

Friends of Tooting Common

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 13 November 2022

Held at St Anselm's Church Lower Hall

Attendees

Peter Ramell, Matthew Hamlyn, Tove Bellingham, Elaine Welsford, Anna Cope, Michael Langdon, Anneli Sarkanen, Liliias Gillies, Harriet Blacklay, Roy Vickery, R P Mole, R Findlay, Steve Boorman, Kate Allan, Debbie Foster.

Apologies

Martin Beaver, Steffi Backhouse, Lorcan and Caroline Farelly, Leonie Cooper, Eamonn Richardson, Geraldine Kelly.

Minutes of the AGM, 2021 (Keith Davies)

Circulated and agreed. Note that FoTC has talked to the Council about Furzedown Lodge (currently unoccupied and in poor condition) and we could not accept responsibility for it.

Financial Report year to March 2022 (Eamonn Richardson)

Circulated and agreed, with thanks to Eamonn. Note that the £1,214 surplus is exceptional, because of Covid frustrated work, and we have committed projects for this year including a sound system and two trees.

Membership (Debbie Foster)

With thanks to Debbie, we have currently 218 members, about half being family memberships. 143 pay by standing order and Debbie has been trying to convert them to direct debit. We need to manage the website and facebook presence: a volunteer would be very welcome.

Litter Picks (Mike Langdon, Tove Bellingham and Peter Ramell)

Report circulated, and thanks agreed – especially to Tove for the last five years. There is also separate litter picking by Duke of Edinburgh volunteers. Enable do litter picking as well as emptying the bins, but they tend not to get into the wooded areas. They are offering space at the Athletics track to store a trolley.

Bat Walks (Geraldine Kelly)

Report circulated, with thanks to Geraldine. We managed walks in April, June, July and September – and perhaps the bat season is extending.

Chair's Report (Peter Ramell)

Circulated , with especial thanks to Peter for all his work. As well as the activity recorded above, the report covers the Fun Dog Show, the Pumpkin Parade, Botanical and other walks (thanks to Roy Vickery), volunteering sessions organised by Enable, the two trees to be planted to commemorate the Queen's lifetime of service, and her platinum jubilee, the photo competitions, and the current issues on the common (see below for discussion).

Election of Officers and Committee

Under the FOTC constitution all officers and six elected members are subject to annual election at the AGM. The following were elected unopposed:

Chair: Peter Ramell (Anna Cope took the chair for this item). Proposed by Matthew Hamlyn, seconded by Tove Bellingham.

Treasurer: Eamonn Richardson. Proposed by Debbie Foster, seconded by Matthew Hamlyn.

Membership Secretary: Debbie Foster. Proposed by Matthew Hamlyn, seconded by Tove Bellingham.

Minutes Secretary: Steve Boorman. Proposed by Matthew Hamlyn, seconded by Anna Cope. Thanks to Keith Davies, the previous holder.

Committee: Tove Bellingham, Debbie Foster, Leonie Cooper, Anna Cope, Michael Langdon, Matthew Hamlyn, Elaine Welsford. Thanks to Simon Hemsley, one of the founder members of FOTC, who has now stood down from the committee, for all his work.

Subscriptions

Agreed that subscriptions should be maintained at the current rate: £6 individual and £10 family. Proposed by Peter Ramell, seconded by Anna Cope.

Discussion of current issues (arising from the Chair's report)

Cycling

Discussion of the MAC's (Management Advisory Committee) proposal for change in the existing arrangements. Need to get the balance right between cyclists and pedestrians! Though there is extensive cycling on the common, there is only one route (the shared pedestrian/cycle path through the Common, which includes the Culverden path) where it is actually permitted. Wandsworth, perhaps uniquely, has a bye-law limiting cycling speed to 12mph, though there is currently little enforcement. The MAC consider that the present position is untenable and have proposed options. eBikes are legally the same as other cycles, but eScooters are illegal on the common (and possibly on the road as well). The position on commercial delivery bikes is unclear. Initial thoughts, subject to a wider consultation with FoTC members, are:

- a) to review policy in the light of experience on other open spaces, eg Brockwell Park (considerate cycling allowed) and Clapham Common (no specific bans);

- b) to consider the MAC's suggestions of permitting cycling on more obvious routes, such as going from the car park to the cycle racks by the lido or under the railway bridge leading to Drewstead Rd;
- c) to review other routes, but noting that some of the surfaced paths are in a dangerous state, and would need improvement before allowing cycling, or would be too narrow for cyclists;
- d) to continue to promote clear signage for permitted and not permitted cycling and for speed limits;
- e) to seek effective enforcement – fixed penalty notices may be inappropriate for some of the obvious routes (eg from the car park to the lido), but would be very appropriate for dangerous cycling. A key point was the need for a considerable increase in police patrolling resources

Trees

FoTC is funding two trees to commemorate the Queen – a wild cherry and a copper beech – at a cost of about £200 each, including planting.

Note overhanging trees obstructing the footway on Tooting Bec Rd railway bridge. We would raise with Enable

Toilets

Enable are meant to be enabling the public use of the toilets in the changing rooms - a welcome development, given the need for more toilet provision which FOTC has raised for some time - but this is going slowly. The undergrowth which was obscuring the entrance has been cut back, but completion is needed. We will ask Enable for an update.

Sponsoring a bench

From a recent case, it appeared that Enable were reluctant to agree to requests to sponsor a bench. Agreed that we would ask Enable what is their policy on memorial benches.

Plastic fencing to protect vulnerable areas

Agreed we would raise with Enable the need for reinstatement of some plastic fencing to protect vulnerable areas in wetter weather, particularly by the Culverden path.