

FRIENDS OF WINDMILL GARDENS (CIO no. 1176991)

MINUTES OF SPRING GENERAL MEETING

Held in person at

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

At 7PM, 15th APRIL 2026

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

Members: Carolyn Weniz, Edgar D’Mello, Jean Kerrigan, John Licence, Liz du Parcq, Nick Weedon (Chair), Olivia Christophersen (Minutes), Eric Harvison, Penny Steele, Robert Adie, Flora Faith-Kelly, Alan Piper, Sandra Watts, Viv Whittington, Kim Winter

Non-members: Sil McIlveen, Chris Patton, Lizzie Taczalski

Apologies: Ann Lee, Catherine Hamilton, Sonam Sikka, Marliyn Rogers

1 WELCOME & INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIR:

Nick Weedon (Chair) introduced the trustees present and thanked all members and non-members for attending.

2 FoWG AUTUMN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES 2025

The Minutes for the Spring General Meeting 2025 were presented to the members. The minutes were approved without comments. Proposed by Jean, seconded by Edgar D’Mello.

3 CHAIR’S SPRING REPORT 2026

The Chair, Nick Weedon, presented his Spring Report verbally. Highlights included:

Volunteering

Several inductions have taken place this year leading to some new volunteers for open days including guides. Data on Assemble show that 43 volunteers have already contributed 374 hours this year and, during 2025, 79 volunteers contributed 2,149 hours. Both these figures will be a significant underestimate. The Chair thanked our volunteers for enabling everything we do to happen. He recommended that all volunteers record their activity on the timesheet function in Assemble.

He also presented analysis of demographic data on our volunteers. For example, so far this year, the largest age group is 25-34, which is surprising. It was recognised that some demographic groups may be less likely to record their demographic information meaning the results may not be representative. He encouraged volunteers to record their demographic information on Assemble so we can be more confident about the figures. As well as supporting our commitment to diversity, these data are useful for grant applications.

He noted the recent appointment of a new volunteer co-ordinator, Alice, which should help improve the volunteer experience.

Funding

We recently received a £19k Lottery Awards 4 All grant for community events. So far this year

trading income is healthy, with around £1,000 of unrestricted income from the Easter weekend.

Maintenance

The state of the windmill is an ongoing concern. Lambeth has supplied large fans to help tackle the damp but the sails are not fully repaired.

The chair extended his thanks to the new maintenance volunteer, Bram, who has made a large contribution, resolving many issues.

Action to fix the cladding on the centre is awaiting procurement but the details of the work have been agreed with Squires and partners.

Park

The hedge planting has been successful and there has been some bulb planting in the woodland glade. Clearance of the undergrowth has made it easier to keep on top of litter.

Access

This project is still stuck with Lambeth but we are looking to make progress on the aspects we can control. The chair cited the new sign on the gate and thanked Chris Patten for producing this. There are plans to make the gates more welcoming, possibly with motifs similar to Vauxhall park, although there is no timescale for this. This will be part of the bid to the Mayor's Fund for the park, which is due at the end of May.

Forward look

The chair encouraged people to get involved with May Fest, which is a key event in our calendar. We now have a new maypole supplied by Brixton Tatterjacks, which is twice as high as the previous one.

Other key events include Lambeth heritage festival. This year's talk at the windmill, on 9th September, will be on Mills of the Wandle and the Ashbys' time there.

There were various comments and questions:

Chris Patten asked about the buddleia on the windmill. It was agreed this was a concern and was part of the maintenance discussions with Lambeth.

Jean Kerrigan said that many of the new volunteers are gardeners and they tend to be younger, partly explaining the statistics by age on Assemble. They tend to be interested in gardening but then get involved more widely.

She also mentioned an online survey which demonstrated the importance of the park to the local community. This type of evidence of local people's interest and support is important to secure funding.

It was agreed that people attending and volunteering should be encouraged to become members, using gentle encouragement rather than a hard sell.

Olivia Christophersen mentioned the new choir as another recent success. This is well attended, bringing in some new people and creating a buzz in the centre.

4 FINANCE UPDATE

The Treasurer, Edgar D'Mello, gave a provisional, high level overview of our finances.

The big change to the way we do our accounts from this year is separating restricted and unrestricted funds. This brings our reporting in line with Charity Commission expectations. He will present more detail at AGM, including separate figures for each grant. He confirmed that the cash position is much stronger than at the end of last financial year.

Jean Kerrigan asked where venue hire from other sources (ie not related to grants) was recorded. Edgar confirmed it was included under unrestricted trading income.

Jean Kerrigan thanked the treasurer for presenting the figures and for all his work going through previous accounts and transactions. She noted the need to be aware of money to be spent this year as well as the challenging fundraising environment. This included terms becoming stricter (eg some funds are restricted to the 10% most deprived areas and we are now just outside this). There is also an interest in funding projects led by people who will benefit from them. We need to be aware of this and also look at different ways of fundraising. Other sources of income might include businesses. We are exploring Match My Project, which provides support in kind and Flora Faith-Kelly is speaking to Brixton bid.

The Chair agreed we need to remain vigilant, noting that the financial situation can quickly tip. Edgar confirmed he is managing the run rate carefully and is keen to ensure close collaboration with fundraising committee

In response to Jean Kerrigan's point that we need to develop more revenue streams than just funding grants (such as local company sponsorship), John Licence also felt we need to be more open to charging for certain events and increasing charges for open days. Whilst these sums might not be significant it all adds up.

Viv Whittington thanked Edgar for his hard work on the finances. She asked when the fundraising team will have a forward budget.

Edgar said this was already complete and had been shared with several trustees. It will be shared more widely shortly. He has applied a cautious approach to forecasting, given the current political and financial climate.

It was confirmed that there had been no applicants for the fundraising role. It was agreed we need to look at other approaches to specifying and promoting the role.

Edgar confirmed he has completed a review of the Reserves policy. He will need to rewrite the finance policy as so much has changed. Similarly, the petty cash policy needs to reflect the fact we now have business cards.

Jean Kerrigan reminded the Board of the importance of having all policies in place and up to date.

5 NEW BUSINESS PLAN

The Chair presented the new plan, which is intended to be more compact and targeted than the previous one. He had received useful feedback from the fundraising committee, which will be taken on board. He noted that the sections would be given more active names eg 'Education' would be changed to 'Learning for all'. There will also be Board leads on each item. An Introduction will be included in the final version with context for funders.

The following points were discussed under each pillar of the plan:

Heritage

It would be useful to have a trustee lead on heritage matters. The link to the archive and history group and Ann Lee's interest in this was noted.

The maintenance of the windmill is a key part of the heritage strand. We will probably need to do a joint funding bid with Lambeth which would require officer commitment.

We are looking again at the possibility of museum accreditation in the longer term. This would also need a board member to lead it and agreement with Lambeth

The Heritage strand includes one open day focussing more on heritage.

Penny Steel noted the other heritage events in September and asked how the heritage day would be different. The Board are considering this.

Kim Winter recommended looking at the Museum of English Rural Life in Reading for ideas as

they are good at presenting items in an interesting, playful, engaging way including using a sheep which went viral.

Alan Piper suggested displaying the belt drive linking the great spur wheel with the centrifugal governor.

Penny said that, from talking to a museum development officer, we have a limited collection of things that would qualify us as a museum. She also mentioned the issue of not being able to put up displays because of other uses of the building. It was noted that Upminster has a display despite similar issues. Jean said that to apply for museum accreditation we would either need to recruit a new Board member or identify people within the group who are interested in this. There was support for Penny to take the lead on this if Ann Lee has insufficient time. Penny said she will consider whether she is happy to convene a group to work on this. Liz du Parq said she has done some research and could do more if pushed. It was agreed the Board needs to make progress on accreditation.

Community engagement

The first item was already achieved, with the appointment of the new volunteer co-ordinator. It was noted that plans to increase the number of open days needs to be balanced against volunteer availability.

The Chair commented that having sufficient volunteers is part of EDI, by ensuring capacity to cater for everyone. He gave examples of being able to provide a bespoke experience for individuals with disabilities at recent Open days.

Environment and Sustainability

It was agreed this needs more of a focused lead at Board level.

It was noted that preliminary progress on installing solar panels has already been made thanks to Jean Kerrigann and Catherine Hamilton.

The Chair also mentioned the other strands of the plan, Education and EDI

Sil McIlveen asked where milling and promoting the flour features in the plan and suggested linking flour with what's grown in the community garden to the cafe. It was agreed this should be included in the heritage section and we need to promote the flour more. The biggest challenge for selling the flour is deliveries. Liz du Parq said she has a car and can help with deliveries

Viv asked if there is any possibility of having windmill loaves baked again.

It was noted that the grant applications are often interested to know where ideas are from and whether they are rooted in the community.

The chair confirmed that the Board would incorporate this feedback and circulate a final version.

6 PARK SAFETY

Flora Faith-Kelly provided a brief update. She has been liaising with Lambeth on a safety evaluation tool, focused on women and girls. She asked that people share any reflections or experiences with her or contact her if they are interested in this project. She will set up a session to collate a response.

7 ELECTION OF NEW TRUSTEES

The Chair invited the new Trustee, Flora Faith-Kelly, to introduce herself. She said she works in creative health for the NHS in South East London and has experience with community groups

so she hopes to draw on that experience. She will be focusing on membership and promoting member benefits.

Flora Faith-Kelly was proposed by Nick Weedon and seconded by Olivia Christophersen. Members voted unanimously to recruit Flora Faith-Kelly to the Board.

9 RESOLUTIONS

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

10 AOB

Jean Kerrigan suggested the Board should look at the fundraising subgroup folder including the reports at the end of projects and applications for new projects to see what we are offering and achieving. There is also a folder for the community club, which is one of our successes. It is important the Board are sighted on what is going on at the windmill.

The Chair showed a list of people/organisations who we are involved with, commenting on our extensive network.

11 DRINKS AND SOCIAL

The meeting was closed at 8.22 pm and attendees were invited to stay and socialise over beverages and snacks.