

FRIENDS OF WINDMILL GARDENS
SPRING GENERAL MEETING MINUTES OF CIO
registration number 1176991

7PM, 27 APRIL 2021

Meeting held online via Zoom and at the Brixton Windmill Centre

DRAFT MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

Current FoWG Trustees: Jean Kerrigan (Chair), Viv Whittingham (Sec), Sonam Sikka (Treasurer), Marita Brown (co-opted), Liz du Parcq, Mark Gordon (co-opted), Abigail Holsborough, Ann Lee, Jeff Thomas, Philippa Tudor co-opted)

Members: Annick Alet, David Beamish, Eric Harveson, Donna Lister, Margery Povall,
Peter Skuse, Penny Steele, Sheila Triggs, Carolyn Weniz, Kim Winter

Non-members: Hattie Hammans

Staff: Lucy Bridal, (Business Development Manager) Margherita (Mags) Di Ceglie (Project Administrator),

1 INTRODUCTION & HOUSEKEEPING

Lucy Bridal (Business Development Manager) gave a brief introduction to online webinar procedures and explained how all participants could ask questions. She noted that the meeting was being recorded and introduced the Chair of the meeting Jean Kerrigan (Chair of Trustee Board).

2 WELCOME & APOLOGIES:

Jean Kerrigan (Chair) thanked all members for attending. Apologies had been received in advance from Robert Adie, Pru Ashby and Nick Weedon (Vice Chair).

3 INTRODUCTION OF NEW TRUSTEES:

Following the decision of the AGM in October 2020 three new trustees had been co-opted on to the Trustee Board. The Chair invited them to introduce themselves:

Marita Brown explained that in her day job she looks after training and development in the NHS. She lives in locally in Clapham. She visited the windmill a few years ago and was really keen to get involved with this amazing local organisation.

Mark Gordon explained he has a business background as a marketing director for multinationals. 10 years ago he became a volunteer for Sutton community farm in South London, where he became a trustee and later the Chair and that gave him the taste for community business. Mark has lived in the middle of Brixton for six years. In the FoWG he leads the communication subgroup and will be involved in ensuring that the Friends become a sustainable community business.

Philippa Tudor said that her professional qualifications are in HR and corporate governance and she works as a public servant. She first visited the windmill nearly 20 years ago, with her late father who was a flour miller and was inspired

to get involved with Brixton Windmill because of what everybody was doing during lockdown. She was hoping to get involved with the new archives and history subgroup.

The Chair thanked all three new trustees and noted that they bring very valuable skills to FoWG.

4 **CIO ANNUAL REPORT:**

Jean Kerrigan gave a report on FoWG activities over the six months since the AGM in October 2020. Starting with **Brixton Windmill** itself she explained that the trustees had been in discussion with the Council about the problem of damp and water penetration inside the windmill. Despite repairs carried out in 2017 and 2019 the problem persists. So she had approached Lambeth Council to suggest a joint grant bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to raise the finance to fund more serious repairs. It had been agreed that a feasibility study will be carried out and that to inform that study, the Friends will monitor the damp and temperature. She also reported that in January Lambeth Council paid for the modular millstones to be dressed, a very expensive piece of work.

The next section of the report was illustrated by a series of slides showing the activities of FoWG volunteers. Throughout the winter lock downs FoWG's volunteer millers continued **milling flour** and increased the number of retailers – spreading into to East London as well maintaining regular donations to local Lambeth food banks.

In **Windmill Gardens** our gardening volunteers supervised significant changes in the park itself. Funded by a £10k Western Riverside Environmental Fund (WREF) grant these changes include a new food growing space, a new wildflowers meadow behind the windmill, a mini heritage fruit orchard, and a new FoWG notice board and flagpole are all now in place in the park.

Open days at the windmill were organised in the brief period when COVID-19 lock-down regulations were relaxed in early autumn and a successful socially distanced winter market was delivered on 13 December thanks to all our volunteers, especially Glynnis, who decorated Santa's grotto. She also thanked the GoodGym team who joined our own volunteers to make the day a success. This was our only large-scale event in the park during 2020.

FoWG's volunteer fundraisers have helped to keep our finances in the black during a period when we've not been able to increase our income by trading as planned in our forward budget for 2021. Some large grants have been secured and this has been a lifeline. We also benefitted financially in January when Lambeth Council hired our building to deliver a **lateral flow COVID-19 test centre**. Many people discovered the windmill when they came for their test.

In the October half term we delivered a week of **workshops for young people** in partnership with local education charities, CEFLyncx, who organise play schemes in Windmill Gardens during the school holidays. We also delivered another programme during the Easter holiday.

Funded by a significant grant from the City Bridge Trust, we produced a new **activity pack of 12 creative projects for children**. 2000 packs designed have been delivered to children of families in digital poverty. Also funded by the grant are **packs of six recipe cards**. The grant has also funded filming a **virtual tour of the windmill**, with a second film that can be used in our programme of school

workshops. The script was written by one of our trustees, and the filming has been done by a professional team. She thanked Mags, our project administrator, who despite social distancing rules managed to pull together a group of volunteers to appear in the film, which is designed for those unable to climb the stairs of the windmill or unable to visit.

FoWG is now in a position to slowly come out of lockdown and re-start **Tai Chi** and gardening as regular activities in the park. We've planted a bed of April Bearded heritage wheat and hope to open again for **guided tours at the windmill** in late May. Our new **pop-up café** is open weekdays 2-4pm and on Saturday from 11am-2pm. Our **Heritage Walks** led by Liz du Parcq will resume on 30 May. Our range of merchandise will be on special display at a **Designers Market** in the Department Store, Ferndale Road on Saturday 22 May. All these events rely on volunteers to make them a success and we encourage everyone to consider helping at one or more of these activities.

She ended with **thanks to all our volunteers**, millers, fundraisers, tour guides, bakers, gardeners and stewards, saying that without them and all their skills, FoWG would have no future.

Finally, she gave special **thanks to Kim Winter** who stepped down as a trustee at the AGM to concentrate on her creative work. Kim served as an Exec member and Trustee for many years and her skills were much missed.

5 **COMMUNITY CONSULTATION – Business Development Manager**

Lucy Bridal, FoWG's BDM, outlined the work with consultants funded by the Power to Change grant to gather information to inform what we do. We have been focussing on building a social impact framework. This looks at our current audience, those we reach and those we don't reach, how we can reach them and make sure we're including those we want to reach.

Part of this means a **public consultation**, that also takes the form of an online survey hosted by Survey Monkey. We're encouraging as many people as possible to complete it because we want everyone's views. The main purpose of the survey is to find out what everyone wants, what you'd like us to do, what you think we've done well in the past, how we could use the gardens how we could use the centre, the windmill, and also whether we should be delivering activities directly ourselves, or if we can enable community groups and local residents and facilitate their activities and work in collaboration.

Once we've gathered all this information we can start forward planning and programming for hopefully some COVID free years so that all of our activities are tailored to our main aims and objectives and our mission, while also meeting community needs, and the new needs brought by the pandemic.

We're also running a **community leader consultation**, via Zoom, so, the people running the initiatives and the projects in our local area at the moment can tell us how they'd like to work with us.

SETTING PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE – Marita Brown (trustee)

Although the Friends of Windmill Gardens does fantastic work, like any organisation we need to focus on the future and make sure that we're directing our time, effort and resources on the most important things for the organisation. This is the work that Marita has been leading on, on behalf of the Board of

Trustees.

The work started with the Board reviewing progress against the business plan that had already been set for the period 2017 to 2022, which was really clear about what the organisation wanted to achieve. The Board agreed that most of the aims were a 'work in progress'.

Secondly, the Board looked back to the original charity objectives and did a SWOT analysis in order to review our strengths and weaknesses as an organisation, as well as the external opportunities and threats. From that, the Board produced a list of draft priorities for the coming year.

The third part of the work is around supporting the board to lift their gaze, thinking more strategically. This also links to levels of decision making, accountability and responsibility which we are working through at the moment.

We hope to have finalised this work over the next couple of meetings. Marita showed slides and explained the draft priorities that the Trustees had come up with so far.

The first one is a clear strategy for income generation, which is key for any organisation, particularly in the charity sector. We need to look at all sources of income going forward to make sure we are sustainable as an organisation and can really develop ourselves to meet our aims as organisation. We need to look at all aspects of income, including trading, and fundraising opportunities, how we can raise money through schools and education, looking at grants, (a big source of income for us), and membership fees. We are still at the early stages of discussion, but that will be a key focus.

The second key area is around the buildings, facilities, and the park. We are really clear we need to preserve and promote the windmill and the new centre and the park as a community asset. As a CIO, we also need to maximise the space that we've got, especially the new centre, make sure we really optimise that and make it useful for the whole community. We also need to run education workshops, which is part of the agreement with Lambeth Council.

The other priorities all have equal weight, and importance:

Developing and empowering volunteers. Our volunteers are really key to what we do. We need to make sure we have a strategy for both getting on board new volunteers, and supporting the existing ones. Everyone who wants to be involved has a key role to play because without volunteers, we can't continue to do what we do.

Management governance. This is really about levels of decision making, accountability, responsibility, being clear what the Trustee Board is there to do and what not to do, and making sure we support volunteers, members and employees in what they need to do as well.

Developing the membership base. Making sure the organisation is both more democratic while remaining accountable in the community.

Finally, **strategic partnerships** are really important. We need to consider how to link with local organisations such as schools, charities, and the corporate sector in order to meet our aims and maximise the benefits that FoWG bring to the local community.

These are the draft priorities that we propose and are still finalising. We hope that they form a sound basis on which to focus over the coming years, help

ensure that the windmill is supported and maintained, and that everything linked to the organisation works going forward.

6 2020-2021 DRFT FINAL ACCOUNTS – Treasurer

Sonam Sikka introduced herself as FoWG treasurer for the past couple of years and shared her screen to show the draft accounts up to 31 March 2021 as a work still to be finalised. The numbers are correct but need to be properly professionally validated in the usual way.

Cash in hand at the bank was still pretty strong.

We've made progress over the past months. Most finance policies were now in place including an overarching financial management policy that deals with our bank account, PayPal, a cash handling policy and a very clear expenses policy. These supplement the existing reserves policy we had in place. Being a charity, our clear division between restricted unrestricted funds is key. Our unrestricted funds stand at £20,000, unchanged from the previous year. We are still significantly above our minimum reserves of £5,000 as set out in our reserves policy.

Although the picture looks relatively healthy, we do have hard work going forward. The next slide gave a very high-level picture of where we were last year on all of our key income streams, and our key expenditure streams. We are heavily grant dependent, and that is something we want to reduce going forward by reducing reliance on grants and increasing the income we get in from the trading income, flour and café sales.

On the expenditure side, our building costs are quite high. This is very much a function of our initial start-up costs getting set up and just understanding what kind of utility costs, CCTV setup costs, broadband costs, etc, we will have. These should start to set into a pattern going forward.

In terms of our grant dependence, the bulk of our grant covers costs for freelance teachers and the salaries for our two part-time staff members. Again, the fact that we would want to keep them working for us after the Power to Change grant ends is something we will have to work really hard to resolve.

The amount of expenditure and the income from the events and tours was quite small due to the lack of events during the pandemic.

The next slide illustrated key income streams and the key grants we received. Although our café was open only for a limited period of time, we still did quite well on the café income. Flour sales continue to be our star. We were very active when COVID started last year in donating to the local food banks, and that's something we are very much committed to. The anomaly mentioned earlier was on the venue hire. We're hoping such high venue hire income continues when we are up and running properly in a post COVID world when the new building will generate income through the number of venue hire options we have set out in our business plan. This particular number is an anomaly that reflects Lambeth Council hiring our building for two months in January and February 2021 to use as a COVID lateral flow test centre.

The bulk of our expenditure is on payroll expenses. Staff salaries form a significant part of this figure. Most of our projects are also supported by grants.

Last year, we received a number of grants despite the pandemic situation for

projects and activities and part of the two-year Power to Change grant as well as a WREF grant that paid for the work that's been done in the park.

The key thing to flag up on grants is that our Power to Change grant that funds the salaries of our two staff members will end this November. That leaves a big financial gap we will have to fill through income generation. As Marita reported this one of the top priorities that the Trustees have discussed.

We will share the final accounts with our Trustees and members so they will be able to question them again.

7 **RESOLUTIONS –**

Jean thanked Lucy, Marita, and Sonam for their presentations and noted that no resolutions had been received prior to the General Meeting.

8 **QUESTIONS & COMMENTS FROM THE CHAT BOX (invited on any of the reports / presentations)**

Question: The accounts show a profit of £19,000. Do we know what the main source is?

Answer: The Chair explained that some of the Covid-19 special grant awards for activities and help with running costs, including salaries, had not yet been spent. FoWG also benefitted from rent receipts from Lambeth's two-month hire of the building when they only used it for just over one month. The Treasurer confirmed this.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending FoWG's first virtual AGM and reminded them to participate in the survey about the future use of the new Brixton Windmill Centre and if they could volunteer at one of our future open days to sign up on the Doodle calendar. She concluded by saying she hoped to see everyone very soon face to face in the new Brixton Windmill Centre, at one of our future activities, when social distancing regulations allowed.

Request: for the dates/times of the café Monday-Friday 2-4pm Saturdays 11am-2pm.

Comments from members:

- congratulated the fundraising team for their successful grant funding work in a very competitive environment
- congratulated FoWG's designer for the colourful merchandise available in our shop
- future options to streamline our accountancy and to track our income against our 3-year forward budget.
- thanks and congratulations to all presenters for their contributions and noting that despite the difficulties of the past year FoWG has had a good past six months.

8 **AOB**

After a final appeal to everyone not yet a member of FoWG to join and help shape the future of the Friends the meeting closed at 8.15pm

Date of the 2021 AGM: Wednesday 6 October 2021