**Annual General Meeting: 27th August, 2020 7pm – 8pm**

|  |
| --- |
| Trustees present: Helen Osman, Simon Jarosch, Gail Nielen, Toni Guiver, Chris Ferrary, and Lisa Chapman. |
| Trustee apologies: Soulla Thomas, Geraldine Cosh |
| Note: - Unfortunately due to Covid current restrictions and the weather, the meeting was moved to a sheltered location and as limited space, was closed to all but Trustees on this occasion. We advertised that all were welcome to take part by other means and would have until Monday 7th September to read, digest and comment back on all documents provided for the meeting including the minutes which were available on the website. (Documents were advertised and available on our website as usual for non-attendees, and these minutes will be added by the latest, Monday 31st August 2020). |
| **Welcome 7pm** The chair welcomed all the trustees who had already been taken through Covid ‘housekeeping’ to reduce all safe, and all agreed to keep the meeting brief and direct our focus on the main points and Finance report under the circumstances.  **‘The AGM was declared open’**  |
| 1. **Agree Previous Minutes ( Last year - 2019)**

All agreed bar one comment which was agreed: ‘Paul Guiver was nominated as a committee member not a trustee. |
| 1. **AGM Report**

We talked through some of the last year’s highlights for what was the Friends 2nd years as a registered charity, which was a very good year.Key highlights :* 1. Events:
* We had a successful stream of events such as Halloween, corporate days, school visits, wetlands tours, World wetlands day, and National Children’s day all of which helped with fund raising and promoted the Wetlands to the community and wider audiences.
* Newly installed pond islands were launched at a community event last August which helped with education, fund raising, wildlife awareness.
	1. Four new trustees joined the charity in the last year: Helen Osman, Geraldine Cosh, Simon Jarosch and Chris Ferrary.
	2. FOFF filed their first set of accounts and Trustees annual report with the Charity Commission (31st Jan, 2020)
	3. Cemetery/ A10 entrance: the new fencing has gone up, the hedge will follow during the next available planting period and LBE has agreed to pay for a noticeboard. The final location of this is still to be determined with the help of the Friends. A solution to the issue of the ‘open’ entrance leading out to the A10 here is currently being addressed through the provision of a new gate making this safer for visiting children / VA.
	4. Footfall has increased during the last year but particularly so since the COVID / lockdown during which we noticed the biggest increase as people flocked to walk, run and cycle here to keep fit and healthy.
	5. FOFF continue to volunteer in developing and protecting this local gem in line with the Covid guidance for staying safe. To date over 650 trees planted since 2014 and we plan to add around 50 more during 2020/21.
	6. Positive feedback on the ‘wheelchair accessible ‘picnic table which was installed last summer.
 |
| 1. **Treasurer’s update and report**

Welcome by all to SJ and this his first AGM with the Charity. SJ highlighted the following points which were discussed.* 1. Overall a really good year for FOFF. Income for the accounting year ended 2020 was nearly 70% higher compared to 2019. The majority of the higher income came from a £5,000 Groundworks related donation for the interpretation / pond islands.
	2. The accounts as at 31st March 2019 showed restricted funds of £860. However, the restricted funds brought forward balance for the last financial year has been updated to £18,338 as the monies relating to the community hub had not, but should have been classified as restricted, (Restricted funds: tied in to a dedicated project or initiative).
	3. Looking forward, 2020/21 is obviously a difficult year due to the lock-down and restriction on activities resulting in many being cancelled. As would be expected, there have been no major fundraising activities this financial year and it is looking difficult for the remainder of the year, too. Covid has not only impacted on our service and funding leading into the current year, but is reducing the progress of the community hub and our ability to hold fund raising events that bring the community together. However we are working on improving this through our activities in the woods for families with small children through the new trails.
	4. FOFF have applied for some funds during the current year but, as yet, had no success and the reasons provided have been due to Covid-19 priorities.
	5. We are hoping to launch the ‘young litter picking’ event in September as we have had some eager young people wanting to help with the litter. We hope that this will be a regular event and possibly an opportunity to also raise some funds as some parents have expressed a wish to buy their own children’s litter pick kits from the Friends.
	6. The trustees discussed what other opportunities we may have to raise additional funds this year in addition to any grants. Additional fund-raising activities are in development, such as a lottery fund and the possibility of perhaps a 200 club / or similar, but this needs to be discussed in more detail by the trustees once they have carried out further research into these.
	7. There are sufficient funds available to cover ongoing expenses and activities. At the current rate of expenditure, which is primarily to fund activities, the available unrestricted funds will comfortably cover the remainder of 2020/21.
	8. We discussed the importance of community engagement, retention of visitors, and particularly younger age group through making use of the current high visitor numbers. FOFF have worked hard to develop new attractions to the wetlands and park and would like to continue this. It was proposed, and agreed by all, to commit to spending a total of £800 on the following planned attractions in the Spinney: Music wall, mud kitchen and a woodland pond area.

**Actions:** SJ agreed to check that the Friends charitable status will not affected by the lack of funding attracted this year due to Covid. HO/GN agreed to research and apply for funds for the following: All agreed there was a keen interest in pursuing the Friends action plan item for play opportunities (in keeping with the wetlands) which would encourage outdoor play for under 5s. TG / GC to progress the spinney initiative. |
| 1. **Community hub update:**

The Sports England application by FOFF is successfully through to the next round and is now dependent upon Mark Bradbury follow up prior to SE final round decision. Once successful, this will deliver £25,000 (through the council) restricted funds for the community hubs, Changing Places Toilet making it an inclusive hub.  Following on from the Autumn public meeting in 2019 attended by Mark Bradbury (LBE), we expected progress in the Spring with this project. A further meeting took place on 12th March 2020, attended by ST, CF and TG (FOFF) with Andy Higham and Mark Bradbury (both from LBE) at which it was agreed the Friends would prepare a planning statement for LBE in support of the council’s own planning. This statement prepared by CF, sent to LBE in May but to date no reply from the council’s planning officer Andy Higham. Subsequent follow up discussions have been held with the council and they have now agreed to provide a monthly update (the first of which is due at the end of August), they will also arrange for an acknowledgement and response on the planning statement and the planning permission. Councillor James Hockney as representative of BHP ward is supporting the friends with this project and is helping to keep high level council officers in the loop of progress on this and to ensure that the funders are kept updated also on progress to prevent loss of any funds pledged. **Actions:** * TG to pursue with Mark Bradbury on the ground works design, project funds, and LBE responsible officer continued commitment.
* CF to follow up on the planning statement position.
 |
| 1. **Appointment of Trustees and committee members**

Under the terms of our constitution all current Trustees and Committee members stepped down.

|  |
| --- |
| * 1. Appointment of Trustees :

All trustees had agreed to stand again and were re-elected en-block. Nominated Helen Osman / All - Seconded Gail Nielen / AllThe list of trustees thus remains as before – see table at end of this document  |
| * 1. Appointment of Committee Members

All committee members resigned and were re-elected en-block. Nominated Gail Nielen / All - Seconded Lisa Chapman / AllThe committee thus remains as before - see table at end of this document  |

Action: TG Suggestion of a new member to help with being a web master is being followed up |
| **The business of the AGM was declared closed.****Action**: TG to ensure that the minutes are published by the deadline on website and to coordinate any and all responses by monitoring of the Friends email account.  |
| 1. **AOB.**

1. Cllr James Hockney has agreed to support us with the proposal on getting more bins for Firs Farm and it was agreed that this would be followed up. **Action: LC**2. The Halloween event has been cancelled due to COVID-19 but the FOFF have started a programme of woodland trails which will be ongoing. The trails aim is to attract families with small children and, it is hoped, keeping their interest in nature at this difficult time. All agreed that a small budget would be set aside to provide some inexpensive Halloween decoration for the woodland for local residents to undertake self-guided walks only. 3.Recent sightings of a chicken fungus in the woods (August 2020)4. Seen a big increase in wildlife since Covid supported by interesting visit from London Zoo who praised the works of the wetlands and the wildlife springing up in and around the ponds. 4 **STOP PRESSS!** **Firs Farm Wetlands included in London’s Open House weekend 19th – 20th September** **There will be a tour on Saturday 19th September at 11am starting from the Firs Farm Wetlands car park.** This year, the Council (and FOFF) are participating in London’s Open House weekend (19th – 20th September). It’s where there’s a programme of events (tours, walks, talks etc.) showcasing London’s [construction] projects. The Moore Brook Green Link is to be incorporated in the programme – a walk from Firs Farm to Pymmes Park, showcasing wetlands and rain garden projects. As part of this, Open House will make a short video of the route, so interested people can walk the route without a tour guide and this includes an interview of one of the FOFF Trustees.  5. Barnet TV has also requested some coverage with FOFF and an interview in the coming weeks – watch this space.**Actions:**All agreed we would begin plans on 2021 events to not be on the back foot for hopefully any grants and sponsorships that might be available. Joint committee / Trustee led. Thanks to GN for minuting the meeting. |

Elections:

In accordance with the Friends of Firs Farm constitution, the present Committee & Trustee Members vacate Office today at the Annual General Meeting but all were eligible and re-elected en-block .

**Trustees:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Office | Elected | Committee: | Elected  |
|  1 | Secretary | Gail Nielen | Committee | Caroline Wilmer  |
| 2 | Chair | Toni Guiver | Committee | Jo Attree |
| 3 | Treasurer | Simon Jarosch | Committee | John Prior |
| 4 | Trustee | Soulla Thomas | Committee | Paul Guiver |
| 5 | Trustee | Lisa Chapman | Events | Vacant |
| 6 | Planning | Chris Ferrary | Fundraiser | Vacant |
| 7 | Public Relations | Helen Osman | H&S | Vacant |
| 8 | Trustee | Geraldine Cosh | History | Vacant |
| 9 | Fundraising | Vacant | Secretary | Claire Knight |
| 10 | Membership Secretary | Vacant | Social Media | Vacant |
| 11 | Events | Vacant | Webmaster | Vacant |
| 12 | Legal | Vacant | Youth/Environ | Louise Dennis |

 Nb, Trustees have been verified through the Friends application recruitment process.