

**FRIENDS OF WINDMILL GARDENS (CIO no. 1176991)**  
**MINUTES OF GENERAL/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING**

Held in person at  
BRIXTON WINDMILL CENTRE, 100 Blenheim Gardens, London SE2 5DA  
At 7PM, 19<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2023

**MINUTES**

**ATTENDANCE:**

**In person**

**Members:** Abel Holsborough, Ann Lee, Annick Alet, Anna-Marie Franklin, Carolyn Wenz, Catherine Hamilton, Chris Patton, Edgar Sutcliffe, Emma Smith-Bodie (Minutes), Jean Kerrigan, Julian Francis, Liz du Parcq, Mark Gordon Nick Weedon, Penny Steele, Philippa Tudor, Toussainte Reba (Chair), Robert Adie, Thomas Allen, Viv Whittingham

**Non-members:** Allen Turing, Angela Contucci, John Brewer, Tom Smith (LBL), Mat Smith (LBL plus one)

**Apologies:** Marita Brown, Sonam Sikka, Nicola Sloan, Deborah Crocken, Donna Lister, Paul Lister

**1 WELCOME & INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIR:**

Toussainte Reba (Chair) thanked all members and non-members for attending. Asked if there was anyone completely new to the Windmill and FoWg, and there were none - all attending were familiar with the organisation. The Chair encouraged everyone to pick up a 2023 Events leaflet and flyers for our Beer & Bread festival on Bank Holiday Monday.

**2 FoWG PRIORITIES AND FRAMEWORK FOR 2023-2024**

The Chair reviewed the process of getting to the Board's new Strategic Objectives - at the AGM in October 2022 the Board spoke about creating these Strategic Objectives following engagements sessions run in August. Speaking to a presentation, the Chair detailed the key priorities and themes, talking about how Trustees will be taking the lead on these and hope to report successes against these at the end of this year at the AGM 2023. The Chair spoke about our Business Plan being in development and looking to the Park as a particular priority. The Chair encouraged everyone attending to look through the full presentation of our Strategic Objectives on the Brixton Windmill website.

**3 EVENTS PROGRAMME 2023-2024**

Catherine Hamilton, Community Centre Manager, introduced herself and made a note that she has been in the role for 10 months now. Speaking to a presentation, Catherine talked through existing regular activities, such as the Thursday Club for over 50s. Catherine extended her thanks to Jean Kerrigan and Annick Alet for their work with this Thursday club which sees an average of 20 people each week. The Thursday Club has 12 more months of funding to April 2024. Two regular activities - Tai Chi on Wednesday and Joy of Sound workshops - are popular but funding grants are due to finish soon. The Joy of Sound workshops on Friday has 12-15 regulars, and has had 43 individuals since its start. The funding ends in May and new funding is being sought. Another activity soon to finish funding is the Tai Chi groups on Wednesdays, for which funding will finish in May. Funding ideas are being looked at, including a self-funding model, and funding from Sports England. Funding for Tai Chi classes may encompass more wellbeing activities. A recently created Pop Up Cafe on Thursdays needs more volunteers trained to work in the cafe. Catherine ran through future

plans for regular activities, including Baking activities for children, and speaking with City Bridge Trust about funding for a gardening workshop in partnership with Share Community.

Catherine spoke through the Learning activity offerings the Centre has with 4 workshops available to choose from. Covid had an impact on the number of these offerings as schools stopped doing external trips. 17 schools have been engaged so far this school year. We have an ambition to create a hands-on experience for groups with special needs i, and will need to train our freelancer educators to provide this. This may need funding.

Catherine ran through new Special Events coming this year such as new Baking and Milling all-day experiences. To provide these to families funding will be needed in order to subsidise them. In addition we have outside theatre group Alice's Adventures in Aerialand doing a one-off day of performances in the summer, and the Events subgroup have started to plan a Family Sports Day in July.

Ann Lee raised that Midweek Tours were still ongoing - Catherine thanked our volunteer guides who make these happen, and noted that we want to better promote these midweek tours to Local Groups. A Local Group - the Wandle Museum - are coming on a tour this month and the visit will be reciprocal: Penny Steele talked through how the tour helps us foster partnerships with local museums and spoke about how the Wandle Museum group are sharing their insight into museum development. Catherine mentioned a recent visit from the Cinema Museum is also reciprocal and they will be sharing their knowledge of windmill films.

Liz du Parcq raised a recent issue with the website; Catherine explained that the website was slow and had created trouble for people booking tours over the Easter Open Day event. Catherine assured the website has been improved since and development of the website continues to make it easier for visitors to book tours among other activities.

Catherine finally spoke through Venue Hire: the Windmill Centre is booked 3-6 months in advance on weekends. Hiring continues for meetings, parties, during the school holidays. This is an area that will continue to be developed.

The Chair thanked Catherine for her presentation and bringing everyone up to date.

- 4 **FoWG Volunteering:** Speaking to a presentation Abel Holsborough, Community Engagement Officer, talked through the aims behind the National Lottery Heritage Fund grant. He spoke about how his role is to bring people to the windmill, both individuals and developing relationships with local businesses such as Ashby's Deli.

Abel talked about how he recently ran a Volunteer Open Day which was a day where in a relaxed environment people interested in volunteering could get to know more about the Windmill and the Centre, with mini tours from volunteer Robert Aide and the chance to explore Viv Whittingham's archive of books. People who engaged ranged from teachers to bakers. Abel said he wants to run more of these Volunteer Open Days.

Abel also showed images of the very first Milling and Baking experience day that, and he read out positive feedback he received from attendees. The experience itself can be moulded with opportunities to try new recipes and have different bakers. We have more Milling and Baking days planned for volunteers in July, and one in October. Abel referenced local Caribbean bakeries and spoke on how bread brings people together and it is an important way to engage the community.

Abel talked through the new Volunteer Management System (VMS) the organisation is investing in - Assemble. This system will keep track of volunteers, their training and notify volunteers of opportunities. The system will take work to get up and running, and training is being organised.

As part of his role, Abel works to engage with different organisations. One of these is Duchess Far, in Hertfordshire. There are millers there who are likely to be engaged as volunteers for the Windmill. Another organisation is Share Community, which we are working with to create a sensory tour of the mill. Work on planning how to engage with their beneficiaries begins this month.

Abel closed with a call for the Board to input and take the volunteers with them on this journey. The VMS will need work to integrate it with our existing activities to make it the most efficient possible.

The Chair thanked Abel for his work and presentation.

## **5 PROPOSED MEMBERSHIP FEES**

Mark Gordon, Trustee, introduced the proposal on increasing membership fees. With the help of fellow trustee Jean Kerrigan, our current membership fees were reviewed and benchmarked against other local organisations. The proposal paper notes that our membership fees have remained the same for five years whilst we appreciate there are more strains on household budgets we have to reflect in our fees that we are a community business. The jump in membership fees is not large in terms of absolute numbers but in percentage terms it is.

Ann Lee raised the question of what we would do if the membership numbers dropped drastically as a result of these fee increases. Ann particularly noted the poverty experienced in the local community as a barrier. Mark acknowledged that it was a risk but that we would closely monitor and can reduce membership fees again in future if necessary.

Jean Kerrigan committed that this change to membership fees was overdue and in line with local organisations. Mark concurred and added that Corporate membership is something that is still being explored with fellow Trustee Edgar Sutcliffe.

Mark proposed this change, and it was seconded by Jean Kerrigan and Philippa Tudor. No attending member disagreed with the change, so this proposal was accepted unanimously.

## **6 RESOLUTIONS**

No resolutions were submitted to the Secretary ahead of the General Meeting and none were raised at the meeting.

## **7 THANK YOU TO TRUSTEES JEAN KERRIGAN, VIV WHITTINGHAM AND PHILIPPA TUDOR**

The Chair noted that Trustees Emma Smith-Bodie, Edgar Sutcliffe, Nick Wheedon and Mark Gordon, were in attendance, and apologies had been sent by Trustees Marita Brown and Sonam Sikka. The Chair noted that we had vacancies on the Board and encouraged people to apply. These vacancies are created by Trustees Jean Kerrigan, Viv Whittingham and Philippa Tudor standing down. The Chair invited Jean Kerrigan up to say some words. Jean spent time reflecting on the beginning of the organisations' formation 20 years ago, and left the Board and attendees with thoughts on how the community and the council could be engaged. These individual points were noted by the Secretary separately. The Chair thanks Jean for her work

and efforts. The Chair invited Viv Whittingham up to say some words. Viv noted that she had enjoyed and appreciated her time with the organisation and said it is a model for organic growth of community organisations. The Chair thanked Viv for her work and efforts. The Chair invited Philippa Tudor up to say some words. Philippa mentioned she was grateful for her time with the Board, having milled in her family. Philippa remarked upon seeing the Windmill with her late father 20 years ago and the difference to now is incredible. The Chair thanked Philippa for her work and efforts. Each outgoing Trustee was presented with a bouquet of flowers and a goodbye card.

## **8 AOB**

Ann Lee asked specifically for volunteers for the upcoming Beer & Bread festival on Monday 1st May.

The Chair thanked everyone who has donated in memory of former trustee Jeff Thomas. She updated that we were still working on getting the memorial bench and photography exhibition set up in his memory but costs had increased and asked again if people could donate. (<https://www.brixtonwindmill.org/get-involved/donate/>)

Julian Francis remembered going to a meeting in a pub in Acre Lane about FoWG and commented that all that had been achieved would not have been done without Jean Kerrigan. The Chair recognised Jean's 20 years of work and effort for the Windmill and the community, and added that it was proof that campaigning works and community matters.

## **9 DRINKS AND SOCIAL**

The meeting was closed at 8.27pm and attendees were invited to stay for beverages, snacks and to socialise.