

Friends of Windmill Gardens General Meeting

7pm, 22 March 2012

St Paul's Church House,
24 Blenheim Gardens SW2 5BZ

Minutes

1. Welcome and apologies

Apologies received from: Nick Cattermole, Alex Gaffikin, Jackie Grant, Donna Lister, Lisa Rigg, Nancy Platts, Owen Llewellyn, Andy Forbes

Present: Jean Kerrigan (JK)- Chair, Richard Santhiri (RS)- Vice-chair, Nick Weedon (NW) – Exec officer, Magdalen Rubalcava (MR) – Exec officer, Sandra Watts (SW) – Exec officer, Kim Winter (KW) – Exec officer, Chris Patton (CP) – Exec officer, Penny Steele (PS) – Exec officer, David Gilchrist (DC) – Exec officer, and Friends: June Stillman (JS), Anthea Masey (AH), Jill Reyes (JR), Alan Piper (AP), Annick Alet (AA), Elizabeth Morgan (EM), Carly Haslam (CH), Shaun Wilson (SHW), Laura Zauli (LZ).

2. Report: Work of Exec since the last meeting – JK

- Several successful training days for new guides: 24 have completed part 1, a further 21 have completed part 2, and quite a few have also completed the final health and safety stage. Thanks to everyone who helped with training, especially RS, NW, SW, PS, KW and AA.
- We have a new system for booking guides and volunteers, run as a job share by LZ and Kat. They will be contacting all guides in the next weeks to set up the rota.
- Successful Christmas party – thanks to everyone who brought food.
- Raising awareness at events – Brockwell Christmas Fair and Streatham Volunteer Fair.
- Nancy has done great things on the PR front, with mentions in the local press and interview on Radio London.
- Many thanks to the Comms Group for developing merchandise ideas, producing leaflets, maintaining the blog and organising Loaf Day to publicise a special open day for Blenheim Gardens Estate. Special thanks to Pansy and Anna, and also the Old Post Office Bakery for providing free gingerbread windmills.
- RS has given at least one talk about Brixton Windmill to a historical society.
- Fund-raising group has been set up (see item 8). Thanks to NW, RS and MR for their work on this.
- The felled horse chestnut tree in the children's playground has been turned into a bench. The bulbs planted last year by the Parks Group are now flowering!

3. Minutes and matters arising from last GM – 7 November 2011

Agreed: A correct record

Matters arising:

- The feasibility study into grinding flour has been delayed by StoneWest going into administration, as the training to use the mill was part of their contract.
Action: JK to raise possibility of alternative at next partnership meeting.
- Drug addicts and prostitutes have also been using the area behind the mill – condoms and syringes have been found. The area is checked and cleared before every visit and open day, but some kind of deterrent is needed – security lights, CCTV, prickly bushes suggested. Cuts in maintenance and park rangers don't help.
Action: JK to raise at next meeting of parks and open spaces.
- A partnership group is trying to get more activities back in One O'Clock Club – currently, Windmill school visits and open days are only users of the building. Holmewood

Children's Centre/Tree House nursery and Lambeth Play Association want to deliver outreach children's sessions there, and with Blenheim Gardens Estate and FoWG propose to formalise partnership use.

Action: JK to report back on progress at next general meeting.

- Apparent flaking paint on sails reported last meeting was actually bird mess! Regular maintenance programme for mill now in place with Owlsworth IJP – visits once a month. Recently fitted ratchet straps to prevent sails slipping when it's windy.

4. Proposal for secret ballot – JR

Important for FoWG to be seen as free and fair. Some people find formal meetings intimidating and feel inhibited from speaking. Secret ballot only necessary for contentious issues or when exec posts are contested – not intended for straightforward business.

Agreed, as long as use is reasonable

5. Proposed change to constitution – SW

We want to make our FoWG objectives clear in language that everyone can understand. Sent a much clearer version to the Charities Commission who responded with this alternative. If we are not happy, we will have to go back to re-negotiate with the Charities Commission.

Disagreed with proposed wording change – Agreed Exec should go back to Charities Commission and argue for clearer language before our AGM in the summer.

6. Open days – JK

- We have 21 open days this year, the first one on 1 April specially for residents of Blenheim Gardens Estate. We also have various associated events, such as an Easter egg hunt, Art in the Park, Hallowe'en activities. They are all listed on the publicity leaflet. We need more volunteers to turn out for our first full year of events, so must keep attracting new members with publicity.

Action: LZ and Kat to contact everyone who trained as guides in the next couple of weeks.

- List of volunteers doesn't currently include people who bake cakes to sell but aren't there on the day.

Action: LZ to add this category to volunteer list.

- Guided tours on some days are almost booked up already. We've also had a query from a large group who wants to visit on a day we're not open. Exec agreed that we should charge £6 a head, to include a tour, cup of tea/cake and an information booklet – but we still need to get volunteers to turn out for this extra time.
 - AP: We should charge
 - RS: We should write down what the money will be used for, so people understand why we charge
 - LW: Could advertise these tours, which would help raise funds
 - AA: Getting income from regular organised tours is something Exec should discuss
 - NW: Do we also charge community groups?
 - RS: Once money changes hands, expectations are raised: it's a contract
 - AM: £6 looks very cheap, compared with a commercial operation that would have to pay guides etc to turn out
 - MR: Use of the word "donation" might be better than "charge"
 - JK: Let's see how many people approach us for tours – discuss at Exec if necessary

7. May Day parade – MR

- There is a funding problem this year, so if anyone has ideas for potential funders, please tell Festival Group. Also space for more stalls (not food) – let Festival Group know: cost is £10 for community groups, £20 for stalls selling items.
- A publicity leaflet inviting people to design posters and floats, play instruments or make dragonflies will be handed out at the tube station and put through doors in local streets. Nancy is working with Veolia press office on publicity. Lisa is emailing local schools – everyone please email any other groups they're part of. We're also looking for suggestions for people to run children's workshops.

- Andy Forbes has offered space on Brockwell Bake's stall at West Norwood Slow Food on 31 March. SW and SHW agreed to attend this.

Action: JK to email parks and local civic groups

Action : KW to liaise with Comms Group on distributing leaflets

8. Education Programme – report from LR

In LR's absence, a written report was presented.

- The pilot education programme is going well – yesterday the first school group went inside the windmill since restoration. All visits have been from primary schools so far. The response has been very encouraging.
- Lisa has bought 2 stone querns from the Netherlands – they are now on the ground floor of the mill. Not sure whether they could be used as part of a touring exhibition – they are very heavy!

9. Fundraising – NW

- Three people responded to a mailing and met with NW, RS and MR. Drafted a business plan showing where the money has gone, what it's committed to and what we still need. Two attendees work in charity sector so have useful advice, as well as questions about FoWG's long term plans and how we operate.
- Merchandise can bring in money, but involves costly initial outlay, e.g. printing postcards. We will shortly be paying our £2,000 cash contribution to the Windmill restoration/education project. So we need to start thinking about how we can raise large amounts of cash for future FoWG activities and to fund our longer term plans.

Ideas include:

- Grant applications and awards, matching different projects to different award bodies
- Fundraising days, eg vegetable growing, pet talent shows, festivals
- Impulse donations
- Small scale giving, eg egg game, putting money on a snake
- Linking with other organisations through members' contacts
- Developing merchandise, both products and distribution, eg selling on Brixton Society stalls
- Different classes of membership with different benefits

Ideas suggested at the meeting:

- Open gardens
- Perform a play in Windmill Gardens

Action: NW to make draft business plan more widely available

10. Awards – KW

- We have made the shortlist for the Museums and Heritage Awards for Excellence 2012, in the Restoration/Conservation category. The results are announced on 16 May.
- We have also gained more than 100 votes in the Great Exhibition 2012 – currently we have 269 votes, lying in third position in the Landmarks and Attractions category, behind Wickerman Oxford and Peterborough Cathedral! We have a poster that we will put on the website to encourage people to print off and put on noticeboards etc to encourage more people to vote.

11. Treasurer's report

It's been a difficult year – see attached report. But as we will be open all year this year, we have more opportunities to raise more money.

12. AOB

SHW: Any chance of having an artist in residence?

EM: Has painted the windmill in the past – will try again!

Proposed date for next meeting (AGM): 21 June 2012