



Minutes of the Friends of St Ann's Well Gardens (FOSAWG) AGM held on 16 March 2021 5.30-7pm, via Zoom

Present:-

FOSAWG Committee Members:

Melanie Davis (Chair)

Linda Austin (Secretary and de facto Treasurer)

Natalie Hall

Alison Dean

Juliette Hunting

Kate Kirkham

FOSAWG general members:

Jane Bettany, Juliette Bidwell, Janet Clough, Melanie Davis, Alison Dean, Lesley Anne DiMarco, Katy Friese-Green, Carol Gunn, Natalie Hall, Juliette Hunting, Penny Jones, Kate Kirkham, , Chris Murgatroyd, Anya O'Neill, Colm O'Neill, Helen Oram, Pippa Smith, Anne Tyndale,

Non-Members :

Clare Anderson, Lucy Mott ,Tara Shanahan , Jill Williams

Apologies:-

Marie de Vere

Clare Hossack (Nursery Manager, Little Forest)

1. Welcome

Melanie welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was noted that this is the best attended AGM since the conception of FOSAWG and great to see so many new faces. The 2020 AGM had been postponed due to Covid so this AGM is a joint 2020/21 AGM.

The meeting was approved as quorate

2. Minutes of the previous AGM

Minutes of the AGM held on 14 March 2019 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. Annual Report & Finances

The 2019 and 2020 reports were made available to all members and event attendees prior to the meeting, through Google Drive and the website.

Melanie introduced the reports saying that 2020 had been a challenging year due to the arrival of Covid-19 in March 2020. It's clear that the park has been hugely important to many people in the area over this period and there have inevitably been some conflicts of interest at times. For many local residents, St Ann's has been their only access to outside space, whether for exercise whilst the gyms and fitness clubs were closed, to allow children to burn off some energy or just to get some fresh air and clear their heads. Increased use of the Gardens has sadly led to increased litter. The Friends planned to launch a major initiative in 2021 to get local people engaged in keeping their park litter-free.

Sensory Garden

Melanie & Linda reported that after significant progress with fundraising and completion of initial works in 2017 – 2019, we have run into significant difficulties. Although we received designs from the Sensory Trust in June 2020, the contractors withdrew due to other work commitments. We have continued to seek a council approved contractor to do the work as envisage, without success, and we have asked Brighton & Hove City Council for help in finding a workable solution. It was hoped that a new Friends Committee can find a way to make this project happen in 2021/22.

Spring Festival

Saturday 9th May 2020 should have been our 13th Spring Festival but due to Covid-19, the festival had to be cancelled. The festival has also been cancelled in 2021 but the committee hopes that a festival will be able to take place in May 2022. The festival is a significant income generator for FOSAWG so this has had an impact on the funds received during both financial years.

Accounts

The Annual Report and Accounts for 2019 and 2020 were ACCEPTED.

5. Election of Officers & Committee

Pippa Smith was elected Chair.

Alison Dean was elected Treasurer.

Linda Austin was elected Secretary.

Juliette Bidwell, Natalie Hall, Kate Kirkham, Melanie Davis and Colm O'Neill were elected as Trustees to the Committee.

Alison Dean led a vote of thanks to Melanie Davis for her time as Chair and the many achievements she had made.

Pippa Smith thanked members for approving her as the new Chair of FOSAWG. She has lived close to the park for 30 years and is excited about the future opportunities for FOSAWG to maintain and improve the park. She thanked members of the Committee for their contribution and asked members to consider getting involved – everyone is welcome.

6. Discussion of Priorities

Leave No Trace

The Committee is proud of the park's Green Flag status and Kate Kirkham outlined the importance of keeping the Gardens as a clean and welcoming space. The increased use of green spaces across the city has led to increased litter and it is expected that this will increase significantly as the current lockdown eases and people start socializing in groups again.

Kate and Alison have both attended BHCC Tidy-Up training and carry out litter picks in the park on an ad hoc basis. The council have earmarked a SuperBin for installation in the park, making it easier for volunteers to take part in litter picking in the future. It was discussed to encourage more volunteers to take part in litter picking on a regular basis and to ask Garry Meyer (Brighton & Hove Tidy-Up team coordinator) to run a training session at St Ann's Well Gardens. Regular litter picking days would then be organized. Helen Oram and Katy Friese-Greene offered to get involved.

Colm O'Neill has offered to paint out graffiti and it was discussed that this should be included in the remit of the Leave No Trace working group.

Kate is using funding to launch a Leave No Trace publicity campaign this Spring. Jane Bettany suggested a competition for children to design a poster.

Chris Murgatroyd suggested some signage on bins asking people to take litter elsewhere if bin is full.

Pippa Smith suggested handing out bin bags to parties being held in the park.

Increasing awareness of Friends/FOSAWG

There was a broad discussion, with many suggestions, including, litter picking teams with high-vis vests, promoting FOSAWG using noticeboards in blocks of flats, raising awareness in local schools and nurseries, Duke of Edinburgh scheme to involve younger people.

Playground

Kate reported that she had been in discussions with the new BHCC Playgrounds Officer and thanked those who had taken part in the Playgrounds Group subcommittee. The equipment proposals had now gone out to tender. Lucy Mott asked about equipment for children with disabilities. Kate said that the BHCC Resources Committee had included an amendment to proposals for special needs requirements to be taken in consideration for the overall City-wide playground developments

Lighting

Kate reported that Clare from the Little Nursery had raised the issue of the poor quality of lighting from Somerhill Road to the Café. Melanie said that Brighton & Hove Council were proposing to change the lighting and the Friends were being consulted. There was an issue around reducing anti-social behaviour. FOSAWG will continue discussions with the nursery around lighting and anti-social behaviour so that a co-ordinated response can be given to the Council.

Water-table & flooding problems

A number of people have been in touch with the Friends to complain about the mud in the park over the Autumn/Winter. It was NOTED that this was an ongoing problem due to the large number springs, and this was worsening, and this would be raised with the Council.

Events

Pippa Smith and Natalie Hall (FOSAWG Events Team) outlined plans for socially distanced small events which would take place once lockdown was lifted. There will be no Spring Festival in 2021.

7. Any Other Business

There was no other business. The meeting closed at 6.45 pm