

FRIENDS OF MILE END PARK

AGM Minutes

Wednesday 27 April 2016 at 7.15 pm in the Art Pavilion, Mile End Park

Present: John White **(JW)** – acting Chair of Committee
Kerrin Isaacs **(KI)** - Secretary
Colleen Bowen **(CB)** – chairing AGM
Richard Thomas **(RT)**

Debbie Frazer **(DF)**
Gail Stevens **(GS)**
Lydia Burke **(LB)**
Joan Griffiths **(JG)**
Stephanie Dowker **(SD)**
Jane Preston **(JP)**
Vicky O’Sullivan **(VO’S)**
John Matheson **(JM)**
Graham Day **(GD)**
Steve Higgins **(SH)**
Julia Miller **(JM)**
Gerry Matthews **(GM)**

Mohammed Raja **(MR)** (London Borough of Tower Hamlets)
Paul Sammut **(PS)** (London Borough of Tower Hamlets)

CB opened by welcoming all those who were in attendance and explained that she would be chairing the AGM. The Committee members then introduced themselves (JW, CB, KI and RT).

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

It was noted that the agenda order would change slightly to accommodate the late arrival of DF who would be joining the meeting mid-way (she joined in the middle of agenda item 7).

1. Apologies for absence

KI (as Secretary) noted that she had received apologies from the following:

- Roshan Ansari – Committee member
- Bryony Frost – Public Engagement Officer from Queen Mary University of London
- Councillor David Edgar
- Councillor Asma Begum
- Councillor Joshua Peck
- Councillor Rachael Saunders

2. Minutes of 2015 AGM

The minutes of the AGM held on 30 March 2015 had been circulated prior to the AGM.

KI confirmed that the minor change agreed at the 2015 AGM to the revised new Friends of Mile End Park Constitution had been made and the current version was available on the FOMEPE website.

The minutes were approved unanimously as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were signed at the end of the meeting by DF in her capacity as Chair of the Committee at the time of the 2015 AGM.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the last AGM.

4. Election of officers

KI confirmed that she had not received any nominations for election in advance of the AGM or at the AGM.

By way of background, CB explained that the Chair of the Committee had stood down in September 2015 and therefore a new Chair was required to be elected (JW had been acting Chair since September 2015).

Officers were elected as follows as follows:

- a. Chair – JW offered to stand. He was nominated by JG and seconded by GS. He was elected unanimously.
- b. Secretary - KI confirmed that she was happy to continue in the role. She was nominated by CB and seconded by GD. She was elected unanimously.
- c. Treasurer – no nominations were received and CB therefore agreed to step in to the role temporarily pending a future appointment.
- d. Other Committee roles – RT confirmed that he was happy to be a member of the Committee again. SD said that she would be willing to join the Committee.

5. Treasurer's Report on Finance: Annual Accounts

In his capacity as outgoing Treasurer, JW presented a set of accounts to the AGM in respect of the last financial year, i.e. 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015.

Turning to 2016, JW advised the AGM that the main area of expenditure for FOMEF continued to be the Park Life Community Fair and Dog Show. Although the cost of running this event is significant, over the years the Committee members have gained a lot of experience at running such events cost-effectively, for example insurance cover is no longer sourced separately as the London Borough of Tower Hamlets has public liability insurance that provides cover for the event and this year's event was able to benefit from the kind offer of The Victoria pub on Grove Road to allow those attending the event to use their toilets.

The Committee had been successful in obtaining some new sponsorship, from Keatons estate agents in Bow, who provided £500 to be used for the Park Life Community Fair and Dog Show. In addition, sponsorship had been sought from the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, the East End Community Foundation and the Tower Hill Trust.

The accounts illustrated net assets of £2,582.92 as at 31 December 2015.

Following JW's presentation, the AGM formally accepted the accounts.

6. Update on Future Events

Park Life Community Fair and Dog Show

The Committee updated the AGM on various aspects of the Park Life Community Fair and Dog Show that was planned for the afternoon of Sunday 3 July 2016. As well as the dog show itself, there would be dog agility and a range of other activities appealing to all age groups, rides, live music, juggling and refreshments.

As noted above, the Committee had been successful in obtaining sponsorship for the event from Keatons (£500).

The Committee was planning publicity for the event by way of posters, leaflets and advertising. This aimed to raise awareness and generate support across all sections of the local community.

The Committee would be finalising planning for the event over the coming weeks and would welcome any ideas for stalls or activities from members (these could be submitted by email to info@fomep.org.uk).

Monthly litter-picking

The Committee has organised regular litter-picking events on Sunday mornings (usually starting at 10am and lasting for up to two hours). Each session focuses on a particular area of the Park.

These have proven to be a popular activity, with each session attended by one or more Committee members and a number of Friends and/or members of the public; on average, between 6 and 12 people have attended recent sessions.

The sessions provide an opportunity to do some practical voluntary work in the Park, whilst also meeting other members of the community and enhancing the sense of local involvement in the Park. In addition, this provides a good opportunity to assess the Park on a regular basis and to give feedback as appropriate to the Mile End Park Management Team.

The sessions end at the Coffee Room where complimentary coffee is kindly provided for volunteers.

The Committee intends to continue to run litter-picking sessions on an ongoing basis. Details will be posted on the FOMEPA website and email reminders are sent out.

Any other suggestions

JW mentioned that the Committee would try to arrange an opportunity to clear the water in the ponds.

There were no other suggestions of activities.

7. Update from Mile End Park Management Team

CB introduced MR and PS from Mile End Park Management Team and thanked them for attending the AGM and agreeing to speak.

The Committee meets regularly with representatives of the Mile End Park Management Team; usually this takes the format of a walk through the Park to allow the opportunity for plenty of discussion about specific issues. The most recent meeting had taken place on 30 March 2016 and had lasted for approximately three hours.

There was no formal presentation but instead questions and answers on the following topics:

Deteriorating condition of the ponds

GS raised a concern about the continuing deterioration of the ponds following her first raising this in 2014 with Steve Murray (Head of Parks, London Borough of Tower Hamlets).

PS agreed that the ponds do look dry. PS said that there are issues with the middle pond losing water, but the pond outside the Ecology Pavilion is now filling up well with water. All of the Park's water comes from a borehole; there have been problems with the pumps that are needed to circulate water throughout the Park (one of them had broken and needed to be replaced; the other one had broken but was able to be repaired). They are only operated sometimes to avoid them burning out. It is intended that a booster pump will start to be used (this had cost just under £8,000) and usage will need to be monitored so as not to over-pressurise it. In the meantime, they would operate a maintenance plan which consists of filling each pond in rotation using a hose.

PS noted that pipes have also been installed between the ponds to circulate water.

Section 106 funding

JW suggested that any Section 106 money given to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets from the easement at Bow Wharf should technically be

used within the Park as the Park is a charity and not owned by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

GM (from the Tower Hamlets Wheelers) thought that the Fields in Trust Association (formerly called the National Playing Fields Association) is the ground owner of all playing fields set up by King George V and wondered whether it would be worth investigating whether FOMEF could make an application to the Fields in Trust Association.

CB suggested that we could add a section on the FOMEF website about how the Park is financed.

Death of Alexia Walenkaki in Play Area

JG asked about the death of a child last year in the children's play area and why there had been a delay of almost a year regarding the outcome of the investigation. PS confirmed that part of the Park remains out of bounds (including the café) whilst investigations are ongoing, although on Easter Monday more than half of the children's play area had been reopened. Police and Health and Safety Executive investigations continue and will inform a decision about whether a criminal case is brought or not. PS explained that, if the police decide that there is no criminal case to answer, the Health and Safety Executive then decide whether to prosecute the Council.

CB thanked MR and PS on behalf of FOMEF.

8. Chair's Report on Activities and Developments

DF reiterated comments made earlier in the meeting and noted in particular that she enjoyed the walkarounds of the Park that she had attended and found them very useful in terms of growing her knowledge about the Park, for example learning about the different planting regimes.

CB thanked DF on behalf of the Committee for being a great Chair and a very stable influence.

9. Any other business

There was no other business.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.32pm and refreshments were served.

*Kerrin Isaacs
May 2016*