

# Friends of Windmill Gardens General Meeting

7pm, 15 November 2012

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

## Minutes

### 1. Welcome and apologies

Apologies received from: Alex Gaffikin, Jackie Grant, Donna Lister, Dawn Edwards, Nancy Platts, Toussainte Reba, Viv Whittingham, Pansy Aung, Anna Sweet, Richard Dutton, Sue Murray

Present: Jean Kerrigan (JK)- Chair, Richard Santhiri (RS)- Vice-chair, Shaun Wilson (SHW) – Treasurer, 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, Owen Llewellyn (OJ) – Exec officer, Stephen Lawlor (SL) – Development and Education Officer, and Friends: June Stillman (JS), Jane Wild (JW), Jill Reyes (JR), Alan Piper (AP), Annick Alet (AA), Jane Clifton (JC), Andy Forbes (AF), Mike Lansley (ML), Adrian Worrall (AW), Camila Cardenosa (CC).

### 2. Minutes and matters arising from last GM – 22 March 2012

#### **Agreed: A correct record**

Matters arising:

- JK introduced Stephen Lawlor, the temporary Development and Education Officer who is looking after the HLF and schools programme at Brixton Windmill. His contract is due to finish on 21 December; recruitment for a permanent post-holder is ongoing.
- Holmewood Nursery has been appointed to run activities at the One O'Clock Club for children up to age 5. They are working with Danny Howcroft of BGRMO and have attended meetings to discuss sharing the building with us. They are positive about making changes to improve the sightlines of the windmill and access. They will be running a minimum of three activities a week, including school holidays and could be a useful ally in trying to improve the park.

### 3. Executive report

#### Windmill open days - JK

- JK reported a really successful season, given the logistics of getting people through the windmill (only 6/hour on a full tour). We had 20 regular open days and quite a few extra for particular groups. In total we had more than 1,000 people on regular open days and more than 200 on the extra days (including 107 from Secret London over four days).
- On days when there were other activities in the park we had higher numbers, even during bad weather. Families tended to come and spend the afternoon when there were events in the park. The big events, including the festival, Art in the Park, Hallowe'en and the Big Draw, were very successful. We may want to reconsider Hallowe'en, given how cold and dark it got later.
- Our team of guides and volunteers were outstanding – very reliable and committed. The booking system for visitors and volunteers worked well.
  - SW: Do we need more open days to get visitors through?
  - JK: Although we have a wide base of volunteers, it would be difficult to get them to do more days

- ML: Is there anything that precludes us from charging? Research shows that people don't appreciate visits as much when they are free.
- JK: The HLF terms say that for the five years of the programme all open days must be free. Some local families and youngsters have been several times – it's important that they feel it's theirs. Those who can afford to pay usually make a donation.
- OL: We can work out a "unit charge" by dividing donations by the number of visitors.
- SW: We must keep it free but could put up a notice saying how much it costs to run and maintain to encourage more donations.
- JK: Secret London visitors paid £6/head. Other group visits donated £50. We could develop this more.
- SHW: But it can be difficult to get enough volunteers during the week.
- RS: We could improve the training programme so that guides know how to communicate with younger children, not just adults. We can also build on the querns on the ground floor, eg let children sift flour, make dough. And the cap should be lit so that visitors can see the mechanisms better. And music played outside gives atmosphere.
- JK: Stonewest going into liquidation means that some work has been delayed, but we should get lighting in the cap.
- SHW: We also need to sell ourselves better – guides should encourage visitors to buy merchandise or tea and cake.
- AA: Quite a few visitors just walk straight out – we should call people over to the stall after their tour and try to make them members
- ML: Did Stonewest go into liquidation with some of our money?
- JK: No, but some work was subcontracted to the millwright, who hasn't been paid, so he is reluctant to do further work until this is sorted out. The mill maintenance is a separate contract with Lambeth Council, so that's OK.

#### Fundraising to enable Brixton Windmill to grind flour - JK

- JK referred to a leaflet included in the papers for the meeting explaining the proposal to launch a fundraising campaign to raise £20k to get the mill grinding flour again. The HLF grant specified that we would get training on using the electric millstones to produce flour, and the leaflet explains some of the things we need money for. The mill is small, with no ancillary buildings for sifting or bagging. The fund would help us raise money to find alternatives for this, among other things. The money would be raised in stages of £5k. So we need ideas for a name for the campaign and for how to raise money.
  - SL: We have found one branch of the Ashby family that still grinds flour in Essex – we should exploit those connections. We need to make the windmill sustainable after HLF funding runs out, especially with our bicentenary in 2016.
  - SW: We need a feasibility study to see if it can be done at all. We must ensure that the windmill remains open to visitors – that is its primary purpose, not grinding flour.
  - RS: We should pitch it through education. We have two different mills – get information and direction from Mildred Cookson at SPAB to show children how it works.
  - JK: The initial HLF response to the proposal was quite favourable, as long as we remain open for educational visits and open days. The stones were run once to test them during the restoration, so we know they work. But if we want to run them regularly we have received various bits of advice, such as not running them at full speed.
  - NW: The feasibility study will probably take up the first £5k of funding.
  - ML: Would we have to employ a full-time or part-time miller? Grinding flour may be stretching the volunteers too far.
  - RS: Volunteers can work with the provender mill – it's not beyond them. It could be a great educational angle and great challenge for local people.
  - AF (secretary of Brockwell Bake Association): We grow heritage wheat, harvest it, mill it and bake it. We have just got our own mill, about half the

diameter of the one at Brixton Windmill. It's currently on a farm in Lewes while we try to find a suitable location in Lambeth. We milled our first 250kg of wheat last week and will blend it with older flour and sell it. There is lots of demand for it and I think that similarly there would be lots of demand for Brixton Windmill flour. We'd be happy to help with sourcing grain (yields are down 30-50% this year because of the weather) and processing it after grinding. We are already doing this anyway, so it wouldn't require a lot of capital expenditure. Average wholesale price of flour is 90p/kg to bakers. Brockwell Bake sells at 120-130p/kg; Brixton Windmill could probably add another 20p/kg premium. Perry Court wholemeal flour is 125p/kg, sifted flour 185p/kg. The French burr stones make flour easier to sift. You do need a feasibility study. Ideally there would be more buildings around the mill for processing afterwards. Brockwell Bake could make a sieve to handle 70-80kg/hour. You also need a functioning sack hoist. And a plan to handle the bran. The study should include trial millings – turning the mill on – and not leave it till the end of the study.

- SHW: Disappointed we are still discussing a feasibility study – it was in the minutes of a previous GM that we would commission a study and we still haven't done it.
- SW: We need the money to do it, which is why we are talking about this fundraising campaign.
- SHW: The constitution says that raising money has to be agreed by 60% of members.

**Agreed unanimously: That FoWG commit to the raising of funds and campaign for a regular supply of edible flour to be produced at Brixton Windmill**

- JK: We need a catchy title and ideas to raise money, especially from big potential donors.
- RS: We should run an educational workshop next year and invite specialists to come – **Agreed**
- SHW: The Corporation of London has a charitable trust that pays for feasibility studies that encourage people to grow their own food and be greener.
- RS: We were shortlisted for an English Heritage Angels Award and met influential people – Andrew Lloyd Webber, Melvyn Bragg and Clare Balding. We can get them to help publicise our cause.
- ML: Also ask Linton Kwesi Johnson and Darcus Howe for support.
- MR: We are launching a windmill loaf and cupcakes at our next festival – we can use them to publicise our cause.
- AF: The company that made the provender mill went on to become the country's dominant lift manufacturer – later taken over by Otis.

4. Report from DEO – SL

SL said that Lisa Rigg had set up the primary school programme before she left – four workshops for children up to the age of 6-7. SL is running seven workshops before Christmas plus an outreach workshop in north London. He has also produced a leaflet to publicise them.

He is now working on a subject-based programme of workshops for secondary schools, eg English, geography, physics, food science.

Camila Cardenosa is an artist working for an MA at Central St Martins – she will be painting a mural on the wall in the children's playground, to be finished by May 2013. It will explore local people's feelings about the mill and the area, and the history of the Ashby family. One class from each of the eight Windmill cluster schools has been invited for a free workshop. Today they worked with a group from Sudbourne School, looking at language and idioms associated with windmills (eg "whose turn is it?") and using Victorian lettering and fonts. They hope to produce some film footage of later workshops, and will start working with older children and families in 2013.

- JC: Could ask the BBC Archives for footage.
- AW: The Media Trust specialises in helping charities with editing film.

- ML: As part of our fundraising campaign we could get the film shown in the Ritzy.

## 5. Treasurer's report – SHW

- The balance sheet is looking much more positive, as we have expanded our merchandise and are getting more donations on open days. Refreshments and sales of plants and vegetables by the Parks group also make significant contributions, as do fees from group visits.

## 6. Reports from sub-groups

### Comms- KW

- We won two awards this year and were shortlisted for a third. None involved cash prizes – just kudos!
- We launched a regular monthly e-newsletter, though some people appear not to have received it.
- We organised a sound installation in the windmill for a month by an artist working for her MA at Camberwell College.
- We have expanded our range of merchandise, which has started to bring in more income.
- We have been awarded a grant from the HLF for a Mill Memories project, to train up volunteers to interview local people about their memories of the windmill, the area, and food production. From these interviews we intend to produce an exhibition, book and performance. **[NOTE: This information is embargoed until it is officially announced by the HLF on 22 November.]**

### Festival - MR

- Adrian Worrall is ex-chair of Brixton City Farm, which keeps animals, mainly birds, in gardens and on balconies around Brixton. When they organised a pop-up farm at the festival in May, they surveyed around 100 people about their reactions. 86% said they supported having a permanent farm in Windmill Gardens; 94% said they would visit the park more often if it was there. More than 50% said they would help look after the animals. In an ideal world, there would be a stable-block arrangement to keep a whole range of animals secure and safe in a small space. Ducks, chickens and quail would produce a small number of eggs. There is a real benefit in helping people learn where food comes from and providing hands-on experience of looking after animals. The Ashby family kept poultry, so there is also a historical link. AW suggested a joint approach to Lambeth Council with FoWG and the One O'Clock Club, with a high-level proposal to see if they are interested – not asking for funding, as it would be a good subject for grant proposal.
  - JK: We have raised it with Lambeth, who don't seem opposed to it. But they might object to more buildings in the park, as loss of green space is quite sensitive. BGRMO input is important – might be concerned about noise and security of animals. FoWG generally supportive, as are Holmewood.
  - AW: Suggest short formal meeting with FoWG, Holmewood and BGRMO. Stable blocks need not be permanent, but still strong and secure. I have experience of applying for funds in previous job.
  - ML: Queries about permanency of stable blocks and child labour.
  - AW: Buildings are not permanent – they can be moved. Children can help check water and food levels before and after school – an adult would always be present.
  - SW: Main purpose of park is for dogs to run around.
  - MR: Wants to be included in proposal.

**Agreed: To come up with joint proposal from City Farm, FoWG, Holmewood, BGRMO**

- Christmas party is on Monday 10 December, 7-10pm, at the Brix in St Matthew's Church. Please bring donations of food and drink and dress up in rock 'n' roll theme.
- Parade next year will have the theme of cakes, puddings and pies. We will be launching a windmill loaf and cupcake.

#### Fundraising – NW

- Have been working on a plan.

#### Parks - AA

- Thanks to everyone for their time and donations, including plants and jam.
- A bench has been donated by a local family, which will be sited next to the newly planted chestnut tree.
- The ping-pong table has arrived – Veolia has to reinforce the grass around it.
- Also a tool box has been installed next to the wheat – makes a useful seat too.
- There is another bulb-planting workshop this Saturday, to plant bulbs by the fence leading to the estate. The wildflower meadow also needs weeding, as does the herb garden (and need some ground cover).
- The wheat was much more successful this year, as the new site had more sun. We should rotate it, as wheat takes a lot out of the soil, but might have to use the same site.
- Other workshops planned: bug walk for children, sessions to make notices explaining herbs and wheat, and plant labels.

#### 7. AOB

- Volunteers needed for stall at the Friends of Brockwell Park Christmas Fair on 9 December
- KW to give list of groups and people to contact in newsletter

Proposed date for next general meeting: 21 March 2013