

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

7PM, 7th OCTOBER 2020

ONLINE MEETING

DRAFT MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

Current FoWG Trustees: Jean Kerrigan (Chair), Viv Whittingham (Secretary), Sonam Sikka (Treasurer), Nick Weedon (Vice Chair), Liz du Parcq, Abigail Holsborough (co-opted), Ann Lee, Chris Patton, Jeff Thomas, Kim Winter

Members: Annick Alet, Pru Ashby, Helen Atkinson, Sonia Bailey, Neil French, Adrian Garden, Mark Gordon Eric Harveson, Donna Lister, Lesley Pryde-Coales, Marilyn Rogers, Peter Skuse, Penny Steele, Sheila Triggs, Philppa Tudor,

Non-members: Cecile Boissonneau, Lucy Bridal, Marita Brown

Staff: Marta Babecka, (BDM) Margherita Di Ceglie (PA),

Marta Babeka (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)

1 WELCOME & APOLOGIES:

Jean Kerrigan (Chair) thanked all members for attending. One apology had been received in advance from Alan Piper. Introducing the first item on the agenda she noted it had been circulated in advance. She reiterated that the AGM was being recorded, and there were no objections to this.

2 MINUTES OF 2019 AGM & ANY MATTERS ARISING:

As there were no questions or comments on the draft minutes of the 2019 AGM it was put to the meeting that they were a true record.

Proposed: Viv Whittingham; Seconded Sonam Sikka

AGREED

3 2019-20 ACCOUNTS:

Sonam Sikka (Treasurer) introduced the accounts for Financial year 2019-2020 which all should have received in advance and were displayed on the screen. The accounts have been externally examined and signed off as correct. It was noted that this was a report of the first full year of activity since the CIO was formed but it had been a difficult year but it was the year that we finally moved into our new building. This would not have been possible without the support of all our members, volunteers and supporters and she thanked everyone for this. Income statement for Year 2019/20 shows a large dependency on grants reserved for the fit-out fund to furnish the new building and for landscaping works in the park. Income. She noted increased donations. Trading: higher merchandising sales reflecting sales at our events during 2019 notably at the Beer & Bread Festival in May.

On expenditure she noted the largest payments are for admin and this includes the staff salaries for our two part-time staff, large payments on setting up our new website (thanks to Kim for steering us through this), and substantial payments on legal fees although we have to thank Lambeth Council for some assistance with the costs incurred in negotiating the lease on the new building. Other professional fees included training the Board members to prepare for the move into the new building.

The balance at the year-end is a healthy £25,000.

Balance sheet: Most of our assets are held in the Cooperative bank account. and our year-end balance is £67,000. Much of this is restricted funds for costs of fitting out the new building. Our net current assets are £24,000.

This year the Trustees have done a lot of work on FoWG's financial policies and we have set up a minimum reserve of five thousand pounds. We use QuickBooks as our accountancy software and this means that Trustees are now checking monthly the actual versus agreed budget.

Going forward to 2020-21 financial year our focus will continue to be on further income generation to overcome the big impact of the pandemic. Now that we have the new building we will also be valuing our hard assets including our merchandise stock. We will continue to make applications for more grants.

The preparation basis for the accounts remains the same as in previous years: they are prepared under the historical cost convention.

Question from Adrian Garden: Will the current year 2020-21 break even? The treasurer responded that although our income has been hit by the pandemic she felt confident we would not have to dip into our reserves.

Question from Pru Ashby: Is the rise in merchandise sales due to contactless payments? Treasurer: Yes we have invested in contactless payment system. We use I-zettle.

At the last AGM we agreed to look at the possibility of contactless donations and we are still considering this and should have it in place before the next AGM.

It was noted that the membership needs a big drive this year as the numbers went down. However, some of the existing members became Life Members, and volunteers are being encouraged to join FoWG as members to have a say in its future.

The Chair asked if the financial report is accepted by the AGM so it can be submitted to the Charity Commissioners.

Proposed: Nick Weedon; Seconded: Viv Whittingham;

AGREED

4 **CIO ANNUAL REPORT:**

Jean Kerrigan (retiring Trustee Board Chair) explained that this had had been previously published on the website. The Chair noted that the report covers more than 15 months (July 2019-September 2020) due to the delays in holding this AGM because of the impact of the pandemic and explained that the report to this meeting will concentrate on key issues in the written report and look to the future. The original hope was that this AGM would be held in the new Brixton Windmill Centre so to give a feel of this building and the work of the Friends over the year. She shared photographs on screen to accompany the report.

FoWG is concerned with the security and the future of the windmill which is owned by the Council. We are also the friends of the park – Windmill Gardens. In terms of the care of the windmill itself there is evidence of serious damp problems that have not been resolved by the most recent repairs carried out by Lambeth Council and this is something we must address in the future.

2019-2020 was a very difficult year for FoWG for two reasons: the many construction delays in completing the new education centre, and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. At our 2019 AGM we expected to move into the new building in October 2019 but this did not happen.

In order to draw down money from our main grant funder we had signed an agreement to lease the building and proceeded to advertise for two part-time members of staff. Our Project Administrator started work in November and our Business Development Manager in December. But for the first few months they could not work in our new building to begin to deliver our 5-year business plan.

Our programme of education workshops could not be delivered and although we had continued our events programme and tours of the windmill in 2019 both had been restricted by the building site that surrounded Brixton Windmill.

We lost six months because of these building delays and then we were under lockdown from March 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions. We had to consider how we could deliver our project in new virtual ways. Our fundraising team rose to the challenge and worked very hard to help us overcome our loss of trading income. The one thing that could continue was milling flour and our volunteer millers responded by increasing the production of Brixton Flour while carefully observing social distancing regulations. They kept the profile of Brixton Windmill high which was extremely important.

The building was finally delivered in July 2020 and has proved to be a beautiful building. Our Trustees are pleased with it and we are very grateful that Lambeth Council has delivered this sustainable building and had the foresight to accept the pro bono design of the architects Squire

and Partners. It is a very accessible building. We signed the lease and moved in early in July. Without our members and volunteers none of this could have been done. Since then our many volunteers have managed to deliver activities despite the restrictions of the pandemic. These include delivering flour to retailers that remain open and donating flour and fresh vegetables (grown by our volunteers) to two local food banks. We have worked in partnership with CEFLyncx a local education charity to deliver hot lunches to children attending their summer play scheme in Windmill Gardens and following that our volunteers began to deliver a pop-up café to park visitors. We have written, designed and printed free colourful activity packs for primary school children. Our supporters gave money to enable us to continue flour donations and even our grain supplier donated extra wheat grain for this purpose.

Thanks go to all our hard-working volunteers and in particular to our Trustees who have had to take some difficult decisions about how we could transform our work in response to the difficulties posed by the pandemic. They also took up the challenge to transform our organisation and make it more strategic and ensure that we can successfully manage the new centre over the 20-year period of our lease with Lambeth Council.

Looking forward we are confident that we can re-engage with local schools and deliver our school workshops both online and, as social distancing restrictions ease, at the windmill itself. We will launch our online shop in the next few months and we are confident that once social distancing regulations allow we can launch our milling and baking classes and hire out the Windmill Centre to local people and community groups.

FoWG should be congratulated that despite the difficulties of the pandemic this year the Friends achieved the third of the three aims that were agreed when we established FoWG in 2003. These are: the restoration and re-opening of Brixton Windmill which happened in 2011; the improvement of Windmill Gardens which is ongoing and is now a much more welcoming space for local residents with the new growing space constructed this year; and now we have opened the education centre that we had been campaigning for since 2014.

Two sad events happened this year. We lost two highly valued Friends. The first was Henry Ashby who contacted us in 2010 when he read about the restoration of the windmill. He wrote and told us he was a direct descendent of the first miller at Brixton Windmill, John Ashby. That was a really important contact for us as Henry introduced us to the wider Ashby family and its history. We were saddened when we learned of his death in February.

The second was the recent death of Eamon Maguire who was the chair of the Blenheim Gardens Resident Management Organisation (BGRMO). Eamon was a long-time member of the Friends and a very firm supporter. He helped build the close relationship that we have with the residents of the local council estate that shares a boundary fence with Windmill Gardens. He consistently supported the activities of the Friends. His death is a very sad loss to FoWG and to the BGRMO. In conclusion we do face a difficult future but with the ongoing support of our Friends, our volunteers and our very hard-working staff we can move forward positively to 2021.

Comment: Pru Ashby thanks for the kind words about my father and congratulations to the Friends on amazing achievements this year.

The chair requested that members present accept the CIO Annual Report.

Proposed: Nick Weeden; Seconded by Liz du Parcq

AGREED

5 ELECTION OF TRUSTEES

Nick Weeden (Trustee Board Vice Chair) explained the procedure. Under the terms of the charity's constitution at each AGM the three longest-serving trustees must stand down but can stand for re-election. At this AGM standing down are: Jean Kerrigan, Chris Patton and Kim Winter. He explained that Jean and Chris were willing to stand again as trustees but that due to increased studies Kim was not seeking re-election although she will continue to serve on the Comms sub-group. Kim was thanked for her hard work on Comms and in particular her work on steering through the launch of the new website in February 2020.

The Board has nine trustees in place at the moment. Nick noted that the CIO can have up to 12 members. Listed on the agenda are the six remaining trustees. The Trustee Board is open to nominations from local people willing to contribute their time and skills to this purpose.

The Vice Chair invited nominations.

Chris Patton Proposed: Nick Weeden; Seconded: Jean Kerrigan

AGREED

Jean Kerrigan Proposed: Nick Weeden; Seconded: Viv Whittingham

AGREED

Abigail (FoWG's lead miller) was co-opted as a Trustee during 2019-20 and this should be ratified by this AGM

Abigail Holsborough Proposed: Nick Weedon; Seconded Ann Lee

AGREED

All other current trustees are happy to remain in position.

Viv Whittingham (Secretary) explained that three vacancies remain on the Board and outlined steps taken to strengthen the Board by recruiting new Trustees. The Trustees carried out a skills audit earlier in the year and then advertised for Trustees through our social media links. We received nine responses, all highly qualified. One has since withdrawn due to work pressure but remains an active volunteer. We will be holding discussions with the eight potential applicants so this is a very positive response and we look forward to strengthening our Board.

6 RESOLUTIONS

No resolutions had been received

The Chair then opened the discussion to any further comments or questions.

A request was made by Neil French that there should be notes to the accounts. The Treasurer responded that this was a very good idea and would be taken on board in future financial reports.

Viv commented that part of FoWG's forward plan is to grow our membership this year and this is something the Trustees will be addressing as part of our forward plan.

Nick gave a big vote of thanks to Jean for the work she has been doing this year as it has not been an easy year particularly with the problems of the new building.

Pru asked if it is possible to make membership payments online. Yes this can be done on the membership page of the website

Marilyn thanked everyone for their great work over the year.

AOB:

Date of next AGM Wednesday October 6th, 2021, at the Brixton Windmill Centre

The chair thanked everyone for attending FoWG's first virtual AGM and said she hoped to see everyone very soon face-to-face at one of our future activities in the new Brixton Windmill Centre.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm