

FRIENDS OF WALKDEN GARDEN

16th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday, 3 July 2017

In attendance:

Garth Jones (Chairman), Rob Frier (Vice Chairman), Janette Lavan (Secretary), Gill Jones (Joint Treasurer), Nicola Redman (Joint Treasurer), S Hurst, J Baugh, L Gaulton, B Brotherton, V Richardson, P Evans, L Biscoe, W Rhodes, J Fogg, G Peel, A Sant, A Moran, J Owen, T Mannion, J Mannion, C Gaulton, P Baugh

Apologies:

Kay Meredith, Martin Little

AGENDA

1 Welcome

Garth Jones welcomed everyone to the meeting. He mentioned that there had been a number of projects through the year, but that the Gardens were in need of much maintenance and that feedback from the AGM would be passed on to the Council.

Garth also introduced Sue Hurst and Janette Lavan to the committee

2 Minutes of previous AGM

Distributed and approved

3 Matters arising

The ongoing state of the gardens were discussed at length. Councillor Anstee is to meet with Garth to visit the gardens, but he commented that as the contract with Amey is for a long period, any changes will be limited

3 Annual Reports

a. Chairman – Garth Jones

A tribute was made to Mike Girling, the long term gardener. There is now no permanent gardener for Walkden Gardens; all Trafford's green spaces are to be covered by Amey's team of gardeners, which includes apprentices and overseen by a ranger. There is now an outside contractor who locks/unlocks the gate and this appears to be working satisfactorily. We were assured we would have a team of three gardeners working once a week but this has not been the case. Garth and Susan attended a Parks and Gardens meeting and noted that these criticisms were echoed across the borough. All gardens are receiving equal attention but Garth felt that Walkden Gardens is a prestigious garden with bequests etc, and therefore require more attention.

Amey has key performance indicators but we are unsure as to who is setting these. Mark Saxon from Amey does visit. As Amey is bonus led they are responsive if targets are missed or a Green Flag status is lost. Walkden Gardens has a strong team of volunteers who contribute, but it is felt that they should not be replacing official gardening.

Garth commented that it is still advantageous to remain as a Trafford garden, as the pros outweigh the cons. They provide public liability insurance for volunteers, support and advice, free use of a shed, compost etc, legal support and provide two council members, B Brotherton and J Baugh. A troubleshooter has now been brought in by the Council to oversee new and extra projects.

Garth pointed out that it is very demoralising to see the deteriorating state of the gardens when the volunteers contribute so much and asked the floor what we could improve upon. It was asked whether there is a scheme of work, ie for cutting the hedges. Garth explained that Amey has a winter plan and a summer plan but this is behind schedule. Jane commented that as we are not a partnership we should keep the pressure up.

It was also asked if there is anything done to advertise for more volunteers, perhaps the M33 Facebook site which has over 7000 members. It is felt that articles in the local papers were not very successful.

It was also suggested that the Duke of Edinburgh scheme run by local schools may be advantageous, although this would require supervision.

b. Gardens - Sue Hurst

Sue introduced herself and said that she had been surprised at how much work was done in the background by the committee.

The Tranquil Garden has now been completed. Originally the beds were to be surrounded by a form of gravel called CEDEC, but the cost of this would have reduced the funds quite significantly and the decision was made to turf instead. The turf and the plants are maturing well.

There has been a lot of new planting this year, especially round the Dovecote and the four beds round the monkey puzzle tree. These plants are growing well and look colourful. Thanks were made to Les, Rob and Martin for watering these during the hot weather. There have also been areas of new planting in the main borders, where there is a constant programme of cutting back, weeding and replacing areas.

The next project will be the labyrinth. Funding is now in place and the contractor is to commence shortly.

Thanks were made to the members of the Japanese Garden Society for their time and skill to an exceptional standard. Also to the monthly workday volunteers for their continued commitment, even when lack of maintenance by Amey can be demoralising.

c. Events - Rob Frier

There has been a packed calendar with theatrical events and film nights. Barry Brotherton was thanked for his continued hard work dealing with advertisements, risk assessments etc.

The building of the labyrinth has not yet started but it is felt that this will be a lovely area for relaxation and for children also.

Walkden Gardens have recently won a grant worth £1500 from Trafford and have had donations of £1000 and £2000.

Discussion then turned to the issue of film screenings, in particular the upcoming showing of Magic Mike and whether it was suitable. A showing of Pretty Woman was mentioned, as alcohol was drunk and it was noisy and difficult to usher people out! A few complaints have been made by local residents about the noise. The film company have an advertisement for Magic Mike which includes naked butlers, selling of alcohol etc. It was proposed that we go back to the film company to change the film.

4 Treasurer's Report

The opening balance for the year was £11,550.35, leaving a closing balance of £10,258.93.

The financial year ended slightly down from last year due to items of expenditure such as the purchase of the stone bench. It was agreed that money should be spent on projects which add value to the Gardens rather than maintenance. The biggest fundraiser remains the Christmas event.

Nicola Redman will take over the treasurer's role during 2017.

5 Questions from the floor

None

6 Election of Officers

The following individuals were proposed and seconded to be re-elected existing officers for the next twelve months:

Chairman	Garth Jones
Vice-Chairman	Rob Frier
Treasurer	Nicola Redman
Secretary	Janette Lavan
Other Members	Sue Hurst, Les Gaulton, Gill Jones

Cllr Jane Baugh and Cllr Barry Brotherton were invited to continue attending the committee meeting.

Garth mentioned that there is a space for a further committee member.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm, followed by a very interesting talk by local sculptor Nick Roberson

Appendix to Events:

Rob has contacted the film company who has agreed to change the film to Grease