

Friends of William Clarke Park AGM & Social 2024

Thursday 14th Nov. Pepper rooms at The Islingword 175 Queens Park Road.

7.00-7.30pm: Welcome drinks and food

7:30-9:00pm: A.G.M.

1. Introductions & apologies

The attendees included;

Wook Hamilton, Janette Ackroyd, Laura Perkins, Alex Naoumof, Kathi Welles, Clare Coffey, Georgia Pravda, Richard Rose, Wai Lee, Rachel, Ruth Audus, Finn Brennan, Tony Ackroyd, Juliet O'Brien, Rich Howard, Tristian O'Brien, Charlie Charman, Fran Stovold, Boo Hodges

Apologies included; Duncan, Tina, Tim, PCSO and Sian Berry Lyndsay park ranger

2. Minutes of last year's AGM

Minutes of previous AGM were adopted without

amendment.

3. Review of 2022-23

• Events.

Three community events were organised, a Winter Warmer, Spring in the Patch and Disco in the Patch in September. These took a lot of hard work and time by committee members, helpers and volunteers.

It was noted that that there were some issues after the spring event and Winter Warmer with temporary damage to the park surface exacerbated by the poor weather conditions. The committee will look at options to mitigate this in the future.

It was decided not to do a Winter Warmer event this year.

All the events went well, were well attended and successful but rising costs are a problem.

Large events like Patch Fest are not practical at present because of the resources required, so focus is on smaller community focused events, but these also require funding and active participation to make them a success.

● **Gate-keeping – Tony Ackroyd**

A group of volunteers coordinated via a WhatsApp group lock up The Patch at dusk and open before 8 am during British Summer Time. A “thank you” event was held a week previously.

This allows better access to park than would be possible if the council were to open and close as their hours would be much more restrictive.

There have been some previous problems with anti-social behaviour, but this year has seen fewer issues than in previous years. Motion sensor solar light on Hartington gate has been helpful in deterring misuse of the alley.

Gate locking will be reinstated if problems occur during the winter months.

More volunteers are needed especially to provide cover during summer holidays.

● **Wildlife - Rich/Laura**

Two Patch clean up sessions were held during the year.

Two dates in the 2025 growth season are planned (March 23rd 10.30 and a date in May TBC)

The Council only cut grass so maintaining the park is largely down to the efforts of volunteers. More are needed and welcome.

Foxes and badgers seem to be thriving, and the fruit trees have done well. There is no real space for more trees. Chalk bank also doing well, some grass weeding needed. The pond seems healthy.

Rich gave a talk at Hanover Action in June. Good to build links with other community groups.

A Uni of Sussex project on micro plastic in mice was carried out but we have not heard results back. Alex will try to follow up.

- **Allotment project – Boo Hodges.**

Planters now doing well, thanks to those who helped with soil etc. Herbs, seasonal veg and dye plants have been grown. Connections have been made with Elm Grove primary school.

The project is working together with the composting group.

There was general appreciation for the contribution that the project makes to the park.

- **Improvements - Rich/Tony**

The playground has now been completely refurbished following vandalism last winter. Although it is now smaller and focused on younger children this has freed up space which has been successfully grassed over.

Thanks to work by Richard and Charlie the storage container now has ventilation. There has also been a complete reorganisation and clean up.

It was decided not to lend out tents etc in future to other events as this compromises the ability to hold Patch events due to damage and wear.

It was noted that we will need to look at replacing equipment in coming years. The sleepers at the front of the container will need to be replaced as this is now becoming a safety issue.

The outdoor Gym equipment at the bottom of the park is deteriorating but still safe and well used. It would be good to renew if possible.

- **Patch Yoga & Qoya**

Both going well and successful

- **Community Composting - Kathi Welles**

There are two schemes both with waiting lists and volunteers. Connections have been made with the allotment project

One box collapsed...seeking funding partners for replacement. Costs £135

More information and contact is via Brighton and Hove food partnership.
<https://bhfood.org.uk/directory-hub/community-composting/>

- **Website & social media – Tristian O'Brien**

The website <https://www.williamclarkepark.org/> has now been migrated to Wordpress.

The Facebook page is at <https://www.facebook.com/williamclarkepark>

The site has had 573 views in the last year. New content is always welcome and people are asked to promote and share news from the pages.

Contact details for the committee will be added.

We will no longer use X (formally twitter) and a move to Bluesky was suggested.

- **Hanover & Elm Grove Community Forum – Wai-Lan Lee**

The **Hanover** & Elm Grove Community Forum brings together community groups across the area. <https://hanoverandelmgrove.net/>

It was noted that the Pankhurst pantry and Phoenix food shop were under threat

A series of short films had been made and shown at The Komedia as part of a successful fundraiser.

4. Financial report: End of Year Accounts + Financial Update

Outgoing Treasurer - Fran Stovold presented detailed accounts and a report (attached). The balance held at April 2023 was £6,569.50, this has fallen to £4,808.53 at April 2024.

Spring and Autumn made a surplus but unfortunately the Winter Warmer made a loss

There were a number of unexpected costs including for portable toilets and invoices from previous years that were presented late.

It was noted that for Disco in the Patch stage and toilet costs were high and that the committee will need to review suppliers and make bookings earlier ahead of future events.

Rising costs and a fall in income means that we will need to look at more funding options and opportunities for grant applications.

It was decided to retain contingency reserve of £3000.

Among the “wish list” of possible future expenditure mentioned were new tents, gym equipment, the sleepers at the front of the container and a compost box donation

5. Key dates for the year ahead (2024-2025)

- Patch spring clean. March 23rd 10.30
- Spring in the Patch - Saturday 26th April
- Autumn Dance Event - Saturday 13th September

Next committee meeting Jan 14th 19.30 Pepper rooms at The Islingword 175 Queens Park Road. New members welcome.

6. Thanks to 2022-3 committee

- Alex Naoumoff (Co-Sec)
- Wai-Lan Lee (Sec)
- Fran Stovold (Treasurer)
- Juliet O’Brien (Volunteer co-ordinator)
- Laura Perkins (wildlife and tea tent)
- Rich Howorth (Wildlife & bar co-ord)
- Charlie Charman (events site manager)
- Tristian O’Brien (Webmaster/ bar)
- Tony Ackroyd (Gate-keeping co-ord)
- Janette Ackroyd (rubbish and recycling queen)
- Wook Hamilton (Chair and events stage manager)
- Finn Brennan (Co-opted member midyear)

Special thanks and a presentation were given to Fran Stovold who is standing down as treasurer.

Thanks were also expressed to Wai-Lan Lee who is standing down as co secretary.

Big thanks to the many other volunteers who have helped organise and deliver so much this year.

7) Electing new committee for 2023/4

The outgoing committee were re-elected unopposed with the following additions.

- Co Secretary. Finn Brennan
- Treasurer: Ruth Audus

The evening concluded with a film show of the years highlights and an informal social event.