

FoPP Committee Meeting 2nd December, 2020, 18.30, by Zoom

Present: Carol Cole (CC), Kerry Pickett (KP), Clive Shepherd (CS), Joe McNulty (JM), Rose Jones (RJ), Andy Jeavons (AJ), Dimitri Mehandziski (DM), Beatrice Moreau-Gray (BMG)

Apologies: Mike McGuinness (MM)

1) 'Partnerships' role

With the recent addition of BMG to the committee it was agreed that her role would take the form of 'Partnerships'. BMG expressed her intention to reach out to the wider community and particularly to secondary school students, engaging them through possible music and arts related events. Citing the various stakeholders within the park community, BMG also hopes to cement relationships with these groups on behalf of FoPP with the aim of creating a more 'forceful' park group that can act together to help improve PP. The committee unanimously agreed BMG's role.

Action:

- BMG to contact schools and PP stakeholders

2) Minutes of last meeting 19th October, 2020 and action points

The acceptance of the minutes of the last FoPP general committee meeting 19th October, 2020, was proposed by CC and accepted by all present.

It was acknowledged that the presentation given by St. Peters Cricket Club was a positive one for the park and was approved by the committee.

Action:

- CC to contact MM to inform him of our interest

The photographic Halloween fancy dress competition took place and was a success. Prizes were awarded to the winners of the various categories.

CC's suggestion that FoPP donate £100 to a local food bank was approved by the committee.

3) Minutes of the AGM 14th November, 2020

The acceptance of the minutes of the AGM was proposed by CC and seconded by RJ, and accepted by all others present.

CC thanked CS for his help in making the AGM on Zoom such a success. It was noted that the set-up worked very well, particularly in terms of the question and answer format. It was suggested that we might use this open forum format again.

4) Matters arising from the AGM and action points

CS suggested that the committee select key points from the AGM to follow up with the councillors, thus increasing FoPP's intended impact. The committee agreed that this would be a positive and useful thing to do.

Q.1. related to the possible relocation of Pride. It was made clear by the councillors and council staff that there is no other site available within Brighton to host Pride weekend. It was agreed that we should ensure that members and the general public are made more aware of the social impact awards that FoPP has received towards improvements in PP, through our newsletters and the signs that we are required to display showing projects funded by the awards. In this regard, CC reminded AJ that we must display several signs for the plants we are funding in spring 2021 for the front flower beds and the Dahlia Walk. The significance of the continuing effort of FoPP as mediator between Pride and the general public was also noted.

Action:

- CC to contact Pride CEO Paul Kemp regarding the amount of time the park is unavailable to the general public and to see if phasing of different areas (closed off) might be re-considered

Q.2. was related to parking in the park. CC asked why parking enforcement couldn't be made 24hr instead of the current limited hour's system. It would also deter overnight parking and dwellers. This is worth noting as councillor Hugh-Jones did agree that there is more of an issue in the park when parking is free.

Action:

- The parking enforcement number and other useful numbers to be publicised in the following newsletters, website and FB

Q.3. asked about overnight dwellers in the park. Further to the AGM meeting, evidence suggests that PP is on the Wild Camping Association list as a place to stay overnight. It was agreed it is unacceptable to encourage wild camping in public parks.

Action:

- CC to contact the Wild Camping website to ask them to remove PP as a potential overnight stop for campers

Q.4. asked about management, especially regarding social behaviour within the park and why we no longer seem to have rangers. Whilst it is accepted that there is a ranger, he is rarely seen in the park as he has a wide work area to cover.

Action:

- CC to contact Neil the ranger to invite him to participate in our committee meetings

Q.5. was related to the walled garden that is now under the authority of the Museum's Trust, and why volunteers are no longer allowed to work in the garden. Whilst the garden is no longer officially part of PP it was agreed that the FoPP still had a role to mediate between the volunteers and the Trust.

Action:

- AJ to contact Chris Drake of the Museum's Trust, to seek a meeting between CC and BMG and a member of the Trust to try and resolve the issue of the walled garden.

Q.6. asked about the replacement of the elm trees that had been lost to Dutch Elm Disease (DED). This question also highlighted the 50 bequeathed DED resistant trees that were donated last year. AJ also reported that a new arborist has been appointed by B&HCC from January, 2021, so that we can engage with him to discuss the elms and other varieties of trees, to encourage diversity in the park.

Action:

- CC to contact Peter Bourne to see if he has any information regarding the bequeathed trees

Q.7. asked about larger rubbish bins and BBQs in PP. The council is trialling a recycling scheme as well as investigating whether to ban BBQs.

Action:

- It was noted that FoPP needs to continue to pressure the council to ensure that these trial schemes end with a definitive plan

Q.8. was a response for wilder areas in parts of the park. Alan Griffiths agreed that more could be done to encourage diversity. CC commented that not everybody would want all of the park to be wilded, and there should be a balance between wilded areas and more traditional planted areas and trimmed grass.

Action:

- CC to discuss with Alan Griffiths plans for diversity and whether there is a definitive plan, including the wild flower meadow, for 2021. This will enable FoPP to get more volunteers involved with tree, seed and bulb planting, etc.

5) Anti-social behaviour prevention campaign

The committee intends to create an anti-social behaviour prevention campaign for 2021. CS suggested that as part of the plan we should find a psychologist from one of the local universities, to help us understand behaviour.

Action:

- BMG said she would explore this with the universities

6) Garden manager's report

AJ, Alan Griffiths, Mike Ransom and 'Pete the Pond' are to meet this week to assess the work schedule agreed to start work shortly on the Rotunda Pond. It is envisaged that planters, oxygenating plants and ramps for mini-beasts will be added to the pond to improve the quality of the pond life. The area will be fenced off while work is under way.

Work will also start shortly on the walled garden pond. It is currently fenced off and the fish are being caught to be placed elsewhere until work is finished.

Mushroom compost will arrive this week to start mulching the front flower beds in preparation for new planting in spring.

7) Sussex Gardens Trust's 'Unforgettable Gardens' campaign

It was agreed that the campaign is of interest to FoPP and that we should engage further with it.

Action:

- AJ to contact the organisers to assess what the committee need do next

AOB and next meeting

- 1) Newsletter – CC to complete the next newsletter before Christmas.
- 2) It was agreed that an outdoor event may be planned for Easter according to how far the pandemic is being curbed nationally in 2021.
- 3) BMG suggested a summer outdoor art event in PP that can be organised in conjunction with local schools. She will contact schools to work out the possibility of achieving this.
- 4) AJ suggested a scarecrow competition as a possible event (near bonfire night?). He will contact organisers of similar events and report back at the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 20.15.

The next meeting will be held in January 2021. Tbc via Slack.