

Friends of Selly Oak Park
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 3.00pm on 22nd September 2024 in the Scout Hut

Present: Committee members: Andrew Schofield (Chair), Bob Curry, Anne Marie McCarthy, Sue Whitmarsh, Helen Murie, Marian Evans, Simon Stafford

Also present : Wendy Critchlow, Hugh Humphreys

Apologies: Beth Delwiche, Sue Amey, Jamie Tennant, Louise Francis-Tailor, Miranda Perks, Mark Crawford

1. **Welcome:**

Andrew Schofield welcomed all to the meeting

2. **Minutes of the previous AGM meeting.:**

available on the FOSOP website.

3. **Matters Arising:**

4. **Chair's report:**

Andrew Schofield presented the report

**Friends of Selly Oak Park
Chair's report 2024**

The 2023-24 year was on the whole good for the Friends of Selly Oak Park. We continued to maintain bed at the Corisande Rd entrance and our adopted bed near the Scout Hut and adopted new beds. We conducted regular litter picks to keep the park tidy. We organised our two regular events. The year has been characterised by donations in memory of park users with two benches and four trees being donated to the park. These events were somewhat soured by council cut backs and also by the arrival of a group of travellers in mid-September.

1. Carols in the park.

We were once again able to run our Carols in the Park event in December with the help of Clergy from St Mary's Church and music from members of St John's Church, Harborne. Despite COVID striking down the chairman the committee were able to run a safe and smooth event. There was a good turnout. The date for this year's Carols in Sat 7th December.

2. Selly Oak Festival.

We were also able to run the Selly Oak Festival in June. The number of stalls was slightly down on the previous year. This year we had a choir performance, which was free and we hired a Brass Quintet and a number of professional singers who sang accompanied by backing tracks. While the music was good the attention paid to the acts by visitors was low questioning the expense of the stage and signers alike. The engagement of local schools in this year's event was again a bit disappointing and we also struggled to get sufficient teams for the football with previous regular teams pulling out. Footfall was again low and the poor weather suppressed food and ice cream sales. We are currently seeking funding to support the festival in 2025 but are also reviewing the format.

3. Memorials

During the year we marked the sad passing of regular park members Bill Barker and Trevor Dyde. Friends and family of both men organised collections supporting a bench and tree in memory of Bill and a tree and bulbs in memory of Trevor. Bill's bench was installed near the centre of the park and his tree (Cherry) will be planted in a nearby location. Trevor's tree (Cherry) and bulbs will be planted near to the Scout Hut in an area where he himself planted many bulbs. An additional donation in memory of Peter Shiner paid for another bench and tree (oak). The bench has been installed close to the Corisand Rd entrance and the tree will go nearby. A fourth tree was donated in memory of Linh Le's grandfather this cherry will be planted on the Gibbins Rd frontage. We have delayed tree planting until November the autumn being a good time to

plant trees. This sudden volume of memorials has led us to produce a new policy on how we handle such donations – what can be offered and what is not acceptable.

4. Reports from groups:

4.1 Gardening Group: (twice per month on one Sunday and a Friday in spring and summer)

Our core gardening group has continued to meet this year on a monthly or fortnightly basis. The group maintains the flower bed near the Scout Hut and the Corisande Rd entrance both of which are flourishing. Following council cut back we have adopted the circular rose bed near the Scout Hut proposing to prune the roses once a year and to weed occasionally. We have also temporarily adopted the two bed near the park keepers lodge to keep them planted and weeded during a period where BCC is unable to maintain them. Group Led by *Marian Evans*.

4.2 Nature Conservation Group: (Thursdays in winter)

This group has suffered from restrictions on the Ranger service as much of their activity can only go ahead with Ranger support. Ranger Jan was able to help with the willow sculpture. Group Led by *Bob Curry*.

4.3 Litter Picking Group: (2nd Saturdays)

Our litter picking group meets at 10am on the 2nd Saturday of each month with individual members carrying our personal litter picks throughout the week. We continue to remove shopping trolleys from the park and secure them in the compound by the lodge before eventual return to their stores. We need to arrange for a volunteer with a van or trailer to help return trollies to further afield stores. The litter picking group were in the forefront of our clean up during and after the traveller visit including one litter pick and bin emptying session during the visit and another litter pick to follow up after the council teams once the travellers had departed. Group Led by *Susan Whitmarsh*.

4.4 Landscape group:

This group meets as required to conduct hard landscaping projects but following a busy time in 2022/23 has not engaged in any projects in 2023/24. The memorial benches were installed professionally. Group Led by *Andrew Schofield*.

5. Travellers:

The recent traveller encampment during September was very disheartening. To gain entry they damaged the outer gate on Gibbins Rd which was reported a criminal damage. They also engaged in the usual fly tipping an open toileting. We were especially saddened by reports of harassment and assault of a young woman by children associated with the camp. We deplore such acts of criminal damage and assault. We are in discussion with BCC with regards to the reinstatement of the main gate.

6. Thanks:

We would like to thank Sue Amy (BCC Area Parks Manager) and Ranger Jan Thomlinson for their continued support. James Gibbs, Simon Needle (Both BCC), local Tree Wardens for their support with tree planting and all those who donated memorial benches and trees. We thank all our regular volunteers for their support.

Travelers.

Travelers arrived in the park again this year but a smaller group and for a shorter period of time. The wooden gate by the lodge was broken to gain access. There was an issue relating to intimidation of a jogger. Need to revisit the issue of larger bins and bins being emptied when travelers are present to reduce the amount of clean up needed.

Summer festival

The festival went ahead as planned but the bad weather reduced the footfall. The stage and the entertainment cost more than £1200 which could potentially have been spent better. Next years festival will

be dependent on funding especially from the university. Suggestions for other fundraising events would be welcome

Other Issues

It is still to be seen how the lack of BCC support will impact on the park.

Selly Oak Trust School would like to volunteer 2 teachers and 4 students to help in the park weekly as part of their Duke of Edinburgh. None of the committee members can take on a regular commitment but a session of litter picking has been offered and an invitation to adopt a flower bed, clean signs, clear the canal path may be suggested.

5. Treasurers report:

Bob Currie presented the report

FRIENDS OF SELLY OAK PARK (FSOP) TREASURER'S STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD 9/9/23 – 5/9/24	
	£
INCOME	
Birmingham City Council (Open Spaces)	120.00
Selly Oak Festival Surplus	132.44
Total Income	252.44
EXPENDITURE	
Gardening Tools	(40.00)
Replacement Tree	(358.00)
Carol Service	(103.24)
Domain Renewal	(14.39)
Total Expenditure	(515.63)
Total Expenditure over Income	(263.19)
Bank Balance & Funds Available for FSOP brought forward from 9/9/23	1,670.59
Total Expenditure over Income	(263.19)
FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR FSOP CARRIED FORWARD FROM 5/9/24	1,407.40
Funds held as agent for memorial benches/trees	630.30
Bank Balance 5/9/24	2,037.70

IT has been a good year, financially.

6. Election of Committee members:

Current committee have indicated that they would all like to continue with the exception of Handel Millar who has not attended any meetings during the year.

7. Lapal Canal Trust:

Lapal Canal Trust presented a power point presentation of the history and future of the proposed canal development. Many thanks to Hugh Humphreys

7. Dates of Future Meetings and Events:

Christmas Carols

Saturday 7th December 2024

Committee meetings: 7.00pm on zoom

Tuesday 22nd October 2024

Tuesday 19th November 2024

Tuesday 21st January 2025

Tuesday 18th March 2025

Tuesday 29th April 2025

Tuesday 20th May 2025

Litter Picks 2nd Saturday of every month 10am

Gardening Group: 1st Sunday and 3rd Friday of every month 10am