

Friends of Palewell Common & Fields

Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 12 August 2020 at 7.00 pm by Zoom

Attending: Jessica Rettie (Chair) Bernard Adams, Andy Sutch, Di Hall, Dhun Kenny, Rikki Marks, James Thornton, David Evans.

1. Apologies for Absence: Justine Nagaur, Robyn Philipps.
2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 March: The Minutes were approved. No matters arising were discussed.
3. Draft Minutes of the AGM held online on 18 May: The draft Minutes were approved for posting on the website pending approval at the 2021 AGM.
4. Finance report: Andy Sutch reported that the current balance was £3344.70 with a further £10 cheque to bank. 5 additional members had paid their subscription electronically. Jessica said that she had spent £40 on 4 litter pickers which could be used by Friends volunteers to help clean up the Common. It was agreed this was a good investment and should be reimbursed.

Action - Andy to reimburse the cost of the litter pickers.

5. Sports report: Andy said cricket had resumed on the Common. Bernard reported his pleasure at seeing this.
6. Tennis was thriving throughout the Borough - notwithstanding the problematic state of the Palewell courts. Andy had spoken to Chris Jones from Richmond about investment of the revenue and understood that Richmond had already received this year a higher income from tennis than the whole of last year. They intended to invest this in the courts and the aim was to clean, paint and install solar powered electronic gates at Palewell before 31 March next year – in line with their agreement with the LTA. Andy understood the problem of the poor state of the back courts could be addressed by moving all 4 courts a few metres towards the road – which would be a cheaper and better solution than removing all the tree roots. This and the solar powered gates would be likely to need planning permission. Jessica invited Andy to involve Brian Marcel in future discussions. She said that she had spoken to Kate who had said that the Palewell courts were in such a bad state that they were only being used for children's coaching. Other members were keen to know more about the details of what was being proposed. It was agreed that the Friends supported the retention of 4 good courts – but that we should consult the membership and others about the details of the proposals before taking a position.

Action - Andy to obtain more details on what was proposed ahead of a wider consultation by the Friends.

7. Andy said that the FA had not authorised the wider restarting of club football so it was unclear when football would restart on the Common. Coaching of small groups of up to 6 people was permitted and there were a number of groups for children running on the Common and the dog free area.
8. James said that the position on golf had not improved. The physical state of the course was still poor although the sprinkler system for the greens seems now to be working. Jessica said Richmond had not responded well to an offer from a local

resident to take over coaching although she had put the person concerned in touch with Continental. She said that she understood the dispute between Continental and the tennis coaches about storage of equipment in the hut had been resolved.

9. Bernard said that the Boules was thriving with play taking place nearly every day. Richmond had been very supportive of requests for help from John Hockley.

10. Membership report James reported that there were currently 58 members. He would continue to chase renewals. It was agreed that the online membership form needed to be changed to give James' name rather than Dhun's. Di agreed to explore how to do both this and post the draft AGM minutes with David's help.

Action – Di and David to update the online membership form and post the draft AGM minutes on the website.

11. Conservation report: Rikki said that there had been no response from members to her email about future conservation days and that she was concerned about the lack of support. Jessica regretted that she had not replied – she had been on holiday and the email had been overlooked. Jessica said that she knew that TCV were still running their volunteer days - we could ask them to find a suitable date. She was also keen to do a litter pick in the second half of September aligned with the Keep Britain Tidy Great British September clean-up. Andy said that he would be happy to walk round leaflets to encourage local people to participate. He would also restart the insurance for our events.

Action – Jessica and Rikki to arrange a clean-up day later in September and explore dates for a further conservation event in the Autumn.

12. Upcoming events: Jessica noted that she had sent an email that day to members to follow up her proposal at the AGM to set up a number of working groups to plan future activities by the Friends. The Committee welcomed this and agreed to set up groups as follows

- Membership and community engagement: James and Andy agreed to form this group. Jessica said that she had some ideas to contribute and would be happy to provide a short paper. She was keen to explore what local groups we might reach out to and encourage to use the Common more. And usage had already gone up during lock down – how could we maintain the current level?
- Events and social activities: Bernard and Di agreed to form this group with support from Dhun. Bernard said that he already had some ideas for possible new activities (e.g. nature talks). We could build on existing activities like the successful Easter egg hunt.
- Conservation and environment: Rikki and David agreed to form this group. We already had successful events to improve the environment – how could we build wider engagement for these?

13. Jessica said that she would speak to Robyn and Justine to find out which groups they would like to join. Each group should work up a few ideas for activities over the next 6 months or so and report back to the next Committee meeting. The overall aim was to build participation in the Friends and encourage more people to use the Common – particularly when so many people were working from home. We

were fortunate to have money available in the bank which we should use. Members endorsed this approach and encouraged lateral thinking.

14. It was agreed we also needed to increase our communication with members. It was agreed that we should aim for a members' email update in September.

Action – Members to take action on the points above.

15. Next meeting: It was agreed that David would try to arrange another Committee meeting in October.

Action: David to find a date in October.

16. The meeting closed at 8.05pm.