



Spring General Meeting 2024 – Friends of Windmill Gardens

WELCOME & ENGAGEMENT

Welcome to the General Meeting of the Friends of Windmill Gardens and Brixton Windmill (FOWG). The Spring meeting is an opportunity to engage our membership, volunteers and local stakeholders.

This year we're excited to bring three items for discussion:

1. We are currently in the process of introducing Assemble, a new volunteer management system for volunteers. The system has been tested on a sample of volunteers, and feedback is currently being incorporated in the final version, which will be rolled out to existing volunteers over the next few months, taking account of the need for continuity of volunteer support for our currently scheduled activities. Nick Weedon, FOWG Vice-chair, will explain tonight how this tool is helping us to transition to a more efficient way of working and how you volunteers can use the tool to look forward to upcoming events. Nick will demonstrate how the tool works and how it will be used to benefit both volunteers and FOWG.
2. John Licence – our Comms Lead has made a great impact since taking on this role in November, for this Spring GM, John will lead activity on the weekly planner and how we're looking at Comms to support our activities including volunteering, shop, events and others and looking to capture a wider audience.
3. Earlier this year at the January EGM, Emma Smith-Bodie introduced a proposal for amending our constitution to enable us to hold electronic meetings. Emma will bring this item back further to the feedback received in January.

FOWG BOARD UPDATES

The meeting is also an opportunity to update you on the ongoing work to strengthen FOWG board and governance. Further to recruitment in February and March, we are pleased to recommend three new trustees to join FOWG board, these are:

1. **New Treasurer:** Further to January EGM's vote, the board is recommending the appointment of Mohammed Yasin Hamdard to take over the role of treasurer on the board. This will enable current treasurer to take on a new role on the Board.
2. **New Lead for Events & Visitor Attraction:** The board is recommending Claudette Minott to take on the role of Events and Visitor Attraction and play a key part in supporting our Business Plan 2023-26.
3. **New Lead for HR & Governance:** The board is recommending Yasemin Sezgin on the role of HR & Governance which has been vacant since November 2023 and is critical to effective board management and supporting the chair and trustees.



Spring General Meeting 2024 – Friends of Windmill Gardens

EGM RESPONSE

Further to EGM vote in January. The Board met to discuss next steps at its February and March meeting¹.

It was noted that:

1. The Board disagrees with the vote of no confidence in the Treasurer.
2. There is no provision or guidance in FOWG constitution for a vote of no confidence in the Treasurer.
3. The Board will implement mitigations set out in [response to the petition](#).
4. The Board will additionally look to establish a finance subgroup.
5. The Treasurer continues to have the full support and confidence of the board.
6. The Board will take no further action.

DELIVERING OUR PRIORITIES

Since the launch of our new Business Plan 2023-26 in November, a lot of progress has been made to deliver FOWG priorities thanks to the work of our staff, volunteers and trustees.

This is a good time to have our first review of the Action Plan and expectations that were set at the time. An updated action tracker is attached at Appendix 1 of this report.

SUMMARY OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

IMPROVING PARK ACCESS

A new Parks Subgroup is proposed to begin this spring working together with volunteers, staff, Lambeth council and BGRMO.

VOLUNTEERING

In the last 6 months:

- 16 new volunteers signed up, mainly from online applications

¹ The Board discussed the outcome of the Vote of No Confidence in the Treasurer (as passed by the members at the 25 Jan 2024 EGM – 14 votes For the resolution, 11 votes Against the Resolution, and 1 Abstention).

The Board stands by its formal response which disagreed with the Resolution and the reasons why – which was shared with the members online and verbally at the 25 Jan 2024 EGM and then by email on 26 Jan 2024 and can also be found on the website. The Board discussed the vote at its 21 Feb 2024 Board Strategy Meeting and saw no reason to take any further action. The incumbent Treasurer continues to have the full confidence and support of the Board and continues in role.

As the members will be aware and also previously mentioned at the Jan 2024 EGM and October 2023 AGM, the incumbent Treasurer has expressed a strong desire for almost a year now to step down from this role and take on other responsibilities instead, however this has proved to be a difficult role to recruit to and no other Trustee is able to take on these duties in the interim. However, we have been advertising for the role for a while and having interviewed candidates, we are pleased to offer the role of Treasurer to Yasin Hamdard, with the offer subject to confirmation by members vote at this meeting.

Having finally found a replacement, the incumbent has reiterated their intention to step down from the Treasurer role with immediate effect and will handover to Yasin with immediate effect.

They will continue to be a Trustee on the Board.



Spring General Meeting 2024 – Friends of Windmill Gardens

- Volunteers active at open days in October, March and April + special events (Halloween, Winter Market, Easter), baking classes, gardening, warm spaces, community club, windmill maintenance
- Training sessions held for guides, stewards, cafe volunteers
- Xmas party organised for volunteers, and well attended
- New volunteer management system tested and prepared for roll-out

EVENTS

We're taking a break from the Beer & Bread Festival this year. We have a new community theatre event in July and the Dot Collective are returning in June. Appendix 2 sets out further details.

COMMS

Our comms reach continues to grow stronger and stronger with a refreshed website and active social media. We're looking forward to new Tick Tok presence.

ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

This group is being revived after a fallow period, and new members recruited. Agenda includes sharing history research, interpretation, accessibility, archive development and storage
Penny, Jean and Catherine met Jon Newman of Lambeth Archives. Jon will deliver this year's Windmill annual lecture. The museum accreditation task force is assessing progress and working out a timetable for completion.

MILLING

With Lizzie on board as lead trustee for Milling, we've had a successful Milling & Baking day already this year. We have also reviewed the Health & Safety Manual and looking to roll out training for millers.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

We completed our 2nd year of hosting a community warm space on Wednesday afternoons throughout the winter season. Supported by funding from Lambeth Council, we opened our doors and served up coffee, tea and biscuits, and provided games and a chance to socialize for the participants. This year we also offered a free drop-in advice counselor, available to assist those in need with one-on-one advice.

TRUSTEES

The board is continuing to grow stronger this year to support our Business Plan priorities.

As part of the new trustees' recruitment and change to the board set out above, we are also saying goodbye to our current chair – Toussainte who is stepping down from the board following 3 years. The role has been advertised and closes on 22nd April.

Secretary – Emma has submitted her resignation to the chair and will formally resign at the October AGM. Recruitment for this role will begin shortly to ensure continuity.

Both Toussainte and Emma will continue as members and volunteers after their retirement.

THANK YOU

Toussainte Reba
FOWG Chair
April 2024



Spring General Meeting 2024 – Friends of Windmill Gardens

Appendix 2 – Events Update

So far in 2024 we've delivered a number of events:

- Milling & Baking Day 25 February - fully booked day with 12 participants. Led by Abel and Harvey from Toad Bakery.
- Easter Baking Course 23 March - led by Fabio. 6 Participants enjoyed a full day learning new Easter recipes

Our community projects also continue to run with high numbers participating in various wellbeing activities:

- Community Club on Thursdays - up to 25 attending each week for exercise, crafts, sewing and lunch. Funding has been secured to continue to December (Awards for All) and we are interviewing for a new role of Community Club facilitator on 16 April
- Tai Chi and Pilates for people aged 50+. Funded by Sport England. These sessions continue to attract 15 to 20 participants each week. As well as exercise participants can socialise afterwards. It's a good way to connect with our community and encourage new volunteers.
- Saturday Tai Chi (pay what you can) - this session has run for around 5 years now and continues to attract lots of participants in the park
- Share Gardening sessions funded by City Bridge Trust - these sessions resumed on 27 March with Urban Canopy facilitating. The group enjoy planting and are focusing on creating a new sensory garden in the old herb bed, plus new vegetable beds and bulbs in the park. It's been lovely to welcome some of our regular FoWG gardening volunteers to these sessions too. The project continues until 2026.
- Cook, Eat and Learn - cooking project for young people - we started with our first week of sessions week of 8 April. Sessions are facilitated by chefs from Eat Club and the first week has been going really well with 7 young people attending. They've been cooking delicious vegetarian lunches and learning new skills each day. There will be 3 more weeks of these sessions during the summer (funded by Ironmongers Company).

Further new sessions for 2024

We will be running two sets of family baking club Saturday courses with funding from Awards for All. These will be for parents/carers and children aged 7 to 12. They'll take place on Saturday mornings - dates to be confirmed.

Special events programme for 2024

Although the Beer & Bread festival is taking a break this year we've got a full programme of family events between now and December. Including our July 14 Sports & Games Day, Art in the Park 11 August and Harvest Festival on 29 September.

We also have two theatre companies visiting to perform outdoor theatre in the park - 15 June - Dot Collective will perform The Dream Sequence and we have Open Bar Theatre with Much Ado About Nothing on 20 July. Tickets are available now on our website.