



# Friends of Brook Green

## **Friends of Brook Green Annual Friends Meeting - year ending December 2024**

**Date:** Monday 27th January 2025

**Time:** 6.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.

**Venue:** Dunnhumby, Shepherds Bush Road.

### **Minutes**

#### **In attendance:**

**Board members FBG:** Jackie Duff (chair); Jacco Brouwer; Charlie Boyd; Adrienne Clarke; Irene Rosazzo; Charles Sanderson; Jason Collins.

**LBHF:** Simon Ingyon (LBHF interim Head of Parks and Leisure); Cllr Stala Antoniadis (Brook Green); Cllr Adam Peter Lang (Brook Green)

**Friends:** 21 Friends

#### **Apologies for absence:**

**Board member:** Nick London

**Friends:** Gillian Knights; Alison Woolfe-Patrick; Anna Gardiner; Audrey and Adrian Gale; Alex Rook; Catherine Ashworth.

### **1. Welcome**

Jackie welcomed everyone and explained that, following requests from friends, that this was the first in person Annual Friends Meeting since 2019.

### **2. Approval of the minutes of 2023 Annual Friends Meeting held on 5th January 2024**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

### **3. Resignations from the Board**

Charlie Boyd, Company Secretary, announced that the following had to resign having been on the Board for nine or more years: Jackie Duff, Charlie Boyd, Nick London and Adrienne Clarke. It was noted that all four wished to stand for re-election and that they had the unanimous support of the Board.

### **4. Elections to the Board**

The following were re-elected:

- Jackie Duff - nominated by Robin Jackson; seconded by Isabel Taylor

- Charlie Boyd - nominated by Harriet Hewitt; seconded by Alex Gethin
- Nick London - nominated by Isabel Taylor; seconded by Alex Gethin
- Adrienne Clarke – nominated by Isabel Taylor; seconded by Robin Jackson

## **5. Co-options to the Board**

Jackie explained that the aim of co-opting friends onto the Board was to enable those co-opted to find out more about the workings of the Board before committing to three years as a Board member. In addition, she added that the Board was aiming to have a Board that was representative of the community.

The following were co-opted:

- Anna Gardiner (working group - The Green)
- Caroline Dickson (working group - playground and outreach)
- Kristina Burns (finance - quiz and Bears/the Pavilion)

Anna was thanked in her absence for her initiative in setting up the litter picking group. The group meets on the Green at 11.30 a.m. on the first Sunday of the month.

## **6. Receipt of accounts to 31st March 2024 and Treasurer's report**

Jacco Brouwer, the FBG treasurer, noted that the accounts had been – as per usual – prepared by our accountants Spurling Cannon filed with Companies House and Charities Commission and available on the website [www.friendsofbrookgreen.org](http://www.friendsofbrookgreen.org) for a couple of weeks.

The following points were highlighted:

- the finances of FBG continued to strengthen thanks to strong income from the tennis courts (which he noted, were comparable to - and slightly above- the previous year) and from the annual quiz
- FBG's financial resources remain in good health. As we have noted in our previous accounts and annual meetings, our financial reserves, combined with ongoing income, are expected to support the future need to fully refurbish the tennis courts, as well as ongoing maintenance costs of the courts and related facilities such as lights and the pavilion.
- the tennis courts, which are managed by FBG, will probably need renewing in 2027. It was noted that due to regular quarterly maintenance, funded by FBG, they were lasting longer than the usual eight-year renewal period designated by the Lawn Tennis Association
- there had been considerable expenditure during the financial year, principally on a significant contribution to the playground refurbishment (total contributions over the last two financial years were c £45,000), but also on new shutters for Bears, the Pavilion cafe, and on the Pavilion toilets/drains (see 7.3 below).
- the cafe isn't very profitable but is seen as an important asset for the community.
- following a question about the cost of refurbishing the tennis courts and where the money to undertake the work would come from, Charlie explained that funds to cover the cost which was estimated to be £250,000 (including replacing the floodlights with LED lighting) had been built up over time. Jacco added that, the work, which would last 2-3 months, would have to take place during

the summer months, when the courts were at their busiest, which would result in a loss of income during this period.

- the Board remains confident that FBG have sufficient reserves to finance such maintenance and/or refurbishment costs and retain flexibility for ongoing support to the council for maintenance of the playground and for selective charitable donations for local good causes.

## **7. Working groups updates:**

### **7.1 Tennis (Charlie Boyd & Jason Collins)**

Charlie echoed the points made in relation to the tennis courts in 6. above, adding that:

- following consultation the floodlight hours were extended – coming on at 7 a.m. if a booking had been made
- the balance between coaching (carried out by Courtfit) and public use was monitored to ensure equitable use
- as part of their outreach responsibility, Courtfit provide free coaching to local schools
- the courts were the most used in the country during Covid (taking into account the number of courts)
- the model - FBG managing the courts and sharing the income with the Council is seen as a model for successful running of community tennis courts. This was confirmed by Simon Ingyon.

### **7.2 Playground (Charles Sanderson)**

Charles noted that Caroline, who has young children who use the playground, had recently joined the playground group. He went in to highlight the following:

- the playground is managed by LBHF
- to ensure the playground, which is one of the most used in the Borough, was maintained to a high standard, FBG have, over the last few years, contributed to the major refurbishment of the playground. This included resurfacing the mounds, new equipment e.g. more sustainable swings, new gates to facilitate wheelchair access and equipment for children with disabilities.
- FBG also pay £2.5k annually for regular maintenance of the mounds which are the central focus of the playground

Caroline added that she has found Hugo Ross-Tatam, LBHF Parks Project Officer, very helpful when undertaking inspection walks around the playground. She would like to thank him for sharing his knowledge of similar playgrounds and suggesting and discussing maintenance and upkeep issues.

It was agreed, following ongoing concerns about groups of adults using the playground in the evening, that although locking the playground might act as a deterrent, it was easy to climb over the railings. It was agreed that this needed further discussion. **Action:** playground group

### **7.3 The Pavilion (Jackie Duff)**

Jackie explained that the Pavilion Cafe is run by Bears Ice Cream, through an agreement with FBG. This agreement has recently been renewed for a further two years. It was noted that Bears main outlet is now in Whitstable - having moved there from their original base in Goldhawk Road.

She announced that Jon, the manager at Bears at the Pavilion, was leaving to take up a role at L'Ami JAC - the new wine bar in Shepherds Bush Road. It was agreed that Jon had done an excellent job and that the Board should pass everyone's thanks to him.

It was noted the growing number of cafes in the area are impacting on Bears particularly during the winter months. Bears are developing new ideas to encourage more trade to the Pavilion café. Friends are encouraged to visit Bears.

### **7.3.1 Pavilion toilets**

A major problem has been appalling misuse of the toilets. This has improved since graphic notices were put up.

A number of ideas were explored including payment e.g. 20p; access via a credit card (with payment set at zero); making the toilets less welcoming - more Spartan; not having toilets.

Jackie highlighted that providing toilets was part of the agreement FBG has with the Council so closing the toilets was not an option. The need for toilets was echoed by a number of friends in particular Caroline who pointed out that the toilets were essential for the young children using the playground.

It was noted by Kathleen that misuse of the toilets in the library is a constant problem.

It was concluded that only toilets that require payment (such as the Royal Parks) or have staff on hand to monitor behaviour (such as in Ravenscourt Park where idverde (who are the parks maintenance contractors) staff are located) could avoid misuse. It was agreed that Caroline would seek the views of parents using the playground to see what thoughts they had. **Action:** Caroline.

### **7.3.2 Drains**

It was noted that there were on-going problems with the drains and that Charles was looking into these. **Action:** Charles

### **7.3.3 Anti-social behaviour (ASB)**

There followed a discussion on ASB in particular misuse of the Green by groups of mainly men drinking, using drugs and littering the area. It was also noted that the Public Space Protection Order in relation to ASB related to dogs didn't seem to be enforced.

It was agreed that the Law Enforcement Team (LET) would be asked to patrol more frequently. **Action:** the Council.

In addition, it was agreed that information should be put on the notice board detailing how to contact the various bodies that deal with ASB and homelessness. **Action:** Adrienne

It was noted by Jackie that the local police had set up a Brook Green ward police panel. It was agreed that information about this would be circulated in the newsletter. **Action:** Adrienne

Jackie concluded by explaining that the use of CCTV was being looked into.

## **7.4 The Green - horticulture & trees: (Irene Rosazza & Charles Sanderson)**

### **7.4.1 Horticulture (Irene)**

Irene highlighted the need for help with bulb planting following which a number of suggestions were made. These included suggesting to young people undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh's award that

they might want to be involved (as long as parents accompanied them), engaging with local businesses and schools and, as happens in Ravenscourt Park, establishing a core group who meet on a regular date at a regular time. Irene mentioned that she had explored most of these suggestions but would review them again. **Action:** Irene

She also mentioned that she is liaising with contractors to help develop the mound next to the tennis courts.

#### **7.4.2 Trees (Charles)**

Charles mentioned that he had been in communication with Thomas Bach, tree officer at LBHF and that he was seeking an independent review to check if raising the crown, which is the Council's preferred way of looking after trees, was the best to look after the trees on Brook Green.

There followed a discussion on planning ahead and planting new trees on the Green including smaller trees to encourage little birds.

Simon mentioned that the Council had recently approved an updated tree strategy for the Borough. He also mentioned that Friends of Fulham Cemetery recently held a community day when they had planted 30 trees which they had funded.

It was agreed it would be nice to plant new trees on the Green although it was recognised that the issue of how they could be watered needed to be resolved. Charles noted that he had been looking into the possibility of installing a bore hole for some time. **Action:** Charles

#### **7.5 Events update - the annual inter-street quiz and raffle**

Jackie gave an update on the quiz and raffle explaining that Lizi Hills had joined the events working group and was taking over lead responsibility for the quiz from Nick London. Nick was thanked the work and time he had put into running the quiz.

It was noted that the event would be held on Thursday 6th March 2025 at Bute House School with Susannah Frieze once again in charge of the quiz. Everyone was reminded that table hosts were asked to form tables of 10 at a cost of £40 a head, that wine and soft drinks would be provided and that the table host was responsible for organising the food. It was also noted that individuals, who didn't have a team, would be welcome to join a team that was looking for additional members.

Anyone interested should contact Lizi via [lizihills@gmail.com](mailto:lizihills@gmail.com)

#### **7.6 Outreach (Adrienne Clarke)**

Adrienne explained that outreach involved supporting the most vulnerable in the community and that FBG had made financial contributions to Masbro Elders, Age UK (Hammersmith), LBHF Pensioners Christmas lunch, West London Action for Children, West London Welcome and Hammersmith Food Banks.

Cllr Lang, who had made the introduction between FBG and the Masbro Elders, highlighted that the Masbro Elders really appreciated the support FBG had given to the group enabling them, for example, to enjoy a day out at the seaside.

#### **7.7 Communication (Adrienne Clarke)**

Adrienne listed the key communication channels: the newsletter; the notice board at the side of the Pavilion (which needs repairing or replacing); the website and instagram. She thanked Catherine

Ashworth, who had taken over responsibility for Instagram last summer, for increasing the number of followers.

Nigel Hensman suggested that, although the information on the notice board was clearer, there was still the need for more information about FBG and for details of useful contacts. **Action:** Adrienne

Kathleen Earley suggested using the library notice Board to promote FBG. Cost £1 a week. **Action:** Adrienne

## **8. Community initiatives (Jackie Duff)**

This focused on the Olympia Street Hub which is an organic self-help group, operating through WhatsApp, set up to try and ensure positive outcomes for the local community when Olympia opens. There is an overall co-ordinating group and a representative for as many streets as possible communicating to their own streets. Almost a third of those present were aware of the Hub and its purpose.

Isabel Taylor, Sterndale Road, outlined the three strands that the Hub is focusing on, especially praising the engagement and support the group is receiving from Council Officers and the Brook Green Councillors: Stala (Cllr Antoniadou) and Adam Peter (Cllr Lang):

(i) Parking: as Olympia is due to attract 12 million visitors a year and has no public parking space, parking could be extremely problematic. In the light of this, the Council will be undertaking a parking consultation in February which is aimed at finding solutions for residents and local businesses.

(ii) Traffic flow: the need to ensure traffic flows freely and that there are no gridlocks caused by traffic relating to Olympia is being looked into by the Council and by Momentum, Olympia's traffic consultants. This is in consultation with residents. It was noted that representatives of the street hubs were looking into the specific parking relating to children being dropped off and picked up at Wetherby Pembridge, the new school on the site.

(iii) Public Transport: the aim is to get more trains running on the district line as well as on the overground line and to improve signage to other tube stations. A key issue is the lack of disability access in the station at Olympia. It was noted that a petition for a lift at the station was currently being circulated.

Alex Gethin, Brook Green, made a number of additional points including the fact that a very good journalist was involved.

Anyone wishing to be involved, or find out more, should email [hello@friendsofbrookgreen](mailto:hello@friendsofbrookgreen) and their details will be passed on to the relevant group.

## **9. AOB**

### **9.1 Lime bikes**

All agreed that Lime bikes, and other similar bikes, were causing problems when they were badly parked. It was agreed that information about how to report problems caused by such bikes should be included in the newsletter and on the notice board. **Action:** Adrienne

### **9.2 Signage on Brook Green**

It was agreed that FBG should continue to lobby for clearer signage to stop cyclists using pedestrian paths. **Action:** FBG

### **9.3 The Kick About area**

Following observations about the poor state of this area, Charles mentioned that Anna Gardiner had suggested that clover would be a better alternative to grass and that this was being looked into.

### **9.5 Paths**

Simon agreed to look into the lack of maintenance in relation to the footpaths on the Green. Romyne highlighted the particular problem of the path that runs between Rowan Road and Caithness Road which used to be a road not a footpath, suggesting that this needed to be re-designated as a road and thus maintained by Highways rather than Parks. **Action:** LBHF

### **9.6 Simon Coventry**

Nigel announced the sad news is that Simon Coventry had recently died aged 84. Before moving to Kent a few years ago Simon and his wife Philippa lived for many years in Phoenix Lodge Mansions overlooking Brook Green. During this time Simon was on the committee of The Brook Green Association\* becoming chair in 2004. As a knowledgeable traffic specialist his most visible local achievement was the active promotion of the 20mph speed limit in the local area. He also encouraged the council to plant the shrubs in place of grass at the east end of the Green.

\*The Brook Green Association was a local amenity society founded in 1970 initially to promote the interests of the area between Hammersmith Road and Blythe Road. It raised money to pay for hundreds of trees as well as at least two major refurbishments of the Brook Green Playground. It merged with the Friends of Brook Green in 2012.

## **10. Thanks**

The Board, in particular Jackie, was thanked for all they do for Brook Green. The meeting closed at 08.45 p.m.