

Friends of Westminster Park

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 22nd November 2017 at 8.00pm
at Westminster Park Community Centre.

Present: David & Gill Guyton, Sue Britton, Jenny Stokes, Martin Amesbury, Cllr Neil Sullivan, Trevor Farrell, Richard Tatton, Sandra Magilton, Peter Cocker, Steve Telford, Richard Short, Maurice Terry, John Dawson & Mary Pole

1. **Welcome by the Chairman**

Apologies received from: CWaC Officers, Cllr Razia Daniels, PCSO Lauren Davies, Jenny Szczyglowska, Nicky Crane, Ted Rose, Eileen Brennan, Rob Aldridge & Angela Reeves

2. **Minutes of the 2016 AGM** were accepted as an accurate record, proposed by Martin Amesbury, seconded by Jenny Stokes. Matters arising: David Guyton commented that there were now 3 or 4 pages on the CWaC website that comprehensively covered issues relating to unauthorised encampments by travellers. There is an obvious green button to report any incident.

3. **Chairman's Report**

David Guyton was pleased to report that FoWP acquired funding towards four additional seats in the park, two donations were personal and the Councillors contributed with matched funding from FoWP for the other two. This will assist those with mobility issues as there are fewer intervals between seats.

The park changing rooms have been in need of repair and FoWP together with Golfstorehouse have been requesting CWaC to undertake this work. A renovation project started but resulted in major re-roofing of the building. Due to budget restraints, further work has been slow but hopefully the project will be completed next year. Meanwhile the cafe, run by Golfstorehouse, is being used by an increasing number of visitors and groups, and offers of a much improved range of food and beverages.

Overall the park continues to be a hive of activity throughout the year and is much appreciated by all sections of the community. However, there has been a noticeable decline in standards of maintenance and a disappointing increase in incidents of vandalism, as well as a second incursion by travellers.

Immediate challenges are reversing the decline in standards of park maintenance, improving security and restoring the cafe/ changing block inside and out to a more attractive central hub. Meetings have been held with CWaC officers regarding all of these points, resulting in a request for greater contribution from local volunteers. CWaC are discussing reinstating CCTV, as well as installing a height restriction barrier or possibly internal barriers, and closing the gates (not necessarily locking) for a trial period. The new appointment of a Greenspace Development Officer is proposed with the specific objective of working with Friends groups to acquire external funding. CWaC think this could be a way to raise funds for the refurbishment of the central cafe block.

David thanked all members, particularly the Committee and representatives of groups based in the park, and our local councillors for their interest and support during the year.

4. **Treasurer's Report**

The audited accounts were circulated. There are 150 private residents who are paid members of FoWP, plus user group organisations. The funds are much the same as in previous years.

5. **Current Issues/ General Discussion**

Cllr Neil Sullivan addressed the meeting – he is elected rather than a council officer. Neil explained that local government has had to adjust to changing times and some re-structuring of relevant departments has taken over a year. Whilst the timescale is disappointing, choice of priorities had to be made. Neil advised that Simon Lammond is

dedicated to delivering a first class service and works hard. Whilst taking on this new role, he also had to manage his previous one, and with limited staff on the ground. Rob Jones who is the main WP contact has been on extended paternity leave. However, WP and the Grosvenor are flagship parks. It was suggested that FoWP should aim to meet annually with Simon and quarterly with Rob or Mark Brazil.

Comments from those present:

- The engagement model with CWaC is not working.
- CWaC specialise in being opaque
- Community pay-back (previously Community service) could be undertaken
- Park is important and is a flagship
- National croquet events have been held in WP which is good for tourism
- Chris Matheson is on the House of Commons Select Committee for Sport
- Not FoWP job to organise volunteers – FoWP are not a registered charity just an overall umbrella group
- Police have been working to try and engage with teenagers to prevent anti-social behaviour
- Security – CCTV is one element. If there is no management system in place, height barrier at front gate won't work.

6. **Election of Committee & Officers**

Jenny Szczyglowska is standing down as Treasurer after 16 years on the Committee. Jenny is a founder member of FoWP and David recorded our collective thanks for her years of service.

David Guyton has served on the Committee for 11 years and has been Chairman for 5 years. He was willing to continue if no other volunteers were forthcoming.

Treasurer - Jenny Stokes, proposed by Steve Telford, seconded by Sue Britton

Secretary – Sue Britton, proposed by Neil Sullivan, seconded by Mary Pole

Vice Chairman – no nominations

Chairman – Steve Telford, proposed by Maurice Terry, seconded by Nicky Crane.

It was suggested that Sue Britton should use a small amount of funds to present a token of our appreciation to both David and Jenny for their services. This was agreed.

Sue Britton
Secretary FoWP