

DRAFT

FRIENDS OF MILE END PARK

AGM Minutes

Monday 30 March 2015 at 7.30 pm in the Ecology Pavilion, Mile End Park

Present: Debbie Frazer (Chair) **(DF)**
Joan Griffiths (outgoing Secretary) **(JG)**
John White (Treasurer/website/membership/recycling) **(JW)**
Kerrin Isaacs (incoming Secretary) **(KI)**
Colleen Bowen **(CB)**
Richard Thomas **(RT)**
Terence O’Flaherty **(TO’F)**
Alf Barrett **(AB)**
Valerie Barrett **(VB)**
Paul Barrett **(PB)**
Allan Cousens **(AC)**
Robert Ricks **(RR)**
Bryony Frost **(BF)** (representing the student body of Queen Mary University of London)
Paul Sammut **(PS)** (representing London Borough of Tower Hamlets)

The Chair opened the AGM by welcoming all those who were in attendance and introducing each person.

As at least six members of FOMEPA were present, the AGM was quorate.

1. Apologies for absence

Mohammed Raja had advised that he was unable to attend the AGM. PS was attending in his place but joined the meeting part-way through agenda item 6.

2. Minutes of last AGM

The minutes of the AGM held on 15 September 2013 had been circulated prior to the AGM and were approved unanimously as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chair. (Note that there had not been an AGM in 2014.)

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the last AGM.

4. Election of officers

By way of introduction, DF explained that the Committee meets approximately four times per year. Its role is to support Mile End Park, acting both as a friend and a pressure group where necessary.

DF (Chair) and JW (Treasurer/website/membership/recycling) were re-elected unanimously.

It was noted that JG was standing down as Secretary with effect from the AGM; KI had volunteered to join the Committee and assume this role and she was elected unanimously. DF thanked JG for all of her hard work and commitment over the years on behalf of the Committee. JG said that it had been a great pleasure to be involved in FOMEPE and she was keen to remain involved on the Committee.

Richard Thomas (RT) and Colleen Bowen (CB) indicated that they would like to join the Committee as new members.

Terence O'Flaherty (TO'F) and Paul Barrett (PB) both indicated that they would also like to attend Committee meetings on a trial basis to establish whether they would be interested in joining the Committee on an ongoing basis.

5. Confirmation of Revised Constitution

JW explained that the format of the revised new Friends of Mile End Park Constitution had been based on the standard format used for constitutions for other “Friends of” park groups. It was noted that this version included provisions regarding inclusion and diversity and the Committee supported these changes.

The meeting discussed that it would be appropriate to agree one minor change to the drafting of the Constitution so that “park users” were mentioned explicitly in paragraph 3 (“representing a broad cross-section of residents, park users, community groups and business ventures....”).

The AGM formally accepted the revised Constitution subject to this change.

ACTION:

- a) KI to amend the Constitution as discussed at the AGM.**
- b) JW to post the Constitution on the FOMEPP website.**

6. Chair’s Report on Activities and Developments

DF briefed the AGM on the activities of FOMEPP.

She began by providing an update on the state of the Park, commenting that it was a well-maintained and attractive space with good planting.

She then mentioned that the Arts Pavilion was currently being used to host an art exhibition and that there was a concern about the ease with which artists were able to hang their work. It was noted that it was desirable for the artists to be advised exactly what facilities would be available in the Arts Pavilion for display purposes.

The meeting then discussed the possibility of there being a café within the Arts Pavilion over the summer. The disadvantage of this was that it would potentially take up quite a lot of the venue space. Paul advised that the presence of a café was incompatible with renting out the Arts Pavilion as a venue and that in his experience such cafes are often loss-making and therefore not an appealing prospect to suppliers. TO'F noted that it could be designed to occupy a small space only and that it would generate income. CB noted that a number of new coffee shops and cafes had opened in the area recently and that it would therefore be more challenging to make it a commercially-viable proposition. CB suggested the possibility of inviting a mobile coffee kiosk to coincide with exhibitions at the Arts Pavilion.

Paul confirmed that both the Arts Pavilion and the Ecology Pavilion have water dispensers.

The conclusion of the discussion was that a permanent café in the Arts Pavilion would not be viable but consideration could be given to inviting mobile kiosks during exhibitions.

7. Treasurer's Report on Finance: Annual Accounts

In his capacity as Treasurer, JW presented two sets of accounts to the AGM, in respect of 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, as they had not been presented in 2014.

JW advised the AGM that the main area of expenditure for FOMEF is the Dog Show and Park Life event. In addition, there have historically been some additional projects that required funding, such as the Active at 60 Walking in the Park events and Photos from the Footpath photography walks.

In 2012-2013, FOMEF received some income from participants on walks and as a result the income and expenditure were similar.

In 2013-2014, FOMEF was able to save approximately £1,500 by asking Niki Stevens to organise the Dog Show and Park Life event. In addition, first aid cover for the event had been provided in-house rather than by St John's Ambulance, which generated an additional saving of £195 and separate insurance cover was not necessary as the London Borough of Tower Hamlets public liability insurance provided sufficient cover. It was noted, however, that the decision to save money by not advertising the event in East End Life was a false economy given the size of its readership.

The accounts illustrated net assets of £3,130.64 as at 31 December 2014. JW confirmed that he preferred to have some funds for FOMEF to be able to draw on in the case of emergency.

JW also pointed out that at times the receipt of fundraising was quite staggered, such that the second instalment would be received up to 9 months after the payment of the first instalment.

Following JW's presentation, the AGM formally accepted the accounts. The Chair thanked JW on behalf of the Committee for his hard work in preparing the accounts and also formally recorded the Committee's thanks to Diana Wright who had assisted JW in the preparation of the accounts.

8. Future Events: Dog Show and Park Life and any other suggestions invited

The Committee discussed various aspects of the Park Life and Dog Show event planned for Saturday 20 June 2015 (rather than on Sundays as in previous years). The event would run from 1pm to 4pm with the Dog Show taking place at 3pm preceded by registration for the Dog Show from 1pm and dog agility.

The Committee would try to obtain sponsorship for the event and had discussed potential sources of funding at its recent Committee meeting on 23 March 2015. These sources included Starbucks (which had opened recently on Mile End Road and would possibly consider funding a local

event/organisation) or the Tower Hamlets – Bow East and West community funds.

A sub-committee of the Committee would be finalising planning for the event over the coming weeks and would welcome any ideas for stalls or activities for the event from members. During the AGM members mentioned the following ideas: adopt-a-bike; sporting activities led by LBTH and/or Queen Mary University of London students' union community sports programme coordinators/volunteer undergraduates; smoothie/blender bikes; coconut shy; creepy crawly stall; quiz for children; and tug o' war.

In relation to suggestions for future events other than the Park Life and Dog Show event, the AGM discussed the possibility of pond-clearing to remove algae, ideally during the autumn which is the best time of year for this. Paul confirmed that LBTH is geared up to running this activity with volunteers. In addition, other walks could be organised with a particular focus (such as bats - Queen Mary University of London have likely got bat researchers and might be able to assist; spiders; birds; or trees)

9. Update from Paul Sammut, Mile End Park (in place of Mohammed Raja)

PS reiterated DF's comments about the current state of the Park and advised the AGM that there had been an extensive planting scheme, including to the front and back of the Arts Pavilion.

In addition, parking restrictions had been implemented by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets on both Haverfield Road and by Budgens to assist with problems of unauthorised parking and fly-tipping.

The meeting discussed a number of recent instances of inappropriate behaviour in the Park and PS confirmed that the London Borough of Tower Hamlets had taken steps to address this by opening up areas of the Park to enhance sightlines and, for example, by upgrading the lighting in secluded areas.

In addition, PS reported that bird boxes were being mounted to compensate for the removal of tree cover in these areas and the Park Management Committee was working in conjunction with a local primary school to decorate them.

JG mentioned in particular that the skateboard park was a great asset. PS confirmed that it is very well-known in skateboarding circles.

The meeting then discussed the reassignment of use of the area of land outside The Palm Tree, known as the Scrape, to encourage ecological diversity.

10. Any other business

There was no other business.

11. Date of next Committee meeting

The AGM was advised that the next Committee meeting would be held at 7.30pm on Thursday 11 June 2015. It was noted that all would be welcome to attend.

Subsequent meetings would be arranged in due course and communicated to Committee members by email.

The Chair declared the meeting closed.

*Kerrin Isaacs
April 2016*