

FRIENDS OF WINDMILL GARDENS (CIO no. 1176991)

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at

BRIXTON WINDMILL CENTRE, 100 Blenheim Gardens, London SE2 5DA

At 7PM, 15th OCTOBER 2025

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

Members: Ann Lee, Annick Alet, Carolyn Weniz, Debbie Cottrell, Edgar D'Mello, Eric Harvison, Jean Kerrigan, Jo Huergo, John Licence, Liz du Parcq, Lizzie Taczalski, Louis Gonzalez-Lopez, Nick Weedon (Chair), Olivia Christophersen (Secretary), Penny Steele, Robert Adie, Sandra Watts, Sonam Sikka, Viv Whittingham,

Non-members: Catherine Hamilton, Chris Patten, Nick Cattermole, Sil Mcilveen

1 WELCOME & APOLOGIES:

Nick Weedon (Chair) thanked all for attending. Apologies were received from Alan Piper, Cllr David Bridson, Marilyn Rogers and Tom Smith.

2 MINUTES OF 2024 AGM & ANY MATTERS ARISING:

The Chair, Nick Weedon, ran through the minutes of the 2024 AGM. He noted that the issue of reserves would be covered in more detail under the Accounts; the museum accreditation had not gained momentum since the last AGM; membership remained a priority which would be covered in more detail later; the Community Club is now for people aged 60+.

Ann Lee said she had suggested the club members should get (not provide) IT support. The minutes will be amended to make this clearer. It was noted that this already happens at the club.

Jean Kerrigan noted the minutes should be circulated to attendees as soon as they are available after the meeting. The secretary said they had been posted on the website a while ago and apologised that they had not been circulated. She undertook to do this in future.

There were no further questions or additional comments on the draft minutes of the 2024 AGM. It was put to the meeting that they were a true record, and agreed unanimously.

Proposed: Eric Harvison, Seconded: Ann Lee

AGREED

3 2024-25 ACCOUNTS:

The 2024-2025 Accounts were presented to the membership by the Treasurer, Edgar D'Mello.

Since his update on the 2023-24 accounts at the Spring GM, he has carried out further investigations on the allocation of grants, focusing on the 2024-25 accounts. Historically money from grants has been spent but, in the accounts, some amounts had been allocated to unrestricted funds, leaving various balances apparently unspent on grants and giving the impression of a worsening cash balance. He stressed that the money had been spent on grant projects but had not all been correctly allocated to

grants in the accounts. Following the mispostings of expenses the previous financial year, he undertook a detailed review of expenses to ensure that they were correctly categorized. He has discussed the issues with the Fundraising Committee and the auditor, Nick Cattermole. He also noted that 2024-25 was a good year for grants, which further explains the increase in this category. Whilst the historical grants have been reviewed he noted that the current grants need to be looked at to ensure that ongoing expenses are allocated appropriately and address any issues accordingly in the current financial year.

Jean Kerrigan wanted to clarify publicly that the money had been paid and reported to grant funders where required so this was purely an accounting issue.

The Treasurer confirmed this was the case and said this would be explained in a note in the final accounts.

He noted that donations had increased in 2024-25, partly due to gift aid, while trading income had decreased, possibly because the Beer & Bread event did not take place in addition to the difficult environment for trading. He confirmed that money from tours is included in Trading and more detailed information is available on request.

Ann Lee said it is helpful to have a more detailed breakdown to help identify what is useful to do and what isn't.

The Treasurer undertook to provide a more detailed breakdown in future updates.

The balance sheet is currently healthy. The accounting adjustment has reduced deferred grants to a more reasonable level. Edgar will be looking at the reserve policy as a separate exercise once the accounts are completed. He noted an issue with debtors, which he will be looking into, ensuring improved control on invoices issued.

Eric Harvison asked whether the change to the general reserves was due to a reclassification. The Treasurer confirmed this was due to being in a stronger position in terms of accounting.

Jo Huergo asked whether a balance of around £59k is good in terms of our target.

The Treasurer said this puts us in a strong position to deliver things we want to do. He said there is no target for this but we should never be in a position where we need to use reserves, which cover our costs for 2 months.

Jean Kerrigan asked why the fixed assets were recorded as 0 in 2024 and 2025.

The Treasurer said this is something to look into and consider whether this is a material issue for the organisation. He noted some equipment is capitalised but there is nothing in the policies about this.

Chris Patten asked if there were plans to become VAT registered as currently purchases for the shop costs 20% more than necessary.

The Treasurer noted that, if we did this, it would also be applied to sales so the implications would need to be considered.

Jean Kerrigan noted that the accountancy costs of VAT registration also need to be considered.

Sonam Sikka asked for clarification that the change in balance was due to a reallocation rather than a new pot of money

The Treasurer confirmed the total amount in the bank account is still the same. Some restricted funds have been reallocated to unrestricted, giving the organisation more flexibility.

He also noted that in future the accounts would be done under the charity reporting code, which requires reporting of restricted and unrestricted funds. He presented this

split for 2024-25. This demonstrates the amount used from grants so, in future, misallocation of amounts in the accounts would be identified more quickly.

He noted there is more work to do in this financial year and he was mindful of having sufficient engagement on finance with the fundraising committee.

In addition to the accounts, the Treasurer reported on his work with the Co-operative Bank. FoWG is now set up properly as a CIO with the bank and now has an interest bearing account. He plans to set up a higher rate interest account for the reserves.

He has applied for a business card with a total limit of £3k across 5 people so they can make purchases without using their own money. Each card has a limit.

Jean Kerrigan noted it was important to have restrictions on the amounts that can be spent on such cards.

Viv Whittingham asked about the financial policies and procedures.

The Treasurer said he plans to look at this but has been focussed on sorting out the financials first.

Nick Cattermole introduced himself as the auditor of the accounts. He acknowledged the significant amount of useful work the Treasurer had done since joining this year.

Jean Kerrigan noted it is important for grant applications that the accounts are finalised and loaded onto the Charity Commission website ASAP.

It was proposed that the 2024-25 Accounts be agreed.

Proposed: Jean Kerrigan

Seconded: Viv Whittingham

AGREED

4 CIO ANNUAL REPORT:

The Chair, Nick Weedon, apologised for not circulating the report in advance.

He provided a summary of his report, which was set out using the structure of the 2023-26 Action Plan. His report covered some updates from 2025 as well as the 24/25 reporting period.

1. Volunteer base - There were 16 Open Days between March and October 2024, hosting 565 visitors. There has been a drop off in non-bookable short tours in 2025 but the pool of trained guides has expanded.

Between April 2024 and March 2025 14 special events were delivered, attracting 2,500 people. In addition, there were a range of regular wellbeing activities. The overall number of attendees fell from 8,830 in 2023 to 6,845 in 2024, mainly because there was no May Day event. In May 2025, the first MayFest was an instant success, attracting a large but more sustainable number of visitors than the previous Beer and Bread. The Chair recognised the role of volunteers for the successful running of events and also their importance for income. At the recent Harvest Festival, the largest income generator was donations, possibly demonstrating how much people value the Windmill.

Around 100 volunteers are now registered on Assemble across multiple roles. About 50% have completed the optional demographic questionnaire. He encouraged everyone to complete this as it is important for grant applications and for monitoring purposes. He shared some positive quotes from the evaluation of the National Heritage Lottery Fund (NHLF) project describing the impact of the activities provided on people. The NHLF evaluation report also contains some useful feedback which will inform the next business plan. The chair welcomed ideas on a creating space for project reflection after events/projects.

2&3. **Partnerships & projects and Welcoming & inclusive hub** - The chair again drew on the NHLF evaluation to demonstrate impact in these areas. He reflected on the importance of having a shared physical space and a place for encounter where all are welcome, which the windmill provides. This has a direct, immediate and cumulative beneficial impact on the community, which is particularly important at a time when screen time and polarisation are increasingly prevalent in the wider world.

4. **Education** - 25 workshops were delivered for schools/nurseries in 2024/25. Looking forward we have reserved capacity to increase educational workshops and are keen to promote this and hopefully recruit an education co-ordinator.

5. **Marketing & Comms** - There has been much useful work on social media and other media platforms including more milling and history posts. A recent article in the Financial Times which cited the windmill as one of the Top 10 Open House destinations. We are in the process of making small changes to improve the website and plan to automate membership renewal.

6. **Milling** - There has been good progress with Wholesale customers and we have received a new delivery of grain from Stratford-upon-Avon. Looking forward we aim to run a milling session every fortnight. We are always keen to welcome new milling volunteers and are particularly interested in drivers/cyclists who can help with deliveries.

7.&8. **Park** - We continue to hold monthly gardening sessions and occasional corporate volunteer days. The chair paid tribute to the kitchen garden, which has been spectacular this Summer, and gave his thanks to the Garden Group.

In other updates the Chair mentioned

- **Fundraising** - there have been a number of successful grant applications. The grant providers were listed.

- **Buildings & maintenance** - the windmill sail shutters needed to be renewed in 2025 but this was still not complete. The Council is also commissioning repairs but had decided not to install a powerful fan. They are commissioning a report on the building but there is unlikely to be a quick fix for the current issues. We are hoping to build up a team of maintenance volunteers.

- **Park access campaign** - following further efforts, this has not progressed since the last AGM.

- **Trustees** - Edgar D'Mello and Yaniv Fransez both joined the Board in 2025. Edgar has spent a significant amount of time on the accounts. Yaniv is leading on the next business plan. Edgar Sutcliffe stood down from the Board at the Spring GM but is still a volunteer and safeguarding lead.

- **Staff** - The Evaluation report highlighted greater connection between Board and staff. The Chair gave particular thanks to the Centre manager.

Ann Lee paid tribute to our long term volunteers.

5 **NEXT 3 YEAR BUSINESS PLAN, 2026-2029 - INITIAL THOUGHTS**

There was insufficient time to present the Board's initial thoughts in detail at the meeting. Instead the Chair outlined the key areas and noted that the aim was to keep the next plan briefer than the current one.

It was requested that the draft is circulated to members, allowing them to make comments for the Board to discuss. It was noted that the current version is very much an early draft.

ACTION: The secretary to circulate a draft of the next 3 year plan to members for comment.

There was a question about how we would know if biodiversity in the park had improved. In response it was noted there is a column for measuring items in the plan but this is still in draft.

6 HIGHLIGHTS AND FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES IN 2025

The Centre Manager, Catherine Hamilton, gave an overview of events which had taken place on top of the Open Days. This included the first family Bake club. She thanked Fabio for running this. The Christmas 2024 event was affected by the weather but was still a positive event including wreath workshops using sustainable materials. There was 1 milling and baking day. The last funded week-long cooking course for young people took place. A recent Heritage Open Day, on the theme of architecture included printing workshops; there is a plan to hang banners from that in the windmill. Funding for UN Day of Older People was used to host a wellbeing day, which attracted many new people. A recent corporate tour and baking workshop for 10 lawyers is one of a number of income-generating activities.

There are many more events to come in the remainder of 2025 including indoor family theatre for the first time.

We are applying for funding for more Tai Chi classes and to start a choir. She noted we often apply for lunch as part of grants as this provides an additional chance for attendees to engage socially.

New activities for 2025 include monthly sound bath sessions and free first aid classes.

We use a freelance educator to provide education activities. In reference to the earlier comment about increasing educational events, she pointed out that there is currently limited spare capacity in the centre but Louis will be helping reach out to schools to participate in education sessions next year.

There have been many venue hires with kids parties being the most popular. We are always looking for more key holders to help open/close the centre for these.

Jo Huergo asked if there is a mismatch between volunteers and events we want to run.

Catherine said it is useful to know what skills volunteers have and that we sometimes struggle to get enough volunteers for large events.

The Thursday Community Club co-ordinator, Debbie Cottrell, gave an update on this club, which has gone from strength to strength, increasing from 22 to 40 members. It has built a good reputation as a caring service and means a lot to its members. They offer a good nutritional meal including a desert - they try to provide one that helps attendees reminisce. They have recently attracted new skilled volunteers (sign language and a chef). They received a grant from the council for a wellbeing day, which was very positive and well attended. They have run many successful, funded trips out, which are free to attend. Later this year they are hosting an afternoon session of the indoor theatre Elf & shoemaker and a Christmas dinner which will be cooked by a professional chef. She encouraged people to come along and experience the warm, friendly, vibrant atmosphere of the club.

7 ELECTION OF TRUSTEES

At this AGM, of the 10 Trustees currently in post, Sonam Sikka, Nick Weedon, John Licence and Claudette Minot are standing down. Sonam, Nick and John would be seeking re-election but Claudette would not.

Nick Weedon as Trustee. Proposed: Jean Kerrigan; Seconded: Eric Harvison

John Licence as Trustee. Proposed: Ann Lee; Seconded: Jean Kerrigan
Sonam Sikka Sezgin as Trustee. Proposed: Eric Harvison; Seconded: John Licence

AGREED

8 **RESOLUTIONS**

No resolutions had been received.

9 **AOB**

Penny Steele asked whether it had been decided to abandon museum accreditation. The Chair said this had not yet been resolved.

Ann Lee noted that new badges had been purchased and were available for all volunteers.

There was a reminder of the volunteer party on 9th December.

The Chair encouraged any volunteers to become a member if they were not already.

Jean Kerrigan noted that pressure should be maintained in seeking improvements to the entrance.

Date of next AGM Wednesday October 14th, 2026, at the Brixton Windmill Centre

The Chair thanked everyone for attending. The meeting closed at 8.52pm and members were invited to stay for refreshments and to socialise.