

FRIENDS OF QUEEN'S WOOD

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OCTOBER 14 2020 via Zoom at 7.30pm

1 Apologies: None

3 Minutes of last AGM: Approved

4 Chair's Report: John Dorken said that his full report which had been circulated and covered the last 18 months as the AGM had been delayed because of Covid 19. He mentioned the following:

- The Welfare Unit proposal by Haringey had been temporarily shelved but would resurface in the future. This had made us think carefully about our purpose and the balance of interests that is needed.
- Some activities have been curtailed but are now resumed including working parties and the occasional walk.
- We have been helping the Council during this period with their actions such as litter and dogs.
- During lockdown the footfall in the wood increased enormously and this has been both good and bad, good that people are using the wood and we have increased membership but there is now serious compaction in many areas especially around tree roots.
- Haringey has a new Conservation Officer Annabel Foskett who will be a great asset. The current team led by David Theakston and including Glenys Kirkwood Warren promises well for the wood.
- The Friends have been supporting a project led by Maggie Scrimgeour for 6 children with mental health problems who attend the special unit at Highgate Primary.

Questions were invited re his report:

Laura Dekker asked about the proposed flood management scheme. David Warren explained that the object will be to slow down water flow by creating a number of small ponds higher up in order to prevent flooding lower down in the wood. This is part of a national scheme and will be led by Thames Water and Haringey Drainage dept. The Moselle is partly flowing in pipes and the scheme will include releasing it. Lucy Roots said that the impact on the ecology of the wood will be a major consideration.

Geoff Hunt suggested that channels be dug under paths to let water through as some of them are very muddy. JD said paths are a major issue and are being looked at together with the water ways.

Nick Whitaker asked for an update on the felling of the 4 oaks. Glenys Law said that an independent Arboriculturist had reported that felling the trees would be disastrous for the house in Wood Vale and that it should be underpinned. The insurer's AXA are now employing another Arboriculturist and there is concern about what will be recommended.

5 Treasurer's Report and accounts: Michael Johns explained that his report covered 2019. Since lockdown income through membership and donations has risen and we now have around £5K in reserve, enough for small projects but not a major sum e.g. for paths. The bird survey was not included in the 2019 accounts as it had been paid for after the year end

He invited questions: Louise Lewis said that the Highgate Forum had received £120k in grants for local projects e.g. a new playground and asked why FQW had not applied. John Dorken said he had not received communications and he will forward information re next year to the Chair.

Angela Pollitzer said that the Treasurer's Report was inaccurate in that Mark Cohen's wife is alive though in a nursing home.

6 Election of Committee: No new nominations had been received and the current Committee were all willing to stand again. Under the constitution three members were due to stand down and be re-elected.

Lucy Roots proposed by Sarah Graham-Brown and David Warren

David Warren proposed by David Warren and seconded by Sarah Graham-Brown

Alison Watson proposed by David Warren and seconded by Michael Johns

Election of Chair: John Dorken was proposed by Lucy Roots and seconded by Michael Johns

There were no objections and all were elected.

7 The future: John Dorken said that FQW has just celebrated 20 years of successful existence but had perhaps got a bit stale; he is very keen for new ideas to be put forward by the membership for what we want to see done in the future. This is a particularly good moment as our 10 year Management Plan is just coming to an end and the Council wants to take the lead in writing the new one which will include ideas about education and the broader interest of users.

There was lively discussion with the following points made:

- A plea for at least one wheelchair/pushchair friendly path. The Council is well aware of the state of the paths, there have been walks round the wood but the issue of funding. It was said that there are many grants available which FQW could apply for.
- Problem of ageing trees and badly exposed tree roots must be addressed. New oaks and hornbeams are not taking root for a number of reasons. David Bevan said he has a number of suggestions re addressing this and offered to help.
- Lecture by David Bevan for the London Natural History Society on November 12th on the Ancient Woods of North London which will include Queen's Wood. Details on their website.
- The educational value of the wood has been underplayed. Alison Watson referred to the project for children mentioned by JD and hope for more of this kind.-
- Impact of increased use of the wood by groups. The Council is looking at this and due to get back to FQW.
- Use of social media: It was pointed out that FQW unlike the Friends of Alexandra Park has no social media presence. Laura Dekker, although not an expert, is happy to give help. She explained the different media: Twitter is best for comment, Instagram for pictures and Facebook for interaction. She advised us to get going without worrying too much about it. Edo said FQW need to think about the purpose. Are we trying to recruit more members, increase awareness of the wood and therefore footfall, increase knowledge of environmental issues? It would be good to think about putting on history, human stories.

- Upper pond: Divides opinion. Although rich environmentally some people find it an eyesore. The next working party will remove silt and this should help its appearance.
- Climate change and planetary crisis: Our primary aim should be to help toward mitigating the effects of climate change.

The meeting finished at 9.00pm

Subsequently Angela Pollitzer asked that her thanks to the Chair and all the Committee for their work be recorded.