

FBG AGM Minutes – 6th December 2016 (7pm to 8.50pm)

1. Attendance

- 1.1 36 people attended part or all of the AGM
- 1.2 6 members of the Board were present throughout (RJ, JE, JH, HH, CB, AC)

2. Resignations, Elections and Re-Elections

- 2.1 John Stroughair has resigned from the Board
- 2.2 Jackie Duff (*in absentio*), Jason Eker and Charles Boyd were stood down at the end of their three-year term. They all put themselves forward for re-election and were unanimously approved
- 2.3 Adrienne Clarke stood for election to the Board and was unanimously approved

3. Accounts and Financial Highlights

- 3.1 The 2015/16 Accounts have been audited and are available on the FBG website
- 3.2 Future improvement work on the Green will be dependent on the release of Section 106 funds currently held by the Council

4. The Development of the Western Lawn

- 4.1 The focus of the AGM was framed as being around a public debate around the detailed proposals for the development of the Western Lawn
- 4.2 A presentation of the proposed development and the options as they are currently seen was made by Laura Bradley of Bradley Murphy Design Ltd
- 4.3 Aspects of the development for which there was an overwhelming majority of support included:
 - 4.3.1 Reclaiming the tarmac on the south side of the Lawn, so it becomes an extension of the green space of the Green – with a robust and

aesthetically pleasing (buff coloured)/consistent path put in place so people can walk easily around all sides of the Lawn

4.3.2 The existing formal, tarmac path across the SW/NE axis of the Lawn to be re-laid with a more aesthetically pleasing and fit for purpose finish (consistent with the finish on the path above)

4.4 Additional considerations for these areas of agreement covered:

4.4.1 The reclaiming of the tarmac is dependent on a 'Stopping Up' order being agreed with the Highways Department of the Council, and the transfer of the current pavement area (currently designated to be a road) to be transferred to the Parks Department and to become seen as part of the Green

4.4.2 The practicality of suitable grass seeds being able to flourish under the trees in the extended park area was debated

4.4.3 The possibility of some garden style shrub planting instead of grass in the extended park area – as has been achieved in a shaded area of Charing Cross Hospital, next to the Fulham Palace Road – was suggested as an alternative to grass. It was noted that the original Vision Group had found significant resistance to turning any main area of the Green into a planted area

4.4.4 The width of the currently established path across the Lawn was raised. Would it be possible to make it slightly wider so people could pass each other without having to step onto the grass next to the path?

4.5 There was general acceptance, but limited debate, around the development of low banks around the western edge of the Tennis Courts. The slope angle and height were described and people were encouraged to visit the banks – which had been partially reworked to give a tangible example of their proposed shape – and get back to the FBG with any comments. Comments and observations at the meeting covered:

4.5.1 In one view, the earth banking along the western edge of the Tennis Court was seen as undermining the aesthetic of an unblocked view across the Green – other opposite opinions appreciating the aesthetic was also expressed

4.5.2 The cost savings of using the soil to create the soft banks, rather than paying for it to be removed to landfill, can be seen as a point of merit

4.5.3 The idea of ‘storing’ the soil for future use in reclaiming the tarmac area along the southern edge was explored. Laura Bradley cautioned against it as a possibility

4.6 Development items for which there was no clear majority view

4.6.1 A show of hands presented 14 in favour and 15 against the establishment of a formal NW/SE path to replace the current informal, desire line path. A lengthy debate then took place in which the following views were expressed:

4.6.1.1 Re-instating the currently broken railing in the NW corner in order to discourage the use of the desire line path

4.6.1.2 Having a trial period to see whether or not the re-instated rail did or did not deter traffic along the desire line

4.6.1.3 Experience elsewhere in the Borough (near to Barons Court tube station) suggesting that only extensive high fencing combined with hedging is effective in preventing the use of an established desire line path

4.6.1.4 High fencing (e.g. of the height around the Playground or at the edge of the western fringe of the Tennis Courts) being unacceptable in the context of the Lawn

4.7 The desirability and purpose of fencing around the perimeter of the Lawn was explored. In terms of a show hands for people’s preferences, the results were:

4.7.1 17 in favour of having fencing on the North, West and South edges of the Lawn

4.7.2 15 in favour of having fencing on the North and West edges of the Lawn. Several participants noted that they liked the openness of part of the southern perimeter where fencing has been removed

4.7.3 5 in favour of having fencing only on the Western edge

4.7.4 No one spoke in favour of fencing off the Eastern edge – and there was unchallenged support for removing the existing bow top fence that runs parallel to the Tennis Court netting once plant life including grasses and wild flowers have become established (probably late next Spring)

4.8 The discussions around fencing identified three main reasons for its retention on at least the lawn's northern and western perimeters:

4.8.1 To maintain a clear demarcation between the 'park' aspects of the Lawn and the road – this demarcation is seen as particularly important for young children and for dogs

4.8.2 For the general look and feel of the Lawn

4.8.3 To act as a barrier to bicycles shooting across the Lawn in all directions

4.9 The fencing discussion also raised concerns/suggestions around:

4.9.1 A potential consequence of undirected/unchannelled access onto the Lawn (if there was no fencing or pathways) being that the ground becomes widely churned up in wet weather

4.9.2 A potential opportunity exists for allowing grass to grow long (two foot or so) to act as a natural demarcation signal for the edge of the 'park' area on the south side. In view of the unfenced gap that now exists along part of this perimeter, it was noted that the FBG intend to recommend this proposal to LBHF Parks for 2017

5. Communication, Consultation and Engagement

5.1 There were requests for improvements in how the FBG Board and Working Parties communicate with the members. Specific issues and opportunities included:

5.1.1 Earlier engagement with members in design conversations – this should help reduce the sense of plans being presented as a ‘fait accompli’

5.1.2 Hardcopies of the newsletter being delivered to those who preferred this to an email/website visit

5.1.3 Hardcopies of the accounts being available at the AGM

5.1.4 Using the notice board (shortly to be established) outside the new Pavilion as a hub for publicising the status of plans and other information about the FBG – including how to get engaged in developing plans and supporting the various working parties

5.2 In terms of engagement with the further development and implementation of the Lawn there were concerns and offers around

5.2.1 Being actively consulted when it comes to the sequence with which the Western Lawn developments are carried out

5.2.2 Being willing to be an active member of various working parties – and leafleting local people about their views

5.3 The quality of materials on the website was raised as a concern

5.4 In subsequent, informal, conversation at the end of the AGM, it was suggested that the Pavilion could become a pick-up point for FBG printed materials such as our Newsletters and Accounts.

6. Engagement with the Council

6.1 In response to the reported challenges in engaging with the various departments within the Council, the Board was encouraged to be as robust as

possible in ensuring work is carried out in a timely – and cost effective – manner. This includes ensuring that funds are made available from Section 106 in line with the their original intentions/expectations.

7. The Sports Fund

7.1 A short report was made on the progress of the Sports Fund, which has now enabled a range of activities to take place in three local Primary schools

8. Any Other Business

8.1 There is a need for a big discussion about drainage issues on the Green – there was clarification around the concept of a rain garden i.e. planting that slows down the rate of water collection

8.2 There was a discussion around the need to plan for the replacement of trees on the Green – in the light of disease, their age and the need to schedule new growth so that they have time to mature before the older ones die off

8.3 Following the departure of the Flatau family, Charles Sanderson has agreed to take the lead on trees around the Green and Anthony Van Tulleken will join the Western Lawn Working Group.

9. Votes of Thanks

9.1 A vote of thanks and good wishes was unanimously approved for Gilia in light of all the work she has done for the FBG and the community over many years

9.2 Clare Kemp-Welch proposed a vote of thanks to the Board for their volunteer efforts on behalf of Brook Green. This received general support

John Higgins

- Secretary: Friends of Brook Green