

# **Friends of Coronation Gardens**

## **Annual meeting and AGM, via Zoom**

### **2-3pm, Wednesday 30th September 2020**

A total of 20 people attended at various times online, including:

- Charles Runcie – Chair and Zoom host
- 6 other Committee members
- Ian Mitchell and Ella Rothero from Enable Leisure + Culture plc
- Inspector Stephen Biggs, Wandsworth Parks Police
- Fleur Anderson, MP for Putney, Southfields and Roehampton

Meeting opened 7.04pm.

#### **Annual Review**

Charles explained that this meeting has been postponed from April, and so it is now 18 months since the Friends of Coronation Gardens was formed.

He outlined the progress made by the group since it was formed. The full Annual Reviews is available on the FOCG website.

Suki reported on the gate locking experience which had some teething problems but is generally successful.

Daniel (Treasurer) outlined our success in obtaining grant funding (which is 'restricted' and only to be used for the purposes it was awarded for) and also funding from gate receipts for the Winter Wandergarden event, general donations and membership (which is unrestricted and can be used for the Group's expenses). We need at least £200 a year for running costs of the organisation such as the website and insurance. The full financial review is available on the FOCG website.

Both Charles and Dan stressed the need for more paying members.

#### **AGM**

Nada stepped down from the role of Secretary.

Charles proposed the re-election of the whole committee. This was seconded by Ray Chapman and carried.

Therefore the committee will continue in the same form, and efforts will be made to find someone to act as Secretary.

#### **Guest Speakers**

**Ian** from Enable highlighted how important green spaces have been during the Covid19 pandemic. He praised the progress of the Friends of Coronation Gardens and how active the group has been. He feels that Coronation Gardens has seen much less litter and antisocial behaviour than other greenspaces in Wandsworth and stated that it is the

only greenspace (apart from Battersea Park) which is locked at night. He stated that it has been a pleasure to work in partnership with such a proactive committee.

**Ella** has been covering while a new Friends Group liaison post is filled. She updated the meeting about progress around activities in the Gardens:

- A new water tap will be installed near the NW corner
- The area in the NW corner will be developed and a planting scheme has been developed.
- One of the litter bins has been moved closer to the Merton Road entrance to try to stop the issue of cigarette end litter.
- The playground should be opened as part of the Gardens later this autumn once equipment checks have been made.
- We will be getting a new notice board for the Friends Group to communicate with users of the Gardens.
- Plans are in hand to stop antisocial behaviour in an area around a fig tree.
- Electric scooters are not allowed in the Gardens – see bye-laws.

**Inspector Stephen Biggs** from Wandsworth Parks Police said he felt that the Friends Group had had a positive impact. In the last 18 months they have seen an increase in interaction between members of the public and the Parks Police via text, WhatsApp, phone and email (which is particularly useful for getting an overall picture of ongoing issues which can be targeted systematically). He is very much in favour of the gate-locking project which he believes has gone a long way to prevent antisocial behaviour. He has been pleased to see the increase in use of greenspaces during the Covid-19 lockdown, and they have increased their hours with support from Enable. He will send the relevant bye-laws and information about the new PSPO (Public Spaces Protection Orders) so that the Friends can add that information to their website.

### **Comments from the floor**

The Chair opened the discussion to the floor, and the Chat facility on Zoom was also used for Q&A. There was a general positive response to the work of the Friends of Coronation Gardens so far and thanks to Enable for their support.

### **Closing comments from Fleur Anderson, MP**

Fleur outline three things for us to celebrate: the importance of greenspaces for physical, mental and emotional health, the role of both the space and the Friends group in the community and the link with local school children, and also the role greenspaces have in biodiversity. She also set us three challenges: to continue to be a way in which local people can talk to decision makers, to continue to combat litter (including making the environment nicer to deter littering in the first place), and to continue to 'add value' in terms of funding as Council funding will be in short supply in the coming year.

Meeting closed 8pm.