



Friends of Brook Green

Annual Friends Meeting 2020

The meeting was held on Sunday 29th November 2020 via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: FBG Directors: Jackie Duff (chair); Charlie Boyd; Adrienne Clarke; Sam Cohen; Donatella Goretti; Livia Higgins; Nick London; Irene Rozassa; Charles Sanderson. Cllr David Morton; Richard Farthing (Hammersmith Society). FBG Friends: Robert Jennings; Annie Jennings; Jo Busvine; Isabel Taylor; Ray Eitel-Porter; Rhoda Eitel-Porter; Stephanie Aird; Mike O'Brien; Elizabeth Lamblin.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The chair opened the meeting with a tribute to Gilia Slocock, who died recently. Gilia was, for many years, the secretary of Friends of Brook Green. She was a much-loved member of the community who made a major contribution to the Friends and to Brook Green. She will be missed by all.

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting in particular Cllr David Morton and Richard Farthing from the Hammersmith Society. The chair thanked everyone for their support during what had been a difficult year.

Apologies for absence: Stefan Czeladzinski (LBHF parks officer); Jason Collins (FBG Director); Lucy Le Fanu.

2. Approval of the 2019 AGM minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes were approved. The only issue outstanding was the suggestion that Tesco should be asked if they would put the FBG newsletter on their notice board. This will be actioned in the New Year.

3. Resignations from the board.

The Directors retire by rotation. This year Adrienne Clarke, Donatella Goretti and Charles Sanderson all resigned. All were re-elected having been proposed by Robert Jennings and seconded by Charlie Boyd. Emilie Marneur, who joined the board in 2019, also resigned. She did not stand for re-election.

4. Working group updates

4.1 Tennis (Charlie Boyd)

- The meeting was informed that income for the courts normally makes a major contribution to FBG finances. However, due to Covid-19 income was down this year despite a busier than usual August.
- After costs this income is shared 50/50 with LBHF

- The courts were made Covid-19 safe with thanks to Courtfit and the tennis committee. The community was also thanked for ensuring compliance with the guidelines
- The courts were refurbished during lockdown and the nets replaced.
- We have been able to achieve a balance in terms of court usage between coaching, regular players and occasional players.

4.2 Pavilion/kiosk (Jackie Duff)

- The new kiosk operator, Bears Ice Cream, planned to open 'Bears at the Pavilion' in March. However, due to lockdown, this was delayed until early June when they opened under Covid-19 safe conditions.
- The feedback from the Community has been extremely positive.
- A Christmas tree, kindly donated by Shoots and Leaves, has been erected next to the kiosk/tennis courts. The community will be invited to add decorations - homemade or otherwise.

A question was asked about how such information is communicated to the community. It was explained that the decision about the tree was only made, at short notice, once the position regarding the Covid-19 tiers had been announced.

It was confirmed that the normal means of communication are the newsletter, the website, Instagram.

4.3. Playground (Adrienne Clarke)

- The project to refurbish/improve the playground has been delayed due to Covid-19. However, the Council, the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham (LBHF) has continued to undertake quarterly routine maintenance and to repair equipment as necessary.
- It was noted that, unlike the tennis courts, the playground is under the direct management of the Council.
- The fact that the playground is a critical community asset important not just for children but also for parents and carers was stressed as was commitment of the Friends to the playground.
- Concerns about delaying the project were made by two members of the playground working group; Mike O'Brien and Stephanie Aird. These included the fact that the playground is looking very tired, items have been removed and that prompt action is needed, otherwise the costs will increase as the equipment deteriorates. The possibility of injury was also raised as a concern.
- There was a discussion about revisiting the project plan and perhaps making it less ambitious or even extending the designated area. A counter perspective was that we should aim to meet the objectives of the original plan and find a way forward as soon as possible, keeping the charitable trusts that had promised funds pre Covid-19 on board.

It was agreed that the project team would schedule a Zoom meeting for early December. It was further agreed that the working group should review the playground proposal for Adrienne to resubmit to the FBG Board ahead of the next meeting in January.

Action: Adrienne

From a funding perspective it was suggested, in order to start the project as soon as possible, that alternative models could be explored e.g. FBG could contribute the Council's portion of the playground project by utilizing the 2020 Council share of the income from the tennis courts. This will be discussed further with the Council.

Robert Jennings, who leads the project group, and the parents on the project group were thanked for their work on this project, and Cllr Morton, who apologised for any delays on behalf of the Council, was thanked for his continuing support of the project. He was also thanked for ensuring that the needs of children with disabilities had been taken into account in the revised plan.

The chair reminded all that the playground isn't managed by FBG but by the Council.

4.4 The Green/Trees (Charles Sanderson)

- There is a phased programme of thinning the trees on Brook Green. This is necessary both for the health of the trees and the ground beneath the trees.
- Thinning was last undertaken in March, just prior to lockdown, by a company called Red Squirrel.
- Stefan Czeladzinski (LBHF) was thanked for his help and support in looking after the Green.

A question was asked about the green plastic netting surrounding the St Paul's area of the Green. It was confirmed that the Council had felt it necessary to install this during lockdown when the playground was closed. This was because an increasing number of children were using the area. It was confirmed that this is a temporary structure.

The problems on Little Brook Green (LBG) were raised although this area doesn't come under the remit of FBG. Thanks were given to the Council's Community Safety Officer, Rumel Wahid, and Cllr Morton for their intervention on LBG where antisocial behaviour fuelled by drugs and alcohol, was having a negative impact on the wellbeing of local residents and passers-by.

Cllr Morton informed the meeting that local hotels were being used by the Government for homeless people, asylum seekers and refugees during the pandemic. The Council and local charities had intervened where possible to ensure that the residents were being looked after.

It was clarified that the individuals on LBG were not asylum seekers or refugees but individuals known to the Council and that outreach organisations had been deployed to support the individuals concerned.

The proposal to transform the Saba Hotel on Shepherds Bush Road to a hostel was raised. It is understood that this will be run by St Mungo's.

4.5 Horticulture (Donatella Goretti)

- Donatella explained that many of the usual activities, such as planting the wild flower bank, didn't happen due to Covid-19. However, work on the quiet area next to the tennis courts, had taken place with the help of volunteers although St Paul's Girls' School hadn't been involved this year due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- The Saturday morning volunteer group still meets on Saturdays 10-12.

- Donatella is working on plans for spring planting with Stefan Czeladzinski.
- The 'Grow Back Greener' bid for funds from the Mayor of London was unsuccessful. There were a large number of applications and the bid received very positive feedback. Donatella was thanked for the work she put into the bid which would have involved local groups and local schools helping out on the Green.
- Stefan Czeladzinski (LBHF) was thanked for his support in this area.

4.6 Events (Nick London)

- Unfortunately, Brook Green Day had to be cancelled this year. It is not only an important event in terms of income for FBG but it is a great community day. We hope it will take place in 2021
- The Quiz took place in February, before we knew much about Covid-19. It was, as always, a very successful event with Poplar Grove regaining the trophy they last won in 2018. Thanks were offered to Susannah Freize, who sets such challenging questions, Finlay Brewer, who sponsor the event, and Bute House School who host the event.
- It is hoped that a virtual quiz can be set up in February 2021. This is being explored.
- The possibility of Covid-19 safe Christmas events is being looked into.

4.7 Outreach (Jackie)

- FBG provided financial support to the local food bank and the Masbro' Centre. Covid-19 donations were also made to two local charities. These fall into the 2020-2021 financial year.

5. Receipt of the Accounts to 31 March 2020 and Treasurer's Report (Donatella Goretti)

- Donatella took over the role of Treasurer from Robert Jennings in 2020. She thanked Robert for his support with the handover and transition.
- It was confirmed that the finances for year end 31 March 2020 are in a healthy state.
- The finances for the year to 31 March 2021 will be less robust as income from the tennis courts will be lower due to periods of lockdown and the fact that the key fundraising event, Brook Green Day, had to be cancelled.

6. AOB/Questions

Robert thanked the board for the work they all did, reminding the meeting that this community work was undertaken on a voluntary basis.

He highlighted the importance on the Brook Green tripod: The Tennis Courts, the Pavilion/kiosk and the Playground.

There being no further business, Jackie, the chair, wished everyone happy Christmas and the meeting closed at 7 pm.