

FRIENDS OF MILE END PARK

AGM Minutes

Wednesday 11 April 2018 at 7.15 pm in the Ecology Pavilion, Mile End Park

Present:

Committee Members: John White **(JW)** – Chair
Stephanie Dowker **(SD)** - Treasurer
Kerrin Isaacs **(KI)** - Secretary
Gail Stevens **(GS)**
Roshan Ansari **(RA)**

Other:

Janice Cartwright **(JC)**
Mira Connolly **(MC)**
Joan Griffiths **(JG)**
Susan Hutchinson **(SH)**
Sue Johnstone **(SJ)**
Geoff Juden **(GJ)**
Jagir Kaur **(JK)**
Natalia Langlais **(NL)**
Anne Marks-Maran **(AM-M)**
Miles **(M)**

Paul Sammut **(PS)** (London Borough of Tower Hamlets)
Keith Woodward **(KW)** (London Borough of Tower Hamlets)

The AGM started at 7.30pm rather than 7.15pm.

JW opened by welcoming all those who were in attendance and explained that he would be chairing the AGM.

He started by asking the Committee Members and other attendees to

introduce themselves.

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

1. Apologies for absence

KI noted that she had received apologies from Jane Preston.

2. Minutes of 2017 AGM

The minutes of the AGM held on 5 April 2017 had been uploaded to the Document Store on the FOMEPA website shortly after the AGM.

The minutes were approved unanimously as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were signed at the end of the meeting by JW (as Chair).

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the 2017 AGM.

4. Chair's Report on Activities and Developments

JW presented an overview of the recent activities of FOMEPA and developments since the 2017 AGM.

The Park Life Community Fair and Dog Show held in July 2017 had been a really successful community event, building on the success of this event in previous years. The Committee had been particularly pleased with the strong attendance (over 1,000 attendees drawn from a cross-section of the community with 300 to 400 in attendance at any one time) and very positive feedback for the event, following on from a successful publicity campaign including the creation of additional banners, the delivery of approximately 5,000 flyers to residential streets and local schools, shops and churches and increased use of social media platforms. In addition, as well as the dog show itself, a wide range of activities and stalls had been

provided that would appeal across the community.

JW also noted that the Committee had been really pleased to work in close collaboration with Mile End Park Management Team on the planning and execution of the event and thanked them for this and for the many popular activities that they had provided on the day, such as five-a-side football and the climbing wall. He was especially pleased as this had been noted as one of the areas to build upon from the 2016 event.

As well as the Park Life Community Fair and Dog Show, the Committee has continued to organise monthly litter-picking sessions in the Park. These have been well-attended by members of the community across a wide age range.

As well as providing an opportunity to collect litter, the sessions provide a good opportunity to visit and assess the Park on a regular basis in different seasons and to give feedback as appropriate to the Mile End Park Management Team. Each session aims to focus on a particular area of the Park and to provide a “deep clean” that would otherwise use up valuable council (staff) resources.

JW noted that he would provide more details about future sessions later in the meeting. JW noted the Committee’s thanks to Mohammed Raja of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) who had provided the Committee with more litter-picking equipment following discussion at the 2017 AGM.

As Chair JW has liaised closely with LBTH over the preceding year and has established a good working relationship with Mayor Biggs who is supportive of the work of FOMEPE, for example that FOMEPE be permitted to use the Art and Ecology Pavilions up to six times per year for events.

JW also noted the support that FOMEPE receives from the wider community and thanked in particular The Coffee Room for providing free coffee for attendees after the monthly litter-picking sessions and The

Greedy Cow restaurant for donating a £25 voucher to be drawn as a raffle prize at the AGM.

JW also thanked Graham Barker for his very generous donation of his booklet 'Beer Barrels and Brewhouses', copies of which were available free of charge to attendees of the AGM. Copies were also available at Ye Olde Corner Shoppe.

JW noted that he would expand upon some of these topics later in the AGM.

Following JW's report, JG and JW spoke to the meeting about Lizzie Treip who had died on 27 October 2017. JG recalled that Lizzie had been one of the founders of FOMEPE, giving generously of her time after MS at the age of 35 had forced her to give up professional work. Lizzie organised the first of our annual summer events, days of opportunities to try out many sports called "Get Moving" in 2003 and 2004, followed by a "Town and Country Historical Fair" in 2005. Another event she organised attracted crowds of children to meet Percy the Park Keeper (an animated children's television character) and his creator who drew for them.

FOMEPE urged Tower Hamlets Parks to waive any fee for the Ecology Pavilion and Lizzie's memorial celebration drew over 100 attendees.

JG offered to try to place some of FOMEPE's records in the Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives and this was welcomed by the meeting.

5. Treasurer's Report on Finance and Annual Accounts

SD (Treasurer) delivered the Treasurer's Report on Finance and presented a set of accounts to the AGM in respect of the last financial year, i.e. 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017. Both these documents were circulated during the meeting to all attendees.

SD noted that, as usual, the accounts were straightforward. The accounts for calendar year 2017 show income of £2,301.70 (which was primarily

attributed to a major grant from LBTH) and expenditure of £4,920.89. The deficit of £2,619.19 was covered by reserves, so assets in the current account have reduced from £3,480.38 to £861.19 (the net assets as at 31 December 2017). This use of some reserves was necessary because, compared with 2016, income was substantially reduced because several grant applications were unsuccessful.

From the cash expenditure of £4,920.89 in connection with The Park Life Community Fair and Dog Show, almost half (£2,330) was spent on arts/craft/dance/music, approximately one-third (£1,743.30) on gazebos/tables/chairs, approximately 10% (£458.38) on marketing and lesser amounts on equipment/materials/TEN licence.

In kind expenditure of £7,513 is based on estimate. Almost half (£3,690) is attributed to LBTH for use of the Park, insurance cover, first aid provision and publicity. Contributions in kind from the Climbing Wall and Palm Tree/Victoria pubs (toilets) are given as £473. The remainder (£3,350) is attributed to the PDSA (£1,000) and FOMEV volunteers (£2,300).

SD noted the sponsorship of £500 that the Committee had received from Keatons estate agents and thanked them on behalf of the Committee. SD also thanked The Pizza Room for their donation during the financial year.

Following SD's presentation, the AGM formally accepted the accounts and they were signed at the end of the meeting by JW (as Chair) and by SD (as Treasurer).

JW also noted his thanks to SD for her excellent work as Treasurer.

6. Alexia Walenkaki

JW provided an update to the meeting following the tragic death of Alexia Walenkaki in the play park in July 2015. The CPS announced in March 2018 that they would not press charges against LBTH, the HSE have not yet published their report and the coroner's inquest is scheduled to take place in May.

JG asked PS whether it would be possible for the Committee to accompany Mile End Park Management Team on their annual park inspection of the play park. PS confirmed that a robust and transparent system was in place and provided the following information about the inspections:

- annual inspections are carried out by an independent accredited body that covers the whole park (i.e. not just the play park)
- since 2015 inspections have been carried out using GPS technology so it is possible to see with precision where inspections have been undertaken and faults reported
- any reported faults are required to be supported by photographs and PS will be emailed immediately where faults are assessed as medium or high risk
- the frequency of inspection complies with statutory requirements – visual inspections are carried out at least weekly; operational inspections are carried out at least monthly; annual inspections are carried out by an independent body

SD commented that it would be useful for the Committee to receive a copy of the inspector's report and PS offered to share this.

JG thanked PS for the information and confirmed that she was happy with the information provided about the inspections.

7. Update on Future Events

Community Fair and Dog Show

JW advised the AGM that the Committee had reluctantly taken the difficult decision not to organise a Community Fair and Dog Show in 2018. This was partly because the Committee comprises only a small number of volunteers who fit in organising the event around other commitments such as work and childcare and partly because of the very high workload

associated with the organisation, in particular related to securing funding through sponsorship and grants and consequently FOMEPE's current financial position as set out by SD earlier in the meeting with insufficient reserves to be certain of being able to run the event.

PS commented that when the Park management had been advised of the Committee's decision they thought it would be a shame for the Community Fair and Dog Show not to take place in 2018 (not least because they felt it was such an integral part of what is on offer in Mile End Park over the summer and it had been run continuously for 17 years) and therefore on behalf of LBTH he would like to offer that Mile End Park runs the event with the support of FOMEPE. This would allow FOMEPE to focus on delivering a few specific elements for the event such as the Dog Show and also focus more generally on increasing membership and fundraising activities without shouldering the financial burden of the event in 2018.

PS suggested that he discuss this with the Committee in detail shortly after the AGM (as LBTH would need to know by Friday 13 April) and work towards a date of Sunday 22 July 2018.

On behalf of the Committee JW thanked PS and this was reinforced by SJ.

Monthly litter-picking sessions

Litter picking sessions are set to resume at the end of April after a break over the winter months (next date 29 April 2018 and future dates to be posted on the FOMEPE website).

These usually take place on the last Sunday morning of each month, starting at 10am and lasting for up to two hours, followed by complimentary coffee afterwards provided by The Coffee Room. All equipment is provided. Full details of dates and times would be posted on the FOMEPE website with email reminders closer to the time.

SJ noted that she would like to see increased publicity about the sessions which would likely encourage greater attendance.

AM-M asked the Committee to consider running some of the sessions on either a Saturday or Sunday afternoon rather than a Sunday morning to enable people to attend who are busy on Sunday mornings.

GJ noted that litter-picking is one of Mayor Biggs' priorities and suggested that sessions could be publicised on the LBTH website.

Urban Makers East

Urban Makers East is holding a makers' market at the Ecology Pavilion on 21 and 22 April for independent designer-makers. JW had secured a free stall at this event and the Committee will use this opportunity to raise the profile of FOMEPE.

Publicity

JW showed the AGM the banners that FOMEPE had recently designed and these were well received.

PS also offered to investigate whether it would be possible for a marquee to be made with the FOMEPE logo.

PS noted that LBTH is redesigning the Park website and asked the Committee to provide some wording to publicise FOMEPE and its activities, for example the monthly litter-picking sessions.

Any other suggestions

There were no further suggestions of activities during the AGM.

For reference, suggestions may be made at any time via twitter (@TheGreenSandwich), email (info@fomepe.org.uk) or LBTH's Mile End

Park Facebook Page.

The meeting had a brief break for five minutes. JW selected the winning ticket in the raffle and the prize of the voucher for The Greedy Cow Restaurant was given to JC.

8. Election of officers

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

Officers were elected unanimously as follows:

- a. Chair – JW
- b. Treasurer – SD
- c. Secretary - KI

JW also noted that Colleen Bowen had decided to stand down from the Committee for personal reasons and expressed his heartfelt thanks on behalf of the Committee and FOMEPA for her enormous contribution over the last few years.

JW told the attendees that there were a number of other Committee members – GS and RA who were both at the AGM and Richard Thomas and Terence O’Flaherty who had been unable to attend.

JW noted that we would be keen to welcome some additional Committee members, particularly to assist with publicity and marketing.

9. Update from Mile End Park Management Team

JW thanked PS (Parks Engagement Officer for LBTH Parks Department) for attending the AGM and agreeing to speak.

PS had not prepared a presentation but was happy to take questions and led a discussion on the following topics (in addition to the discussion that had already taken place earlier in the meeting on inspections):

Ponds

GJ asked PS for a status update on the ponds. PS confirmed that they were no longer leaking and the water levels are looking good following work by a specialist pump contractor and investment in a maintenance regime during the past year, including ensuring that access points to the pumps are kept free of debris and that distribution of water in the boreholes is even.

Fly-tipping

There had been a couple of incidences of fly-tipping on Copperfield Road and recent reports of fly-tipping of poisoned meat on the Victoria Park Facebook page. JW had tried to pursue this but had not been able to.

Anti-social and criminal behaviour

SD noted that she was conscious of the increasing prevalence of drug-dealing in nearby streets though there seems to be less in the Park itself. PS commented that there are areas with greater anti-social behaviour in the Park, such as around the urban adventure base (it takes one hour on Mondays for hundreds of nitrous oxide canisters to be picked up from this area of the Park). LBTH has engaged with the Rapid Response Youth Service and other local providers to try to deter anti-social behaviour in the first place rather than just move on offenders to a different location.

PS also commented on the recent stabbings that had taken place just outside the Park on the corner of Grove Road and Roman Road. LBTH tries to mitigate risk to individuals by operating a lone working policy for rangers and all have radios connected to the police and control room. The Park currently has limited CCTV only (and much less than Victoria Park);

new cameras are very expensive and the existing cameras are ageing and would be replaced on a staggered basis.

Skate Park

JG commented that she thought that the skate park was wonderful and a real attraction for people from both within and beyond the local community. PS noted that a new housing development had been built right next to the skate park. This has proven problematic for new residents whose ground floor bedroom windows open right next to the skate park and discussions are currently underway looking at potential solutions.

LBTH Events in the Park

PS provided some analysis of events and activities in the Park between April 2017 and March 2018. In total 11,776 individuals had benefited/taken part, with 3,182 individuals benefiting from Park events. The Park had hosted 1,456 corporate volunteers.

PS noted that there are 23 community-focused events planned for the Park in July and August, such as athletics, arts and crafts and activities for children (growing food to eat, pizza toppings from the garden, making bird boxes).

They are also looking at events for older people, such as health and fitness activities. PS stated that LBTH has just appointed a part-time outreach ranger and consideration would be given to setting up some themed walks (for example on nature, conservation and history). SD suggested that the outreach ranger could link up with Graham Barker and JG noted that circular walks work best.

Regular meetings with FOMEF

Historically meetings have been held quarterly between PS (and others at LBTH Parks Department) and the FOMEF Committee but these have not been taking place as regularly over the last year. Both PS and JW agreed that these should be reinstated as they provided a valuable method of two-way communication.

General comments

SJ noted that she is a frequent user of the Park and that it is well-maintained and a pleasure to visit. She noted in particular the lovely bulb planting.

JW thanked PS for attending the meeting.

10. Any other business

There was no other business.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.19pm and refreshments were served.

Kerrin Isaacs
July 2018