

Minutes of 2016 FoRG AGM – Wednesday 20 April 2016

Meeting held in the upstairs room at The Cricketers pub, Richmond Green, @ 7.30pm

The meeting formally began at 7.36pm

AGENDA & MINUTES

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Nick Coleman.

Noted that all members of the current FoRG Executive Committee were in attendance: Vivien Harris (chair), Mark Sebba (Treasurer), Peter Willan, Graham Walker, Anna Newton Dunn, Peter Griffiths, Martin Anderson (standing down). Also present was Linda Christmas who was to be proposed for election as a new Committee member (see 6 below).

2. Minutes of the previous AGM (23 March 2015)

VH: It had been intended to place the minutes of the 2015 AGM on the FoRG website, but this had not happened for various reasons. Nevertheless, no changes were offered. Adoption of minutes proposed by Bob Harris and seconded by Martin Anderson. Minutes duly approved and signed by chair Vivien Harris.

3. Matters Arising from last AGM

VH highlighted a few items...

- Post-box on The Green. The Post Office says the box receives fewer than 50 letters each day and therefore does not any more justify a separate later collection except by the postman on his round. Commander Clarke doubted the integrity of that figure and thought it a “poor excuse” for leaving it to be emptied by the postman. VH: apparently the count had been made some time before the change was made, and there seems little hope of the PO reinstating a later collection from this box.
- The talk on The History of Richmond Green by local historian Valerie Boyes, suggested last year by Frances Bouchier, had proved a popular success.
- FoRG’s communication with members by email could still be improved; efforts are on-going. If any member of FoRG is happy to help with this, please let a Committee Member know.
- Collections of commercial waste, particularly at the entrance to Brewers Lane, continue to cause concern. VH: there is now a council helpline for complaints; it will be placed on the FoRG website. PW thought there may be as many as 50 dump trucks passing through the Green each day, all generated by this rubbish point used by local businesses (he will monitor to check that number again). GW thought that the privatisation of rubbish collection had a lot to do with the lateness of some collections, and that objections had so far fallen on deaf ears.

4. Report of the Executive

VH: summary, as per recent newsletter topics:-

- AGM venue: we are now back at The Cricketers for this year, although next year’s venue is still TBC (see below: 7. AOB).
- Talk on The History of Richmond Green – Valerie Boyes’s resulting booklet is not yet ready (we will inform you when the date of its appearance is imminent), but there is a copy of her PowerPoint presentation available for anyone to view in the Museum of Richmond. In addition, Valerie would be very keen to hear from anyone living around The Green who may be able to add to her knowledge of the history of The Green and the buildings around it. Contact us at mail@FoRG.org.uk if you need to reach Valerie.
- Heathrow – it’s been a very busy year, with RHC deeply engaged in the issues, particularly pointing out to Parliament the discrepancy between the Davies Commission’s recommendations on a third runway at LHR and contradictory evidence in its own report. The government’s deferred decision on expansion is expected this summer – sometime after, it is thought, the late-June EU Referendum.
- Licensing – PW continues to monitor for FoRG and Richmond Society the latest issues as they arise.

- Busking has raised concerns as it becomes more prevalent around the town and on the riverside; there appears to be little control over their activities.
- Fountain on The Green – the Grade II listed fountain, last restored in 1977 by private subscription, is still a FoRG target: to replace the tatty brick surround with York stone. Progress has been slow, but efforts are on-going.
- Old Deer Park – FoRG continues to be a part of the Working Group monitoring the renewal of the ODP lease and any consequences that might cause concern.
- Events – Charity Cricket Match was becoming noisy and too commercial, but although the council has said it has no plans to increase the Fun fair activity, it does not have any plan to reduce it. BAFTA awards went off without much incident, save for the annoyance caused by too many VIP limousines parked up around The Green for too long (if this sort of event was to be repeated, FoRG would argue for better use of the A316 car park). The RWC Fanzone seemed to be a success; there was resulting damage to the turf in ODP but reparations are apparently in progress. However, the Council is now using the area for new events and the grass has no opportunity to grow back and recover.
- Website – FoRG is still working to improve how it works.
- Better pruning of the Plane Trees – no further progress to report
- The twin BT phone boxes – no further progress to report on their fate.

5. Financial Report and adoption of Accounts for 1 Jan – 31 Dec 2015

Mark S explained a small deficit in the past year's income and expenditure, owing to the costs of the AGM and the Richmond Green talk. That said, FoRG still carries funds of £7,117, which we are anxious to spend for the general good rather than accumulate. One public project that is still in FoRG's sights is the restoration of the Greenside ornamental Fountain, although grants would need to be secured to add to FoRG funds in order to reach the cost of the work that needs to be done. And it was noted that such restoration work being considered was aesthetic in nature and would not include restoring the fountain to working order. Other suggestions for projects that FoRG may support are welcome.

In the current year, there has been no income at all from filming activities so far, and if that source of funds does dry up then FoRG will re-assess how its funds are to be used.

Proposed by Bob Harris; seconded by Peter Griffiths. The Accounts for 2015 were duly adopted.

6. Election of Officers and Committee Members – those standing are:-

Chairman:	Vivien Harris	8 Pembroke Villas
Secretary:	Vacancy	
Treasurer:	Mark Sebba	9 Pembroke Villas

There were no proposals or volunteers for the vacant position of FoRG Secretary; the search goes on. The others were proposed by Martin Anderson and seconded by Peter Griffiths. Officers were duly elected: Vivien Harris to continue as Chair, and Mark Sebba to continue as Treasurer.

Election of other Members of the Executive – those standing are:-

Peter Willan	7 The Green
Peter Griffiths	26 The Retreat, Retreat Road
Graham Walker	10 The Green
Anna Newton Dunn	29 Old Palace Lane
Linda Christmas	Queensberry House, Friars Lane

Martin Anderson, who has been a key member of the FoRG Executive Committee for over fifteen years, had very recently served notice of his decision to stand down due to other pressures on his time. Chair VH thanked him for his long service to FoRG as "an invaluable committee member". Martin's departure creates a vacancy, and Linda Christmas had agreed to stand in his place.

Election of those standing was proposed by Mark Sebba and seconded by Frances Bouchier. Members of the FoRG Executive Committee duly elected: Peter Willan, Peter Griffiths, Graham Walker, Anna Newton Dunn, Linda Christmas.

The formalities concluded at 8.03pm. General discussion on various items then followed.

7. Any Other Business

- Policing / anti-social behaviour (ASB) – PW explained that the law has recently changed, and the idea of a “dispersal zone” has been disbanded. The police no longer have that power. And the Controlled Drinking zone idea will expire next year. FoRG’s view is that the amount of low-level ASB is simply too high in Richmond. According to independent figures collected by the Make Report (2011), there are around 400 incidents of low level ASB each weekend. The police would welcome support from residents in their effort to retain some power to move offenders on. PW solicited views from the room. Fred Hauptfuhrer said ASB “is a major issue at this time everywhere” and “the most relevant” issue facing residents. Martin Anderson had not noticed the same sort of “swarm of kids” on the Green recently. Adrian Parsons had become used to hearing “a large amount of noise” late at night at the top end of Old Palace Lane: shouts, screams “every night”; he thought they couldn’t be coming from the White Swan pub because they appeared so late. Tony Winslade said we should do what we could to support the police in bringing more control to this issue. PW said he would take forward our objections with the support of the room, which was given, although it was against the background of changes in the structure of Police in West London. Tony W asked for clarity in the many local helpline numbers for reporting things to the police. PW would ask Sgt Jackson to provide the current best number; VH: it would be put on the FoRG website. PW added that anyone could attend the Police Liaison Group meetings (next one on 4 May).
- Rough-sleepers in local doorways – John Lee asked what FoRG’s attitude was to the number of rough-sleepers around The Green. PW said the council had tried to deal with it, and there were various local organisations offering shelter and help. Frances Bouchier observed that a lady with a little tent sleeping on The Green had been offered help but had rejected it, and this was often part of the problem.
- Busking in the town – VH asked how bothered people were by busking in the town. MA: there is “cacophony” along the riverside now. Fred H and Tony W agreed. Maeve Willan thought the busking spot near Tesco and Russell & Bromley particularly bothersome. AND thought there were too many buskers on the riverside. PW said the council are reluctant to do anything about it, particularly where sound is amplified rather than merely acoustic. MA recommended that a ‘zero tolerance’ (ie. no buskers) would probably be needed initially to bring some control; Fred H agreed. VH: we will raise the concern with our local councillors.
- Drones – Bill Newton Dunn noted that the recent news story of a airplane landing at Heathrow being hit apparently by a drone had indicated the collision to have happened “over Richmond”, and wondered if there was any discussion around controlling the risks therein. PW: it is beyond our remit, but there is evidently a risk that authorities are aware of.
- Fountain restoration – under item 5 (accounts), Frances Bouchier noted that in regard to the project for restoring the Greenside fountain, similar restorations had been carried out a) to the fountain in the garden of Queensberry House, and b) to the fountain on the traffic island in front of the Star and Garter at the top of Richmond Hill. In each case, “fountain specialists” had been used (different for each) and, FB suggested, we would do well to consult specialists about the Greenside fountain rather than deal solely with the Council.
- Venue for AGM – VH noted the level of noise from the downstairs bar at the Cricketers was higher than expected; some found it difficult to follow what was being said. Other possible venues would be investigated ahead of next year’s AGM. The White Swan in Old Palace Lane was too expensive, asking for a high fee for the use of their upstairs room. Adrian P to speak to the owner.
- Event parking around The Green – Cmdr Clarke said a) a council representative should normally be on duty to supervise parking activities while an event was in progress; b) he had noticed intrusive noise

generated by a ghetto-blaster on The Green close to some lads playing football; c) following the re-painting of the bollards, there was still one lamp-post near his house which had been under-coated (“red oxide”) but was still not gloss-finished.

- Personal trainers on The Green – VH: the proliferation of personal trainers using the Green as their gym/office had increased noticeably. The council would prefer them to be licensed, but FoRG’s view was that licensing may inadvertently increase the numbers using The Green. The room agreed.
- Parking – PW: a new proposal for development of the Friars Lane Car Park site is expected to come forward in June. The closure of the car park (70 places) would lead to more competition for parking space and increased pressure on parking around The Green. Julian Paxton noted that motorcycles parked in between cars often got in the way, and often they were fast-food delivery bikes from Yuma Sushi. What could be done? PW noted that commercial use of The Green was not allowed. Tony W asked if there’d ever been consideration of a speed limit around The Green; he’d noticed cars speeding along the Portland Terrace side. PW said a 20mph limit had been considered in recent years but that there had been insufficient resources to enforce it. VH: general consensus from previous discussions is that we are not in favour of more speed bumps or chicanes than we already have around The Green. John Lee noted the “blind corner” where Friars Lane meets King Street and The Green, and felt it could be dangerous and perhaps a mirror might help. VH to speak to the Council.
- Old Palace Yard – Fred H said while the bottom end of Old Palace Lane had now been resurfaced (“long overdue”), it was a disgrace that the same attention had not be focused on Old Palace Yard, a “precious place” at the heart of Richmond’s royal heritage. The poor condition of the surface was “an embarrassment to the area”. AND noted that the late Baron van Dedem (Trumpeters House) had promised to provide substantial funds towards this task, but since his death it’s not clear whether those funds will be forthcoming any more. FH: any pressure on the Crown agents would be good.
- And finally, Cmdr Clarke offered thanks to the FoRG Executive Committee for continuing to represent local residents through their time and hard work.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm. Drinks followed.

A total of 24 people attended (including FoRG committee members)

END