



Friends of Brook Green

Annual Friends Meeting Tuesday 31st January 2023

Minutes

Venue: virtual meeting via TEAMS starting at 7 pm.

In attendance:

Friends of Brook Green (FBG) Directors: Jackie Duff (chair), Jacco Brouwer, Charlie Boyd, Adrienne Clarke, Jason Collins, Livia Higgins, Nick London, Irene Rozassa, Charles Sanderson.

Cllr Stala Antoniadou, Cllr Adam Lang.

FBG Friends: Nigel Hensman, Barbara Hensman, Audrey Sander, David Blackett, Hugo Trower.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The chair thanked everyone for joining.

Apologies for absence were received from Richard Farthing (The Hammersmith Society).

2. Approval of the 2021 minutes (meeting held on 10th January 2022)

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

3. Resignations from the Board

The chair explained that under the Articles one third of the board must resign each year but that board members can, unless they have been on the board nine years, stand for re-election at the annual meeting. It was announced that the following were resigning:

Irene Rosazza
Adrienne Clarke
Charles Sanderson

4. Elections to the Board

All three announced they wished to stand again. All three were re-elected having given a brief introduction to themselves and their role on FBG.

5. Working group updates

5.1. Pavilion/Kiosk

Jackie reminded the meeting that Bears took over the running of the Pavilion cafe just before Covid. They did well after restrictions were lifted but, in recent months, the closure of the playground has impacted on their business. It was noted they are very dependent on trade from the playground and tennis courts.

FBG are looking at ways of supporting Bears which is a small local business.

5.2 The Playground

Charles detailed how FBG have been working with Council Officers, in particular Stefan Czeladzinski, and more recently with Hugo Ross-Tatam, to support the refurbishment of the playground which is one of the most used in the borough. The refurbishment project has been split into three phases and phase three work is currently out to tender by the Council. Key aspects of the work completed include extending the playground, installing a new gate which facilitates wheelchair access and the recovering of the green mounds. In phase three new equipment, including equipment for children with disabilities, will be installed and worn out equipment will be replaced.

It was noted that the total cost of the refurbishment will be around £100,000 and that FBG will be contributing 75% to the first two phases and that the Mercers' Company had donated £5,000 towards the project.

The playground group, in particular Charles, were thanked for their work on this project.

In answer to a question about the involvement of parents in the plans, it was confirmed that parents had been involved throughout the initial planning stages.

5.3 The Green/Trees

The importance of the programme of thinning, rather than pollarding, the trees on the Green, to maintain ventilation, was explained particularly in the light of disease affecting Plane Trees in other parts of London. This started prior to covid and will be taken forward this year.

5.4 Horticulture

Irene outlined developments in the last year which included installing planters on the road side of the Pavilion. She went on to detail what was planned for the coming months. This includes planting on the mound next to the tennis courts and installing, with the support of the Council, a leaf mulching machine in the quiet area - the fenced off area by the Pavilion.

She stressed the need for more volunteers. This will be particularly important this Spring as, although the volunteers from the Goodgym are available, the school students who normally help aren't free this term. It was agreed that a call for volunteers would be made in the newsletter. Action: Adrienne

It was explained that a bore hole was needed to water the Green but that the cost would probably be around £180,000. It was noted that, in the hope that a bore hole will be installed sometime in the future, a water pipe had been laid last summer during work on the north side of the tennis courts.

Cllr Antoniadou stated that she and Cllr Lang would be happy to help support this initiative as appropriate.

5.5 Events

Nick reminded everyone that the quiz will take place on Thursday 16th March in Bute House School and that once again Susannah Freize will be in charge of the quiz proceedings. He also reminded the meeting that anyone wanting to take part is invited to put together a group of 10 people representing their street, a block of flats, a local business or community group. **Action:** please contact Nick on nicklondon1@aol.com

The cost remains £35 a head. This includes wine and beer but tables provide their own food. Supporting local restaurants and businesses are currently being contacted about raffle prizes.

Although Brook Green Day won't take place this year, it is hoped that other smaller events can be organised.

5.6 Tennis

Charlie explained that the ongoing aim is to get the right balance between coaching and public use of the courts. Courtfit, who have the coaching contract, have been doing a great job for almost four years and their licence was extended last year for two further years until September 2024. In addition to coaching, Courtfit undertake outreach work with local schools.

Charlie went on to explain that the cost of using a court is benchmarked against other local courts and that, despite the increase in the cost of electricity, the board had decided not to increase the cost of using floodlights for the time being.

A key issue is maintaining the courts. Idverde, the company contracted to maintain the courts, currently have staff shortages and haven't been able to undertake the necessary maintenance. They have been booked to clean the courts the weekend of 5th/6th February. Those with bookings will be informed once Idverde has confirmed the work will be undertaken. It was agreed that getting fixed quarterly dates for Idverde to clean the courts was a good idea. It was hoped that the cleaning could be undertaken at times when court usage is low.

Cllr Lang suggested that he would be willing to help if Idverde was not fulfilling its contractual obligations.

It was agreed that friends should be informed via the newsletter about the issues around maintaining the courts. **Action:** tennis group and Adrienne

5.7 Outreach

Livia, who took over outreach work in 2002, gave an overview of past activities which included supporting local schools post covid. She went on to explain that activities had tended to be reactive rather than proactive, but that she was aiming to set up annual small grants funding programme, and that discussions were currently underway with local groups and a template for bids was being finalised.

Following a question by Nigel Hensman, it was noted that parts of the community, for example those in the Osram building, above Tesco, weren't being reached. It was agreed that the board would look into this. **Action:** Adrienne to add to the agenda.

6. Receipt of the Accounts to 31st March 2022 and Treasurer's report

Jacco, who took on the role of Treasurer last year, gave an overview of FBG finances. He stated that finances were healthy and that the rental from the tennis courts, which is shared with the Council, provided significant income and up on the prior financial year, complemented by fundraising through the annual quiz (which we weren't able to organise the year before), raising over £6000

He went on to explain that FBG has long term commitments to both maintaining the tennis courts and the immediately surrounding facilities including the Pavilion, as well as to funding a future total refurbishment of the tennis courts.

A long term financial plan, assessing resources versus funding needs, will be developed over the coming year. This will also allow us to assess outreach plans. This financial planning was scheduled for 2022 but had to be put on hold as FBG had to switch banks. HSBC were no longer supporting charities like FBG in the way they had, resulting in major administrative and access issues in relation to our finances. Following a time consuming application and switching process, FBG now has an account with Co-op Bank and access to on-line banking. This hadn't been possible with HSBC.

Finally Jacco confirmed that FBG accounts had been filed in December 2022. These are on the FBG website.

7. Questions raised by friends

A friend, who was unable to attend the meeting, had asked why the playground gates were no longer locked at night. Cllr Lang explained that the Law Enforcement Team (LET) formed following the disbandment of the Parks Police, had limited powers and didn't undertake all the duties that the Parks Police used to do. It was agreed that this would be looked into further. Action: playground group

It was suggested that the LET could take action regarding car idling which was a problem in and around Brook Green.

Concern was also expressed about other gates on the Green not closing properly. This will also be looked into by the playground group at their next meeting with Council Officers. **Action:** playground group.

There being no further business the meeting closed just before 8 pm. Nigel Hensman having thanked the board for the work they did.