**Friends of Brook Green Chair’s Report 2018/19**

**Financial Resources**

Our financial resources continued to strengthen over the year reflecting good rental income from the Tennis Courts and a highly successful BGD fair in September 2018 and Inter Street Quiz night in early 2019. We now have sufficient reserves to fund the seven-year resurfacing requirement of the tennis courts and to provide funding for emergency situations adversely affecting the Green. We have sought to diversify our financial assets by investing a prudential proportion of them in three funds managed by CCLA in the expectation of achieving a better rate of return on these monies over the longer term.

**Horticulture**

A number of gardening activities were undertaken during this last year. In Brook Green we planted 2000 bulbs mainly awarded to us by the Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham. All the planting was carried out by volunteers. On the North side of the Western Lawn we plan to extend our wildlife hedge row with the help of the local community and 120 more saplings will be planted in March.

FGB are also supporting for a second year, the Mayor’s ambition to make London a National Park City. The Mayor’s Greener City Fund has awarded us 200 saplings that will be planted on 23rd November as part of this mass tree planting across London. We have organised a regular volunteer group with a local school. We are planning to involve more and more people with events and workshops. Events are regularly publicised in the newsletter and Pavilion noticeboards.

**Playground Group**

At our AGM in December 2018, a Friend observed that the Playground was starting to show signs of wear and tear and suggested that spending some money now might serve to prolong its life. The Board concurred with this observation and in early 2019 we recontacted Jon Sheaff, the designer of our current Playground. Since then with his help we have assessed the condition of the Playground and have developed indicative proposals for its midterm remediation which have been tested on a Consultation Group of volunteer parents and on our local Councillors. The work has identified a backlog of longer-term maintenance and opportunities to improve the experience for children in three sections: The Toddler area, a new immediate post Toddler section near to the principal entry gate and in the space between the Mounds. It is also intended to use this opportunity to make the Playground more inclusive for children with physical or other difficulties.

As a further part of establishing the feasibility of these proposals we are in the process of contacting stakeholders to test their willingness to provide financial support for the proposed work programme. As we move closer to finalisation of the Design of these changes, we will publicise the Proposal on our website and notice Board.

**Western Lawn and surrounds**

We worked with LBHF to improve the crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists onto the Green from Luxembourg Gardens/St Paul’s Girls swimming pool which was delivered in April 2019. Discussions are ongoing to tidy up the north side of the tennis courts and to remove the unsightly fencing from the bank on west side of the tennis courts.

**Tree Report**

The Green is now managed by Hammersmith and Fulham Council, as they no longer operate the agreement with Kensington and Chelsea for shared services. Our contact point continues to be Stefan Czeladzinski and he is now assisted on the Green by Silvera Williams.

The trees on Brook Green are one of our most significant assets. Last year Stefan produced a schedule of proposed work to the trees by the Council Tree Officer, following an inspection in the Summer of 2018 and FBG suggested that these should be supplemented by minor works to improve the health of the trees and allow more light through to the Green. A second schedule was prepared, and this was tendered, including to a company called Red Squirrel who are authorised to carry our works to Council trees.

Jason Eker and Charles Sanderson met with Stefan and Silvera in October and agreed that the works proposed by Red Squirrel would now be implemented by the Council over the coming winter period, through to the Spring of 2020. These works do not constitute pollarding trees but are merely lightening the trees to improve air flow, remove any diseased wood and allow light to flow through to the Green below. This contract relates to the trees on the South side of the Eastern lawn and those on the North side of the tennis courts, plus one significant tree on the North-west corner of the playground.

It was further agreed that this sort of works to care for the trees will be a rolling programme so that every few years a new group of trees will be chosen to be assisted in this way. The costs are being met out of the funds raised from the balance of Section 106 agreements that FBG agreed will be allocated to Brook Green by the Council, with any shortfall being met by FBG who has a small reserve for such matters.

**Brook Green Day Fair**

Another very successful Brook Green Day fair was held on Saturday 14th September, fortunately in glorious sunshine. It is a wonderful event in so many respects.

**Community event.**Not just as a great day out for all, but also everyone who mucks in to help on the day. We have about 100 volunteers who give up their time. We were able to distribute more free tickets for rides to local schools to give away to those who might not be able to afford the price of the rides on the day, thereby broadening this event to the whole community.

**Business involvement.**Brook Green Fair would not be possible without the generous help from our local businesses. This sponsorship helps with the up-front costs of putting on the Fair. It costs on average about £8k. The headline sponsors this year, which included some old stalwarts as well as a couple of new entrants, were: Blue City Cars, Finlay Brewer, Marsh & Parsons, Savills, Bective, Onside Youthzones charity, Surge, Fever Tree, Brook Green Supply and Immediate Media.

Other firms that sponsored us for smaller amounts because they admired what we do included Keystone Tutors, and a couple more who did not wish to be named, but their support is equally appreciated. Finally, there were a number of businesses that attended on the day and made contributions to our cause, who are too numerous to list here, although we are grateful to every single one of them.

**Fundraiser.**This is underpinned by our great sponsors and supplemented by the money taken on the day through the fairground rides, the food stalls and our own FBG tent that sells cakes made by people in the local area. All told, we managed to net about £10k.

**Tennis Venue Update**

Brook Green continues to stand out as a Lawn Tennis Association registered venue and was recently commended for having amongst the very highest levels of usage.

Venue Improvements

This autumn we have arranged for the courts to be deep cleaned and relined. After this CourtFit will be responsible for keeping the courts cleaned regularly. We are also looking at replacing the nets for all courts. We are still reviewing the drain-off from rainwater on court surfaces but have placed a water roller on the courts to aid with puddle removal.

Coaching

Working with the LTA and our licensed coaches, we have established a wide coaching offer across all abilities, whilst maintaining peak and off-peak access to playing members. Our membership is still free, which allows all members of the public to be able to book and use the court facilities. We are continually reviewing the coaching offer, which is updated each term.

Coaches licences have been rolled forward on a month to month basis. We continue to see high take up of the block booked courses run by James at CourtFit and Rocco's "drop-in" sessions for kids and adults. We have worked hard to ensure there is the right mix of time on the courts for group coaching, one-to-one coaching and, of course, casual play by the public.

We are running outreach tennis programs now with 3 schools, including Addison Primary, which has been run through the generosity of CourtFit giving their time for free to organise.

We always welcome feedback on all aspects of the courts- coaches, coaching, usage times, maintenance. We have received positive feedback on the increased play on the courts in general.

**Safeguarding**

We are pleased to report that we successfully passed a routine safeguarding audit by the LTA. Safeguarding - as well as Diversity and Inclusion - is very important to the Friends of Brook Green and all coaches and users of the courts are required to observe our policies. Further information about the policies can be found here: https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/BrookGreenTennisClub/Policies

**Pavilion Kiosk**

Tangerine Dream have been operating the kiosk since September 2018. This is a seasonal business which declines dramatically during the colder months and in August during the school holidays, making it a challenge to cover operating costs. The Board is exploring other business models to manage the kiosk and how to improve community engagement.

Our AGM this year is at Dunnhumby, Shepherds Bush Road on 27th November at 6.30pm. We hope as many of you as can will make the effort to attend. There will be significant changes to our Board which we will report as usual through the newsletter nearer the time.

As always, we would like to acknowledge with thanks the time and commitment made to the Friends by all members of our Board and by the many volunteers who have helped us in facing the challenges we take on.

Jason Eker Jackie Duff

Co-Chair Co-Chair