers have made a huge difference to the space.
- Willow Garden: volunteers with specific health needs have been coming to regular sessions supported, through SLaM, by Caroline Lambert which have been very successful. We hope to continue these.
- Bench scheme: 5 new benches installed this past year and money raised.
- Photography competition will feature again this year.

The summer fete is due to go ahead on 15 June and Julie made a request for additional volunteers before and after the event to help set up and break down – especially for the heavy lifting.

The dog show will also return on 15 September.

Questions and comments to the Committee

The chair of the Herne Hill Society, Rebecca Tee, praised the Annual Report and presentation, highlighting the amount of work and planning needed to put it together.

Q: Football pitches, are fees paid when they are booked?

A: Sadly not always.

Q: Paddling pool update?

A: We've had two good seasons but with some difficulties around cleaning. We have a partnership with Urban Village for its management. This year was its first after a lot of investment. It was a bit disappointing to have problems but we got over them and it's now much cleaner. It is a challenge to operate it but the facility is well used and loved.

Andrew Makower thanked Urban Village for driving the project and 'three cheers' to Suzanne.

Chris Norris explained that a lot of maintenance is needed and Tim, park officer, helped out with the volunteers – more were needed for continuity.

Q: Could the pool have uses in winter e.g. skateboarding, outdoor yoga?

A: Officially it is 'locked' over winter as it is not maintained then; surface painting will happen. More practical to consider skate ramps elsewhere.

Lucy Hadfield promoted the advantages of volunteering and joining the FoRP committee as a good way to make friends, meet interesting people and of course support our lovely park. She also commended Lambeth and its dedicated staff who also love the park. Lucy reflected on the changes over her tenure e.g. Covid and park use, renovations throughout, events, Steel Warriors and people just enjoying the space – a lot of memories to take away. Lucy also had special words for Chris who has made such an amazing contribution to FoRP, being pivotal to grant applications.

Lara Mifsud-Bonici said the council really appreciated how Lucy had worked with Lambeth.

Update from Lambeth Council, Kevin Crook, Assistant Director Neighbourhoods

Kevin explained his role as everything in park management, events etc.

He praised the work of so many volunteers who helped in the park. The council's resources were limited so the high standards maintained are valued.

Fields in Trust , charity, protection in perpetuity discussions are concluding. Council needs full title to Ruskin Park, with its legal team, so the deed can be signed.

Strategic plan 2022: includes planting of 5,000 trees/hedges across the borough; kerbside trees; planting in housing estates; extra £10m for parks, £1.3m for Ruskin Park. The park can expect to have replacement trees as old ones dying prematurely.

The council faces financial pressures but recognize the importance of parks to residents. The park service is focusing on income generation targets. Local authority wants to avoid bankruptcy.

Playground/paddling pool: have been upgraded; kiosk/landscaping, more storage.

Resurfacing paths: planned this year; there are tree root issues in places.

Redgra/7 x 7 pitch: Football Association involvement; multi-sports area planned.

Portico: further refurbishment.

Depot: considering a proposal for a community sauna as an income generation option.

Toilets: both sets to be refurbished.

Lighting: has never worked so hope to get it operational. Pressure from NHS staff re safety when walking at night/early morning. Floodlighting of tennis courts.

Questions and answers

Park opening/locking: there were differing views on the value/disadvantages of leaving the space unlocked e.g. commuters' advantage, safety. Kevin reported 14 parks are locked, the majority being open. There will be a 9-month trial to leave three open. There is authorised park use for lit areas only.

Stable block update: hopes of renovation this year with £1m being made available for derelict buildings in the area. £7-800,000 needed to restore it and so a commercial lease would have to be applied for. Further funds would be needed to complete the renovation. The project remains uncertain. The meeting noted the sad state of the site and ongoing deterioration. The promised tarpaulin to reduce water ingress to the roof had not appeared. The project had been at 'the front of the queue' and was signed off but is now in question once more.

Litter bins: adequacy of these questioned but has to be balanced with larger bins attracting fly tipping. Kevin to discuss with local team.

Community sauna: to be wood fired and information on pollution data awaited from the Community Interest Company operators. Air quality a priority in Lambeth.

Thanks to FoRP

Cllr Sardiwal thanked FoRP and Lucy in particular for all the work and effort put into the park making it a 'golden era' for Ruskin Park.

The meeting closed.