

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FRIENDS OF
RICHMOND GREEN HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH, QUADRANT
ROAD, RICHMOND AT 7:30 PM ON 29 MARCH 2012

Present

FORG executive Vivien Harris (Chair); Malcolm Mirrielees; Graham Walker; Martin Anderson; Peter Willan; Tracy Hurley
Residents 25 attended
Apologies Sir Brian and Lady Fall; Andrew & Ros Fitton; Don Anderson; Peter Griffiths; Cllr Frances Bouchier; John Coates; Jean & Terry Lowden, Prof Patricia Maclean

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The minutes of the 2011 Annual General Meeting were approved (proposed Martin Anderson; seconded Malcolm Mirrielees) and signed by Vivien Harris.

Matters arising- Nil.

March 2012 Newsletter was submitted as the Executive Report.

Chair's Report

Vivien Harris outlined several issues FoRG has been working on during the past year: the crown reduction of the plane trees on Greenside; Jubilee Bollards; Richmond Heathrow Campaign; Old Deer Park Crown Lease renewal; Club Cars; Cycling on The Green; litter on The Green; the appearance of graffiti on the Green surrounds and Homeless Richard.

Treasurer's Report

Malcolm Mirrielees presented the accounts and these were approved (proposed Rachel Dickson; seconded Maeve Willan). Malcolm advised that we are waiting for the 2012 filming 'season' to begin as most of FoRG's income comes from filming donations. A member asked why the interest rate we receive is not higher; Malcolm explained that we are not eligible for a higher interest-bearing account.

Election of Officers and Executive Committee

Vivien Harris agreed to continue as Chair.

Malcolm Mirrielees agreed to continue as Treasurer.

Tracy Hurley agreed to continue as Secretary.

(proposed Bob Harris; seconded Maeve Willan)

By a show of hands of members the three officers were re-elected and Peter Willan, Martin Anderson, Peter Griffiths, Graham Walker and Don Anderson were re-elected as members of the Committee (proposed Karineh Grigorian; seconded Rachel Dickson).

Formal meeting ended at 8pm.

General Meeting

Individual Committee members spoke about each of the specific topics listed below although the Old Deer Park Lease renewal was a major discussion topic and we welcomed Paul Velluet to speak about this issue. The main points were all covered in the Newsletter of March 2012 previously distributed to members' homes and also available at the meeting and on the web site. The Newsletter forms part of these Minutes.

Town Centre Improvement Project, Website and communications and Localism were not covered in detail because of time restraints.

Discussions/questions from the floor

1. Diamond Jubilee Bollards
2. Old Deer Park
3. Heathrow
4. Litter
5. Licensing and Anti-Social Behaviour
6. Website and communications
7. Town Centre Improvement project
8. Localism

1. Diamond Jubilee Bollards

Vivien Harris (Chair) spoke of the project we are undertaking to re-install the bollards and rails on Greenside which were removed during WW2 and of which we have photographic evidence. There are currently 49 bollards on Maids of Honour Row and approx. 20% of these are crested William IV bollards. This is a significant legacy project for Richmond which gives our generation the opportunity to do something which future generations can appreciate and furthers Richmond's long association with royalty.

Greenside is the most-used pedestrian access to the Green and we believe the placement of both bollards and rails together with the proposed pruning of the plane trees will have a positive effect on the growth of grass under the plane trees.

We have obtained quotes for the casting of the bollards (and railings) with a crested Elizabeth II and have applied for several grants (Civic Pride) as well as approaching local businesses and residents. Significant benefactors for this important legacy project will be acknowledged in a plaque located on The Green but it was also proposed at the meeting that individual residents could sponsor one or more bollards with a small discrete plaque on each bollard.

The Jubilee bollards project was unanimously endorsed by the meeting and we promised to send out shortly more details of this project.

2. Old Deer Park

Paul Velluet (Consultant Architect, Conservation and Planning) joined us to share what has been happening with the ODP 2016 lease renewal. He is part of the working committee comprising the Richmond and Kew Societies; FoRG; Friends of Old Deer Park and the St Margarets Estate Residents Association. The working party has prepared a detailed report entitled "A Framework for Future Conservation and Enhancement". Paul explained that ODP is owned by The Crown Estate and has two different leases; the golf course (lease renewal in 2043) and the rest of ODP- including the carpark, grassy areas adjacent to the A316, buildings located within the car park and Pools on the Park. The concern of the group is where the renewal will lead to and what opportunities will rise out of it. He spoke of ODP being 'Richmond's oldest park' and noted that it is one of the most historic parks in the borough- there is a designation of it as a heritage park with a number of other designations throughout.

The report that Paul has been working on is based on Kim Wilkie's Landscape Management Plan and highlights several key points: that the spaces could be better looked after and they offer value. The key recommendations are that the links between the town and park be strengthened with a more enhanced route for pedestrian access; there should be improved access for local schools and clubs (toilets and changing facilities); that the underpass (built in 1934 and above the floodline) be reinstated as a safe and viable option for accessing the park; that the spiral ramps be reversed so they deliver people from the direction they are travelling from- and going to-; and that all options be pragmatic and affordable.

Nick Coleman asked if the lease was held by the Crown (it is) and asked if there are more than one lease within the ODP leasehold- (there are)- the main lease is held by the Council who then sublease it- with 200 acres as the Royal Mid Surrey Golf Club.

The full report will be made available on the FoRG website.

3. Heathrow

Peter Willan spoke about the Richmond Heathrow Campaign (RHC) of which FoRG is a member- as well as The Kew Society and The Richmond Society. They have produced an evidence-based report that concludes Heathrow has ample capacity without night flights or a further runway which has been seen by a senior team at BAA who found no holes in the evidence. Peter explained that Heathrow works on a 'slots' allocation system- which means that the backlog of flights entering sometimes need to be 'stacked' and as a result we see several planes building up flying in circles over London until their 'slot' is available. The 480,000 flights per year that Heathrow currently supports should not be a problem and come down to a management issue. The report will be finalised at the end of March and they will present it to MPs the following week.

The other point that Peter raised is the 'Heathrow as a hub' myth- there are currently 69 million passengers using Heathrow- this will increase substantially during, before and after the Olympics. Peter said the number of extra flights is only about 4%.

Nick Coleman pointed out the flights out of sequence for Heathrow trials and the issue when planes are coming in out of sequence. He also pointed out that people in the Borough don't realise when a ½ day is quiet (we have become accustomed to the noise) and asked how FoRG can help residents to understand our rights and how to complain. Peter said there is a phone number to ring to log complaints including time of day, date, level of noise and number of incidents.

It was agreed that this information should be on the FoRG website with click-through links to complaints site, a schedule of quiet ('no fly') days and links to RHC website. It was also agreed that FoRG should send an email outlining quiet days and have the links to various websites about noise levels etc.

4. Litter

Martin Anderson spoke about the cleaner we had for the Green last year- unfortunately he has been recalled to the other park sections he looks after BUT we have been promised someone just as good this year.

Sainsburys have committed to assisting with the reduction of litter in the town and we will pursue the other supermarkets for a joint initiative.

It was noted that the wind transfers rubbish from the Green to Old Palace Yard.

Nick Coleman thinks what we're doing is 'excellent' and asked if the new initiative of fixed penalty notices in Richmond Park was the same for the Green...

There was a general discussion about litter and its causes on the Green. Ideas put forward included:

- a 'do not feed pigeons' sign being erected somewhere on the Green; it was pointed out that these already exist but there is no enforcement.
- larger bins (this was suggested in past years)- the agreement was a good litter picker and more frequent emptying of the bins is the solution;
- broken glass on Green (can any of the shops be required to sell only plastic bottles?)

All agreed that a 'man on the spot' was the answer to a lot of these issues.

5. Licensing and Anti-Social Behaviour

Peter Willan said there have been at least 20 objections for licenses within the town- some of these have been objections to the conditions not necessarily straight oppositions. There are a number of late night takeaway food shops at the northern entrance to town that have applied for an extension of their current trading licenses- to 4am (these are technically outside of our remit but still have an effect on the town).

Sainsbury's senior management worked with The Richmond Society meeting on their application for a license- they have a reduced hour for sale for alcohol and have agreed to have no alcohol within 5m of the shop entrance. They have been very willing to become involved in the community and we should use this as an opportunity for the other supermarkets to follow.

The vendor license for the ice cream truck on the North corner of the Green is up for tender- with the condition that the vehicle be powered by electricity not a generator.

The MAKE Report is about to be published; the initial reporting is that ASB in the town has been reduced.

6. Website and communications

Tony Winslade mentioned that the FoRG website is 'passive;- meaning that you have to look for something; we all agreed that the website should be optimised to encourage more use- this included adding click-throughs for complaints about planes out of sequence, noise, council emails and more on what we (FoRG) are currently pursuing.

Emails were also highlighted as a good way to make people more aware about what is happening as long as it's sharing useful information (eg saying when the ½ quiet days are for planes; how to complain about plane noise; links to council website).

AOB

Karineh Grigorian said she feels vulnerable walking across the Green at night and suggested lights on the paths; Peter Willan said the Police think if there are lights on the Green, it will attract people to congregate there more in the late evening. Vivien showed the yellow personal alarms that the Safer Communities Team have for free from the new Safer Neighbourhood office.

It was proposed that the end car parking spot by the chicane just before the entrance to the Old Palace be removed as it creates a blind spot; we will take up this matter with the Council. On the subject of Club Cars we stressed that we had had no response from the Council on the issue of use of the Club car parking space opposite Maids of Honour row by residents or visitors i.e. non Club Cars and that residents should not park there until clarification had been obtained. We continue to oppose the location of Club Cars around The Green.

If there is a total hose pipe ban and the Council cannot water the cricket pitch, FoRG proposed we organise a relay of buckets of water from the standby tap to ensure the cricket pitch gets watered.

We agreed to take all these helpful suggestions on board and take appropriate actions. The meeting ended at 9:20pm.