

Friends of Garthorne Road Nature Reserve

AGM minutes - 19th July 2017 – Honor Oak Pub, SE23

Welcome and apologies

Present: Ernest Thomason, Ami Evans, Rebecca Woodall, Ben Morris, Jess Kyle (Lewisham), Jon Baggs, Sue Austin, Nick Lee, Shahanara Begum, James Morgan.

Apologies for absence: Chris Andrews

Review of the last year

Since the group was formed a year ago we have agreed a constitution, formed a stable committee and opened a bank account.

Thanks to the efforts of Jess Kyle we secured an award from the Kenneth White Legacy Grant to improve the appearance of the front of the reserve. This has directly funded several improvements:

- We installed a sign for the front of the entrance in a similar style to those found on other local reserves (e.g. Devonshire Road and Burnt Ash Pond). The sign was designed by committee member Rebecca incorporating drawings made by children from Dalmain school.
- The shed at the front of the reserve has been painted by local street artist Butch Gordon.
- Some work will also be carried out to re-align and paint the gates.

We have also been able to open the site more regularly over the last year. Ernie has been instrumental in opening the site once a month throughout the spring and summer, while the family afternoon organised by the committee in July attracted more than 180 visitors.

Constitution

The proposal to amend section J (iii) of the constitution to reduce the number of committee members required for a quorum to three was accepted by majority vote.

Committee

The following offices were confirmed by the AGM:

- Ernest Thomason (Chair)
- Ami Evans (Treasurer)
- Ben Morris (Secretary)

- Rebecca Woodall (Media and communications)

Chris Andrews will remain a member of the committee despite moving to Spain.

The committee are keen to recruit new members who are willing to devote a small amount of spare time to the group. Several AGM attendees expressed an interest in participating and the committee hope that they will confirm their membership once the minutes for the AGM have been distributed.

Priorities for the next year

It was agreed that opening the site on a regular basis should be a priority for next year:

- Ernie has done an excellent job of opening the site on a semi regular basis this year.
- An expanded committee would be able to work towards providing a more consistent and widely publicised opening schedule.
- Care should be taken not to conflict with other local reserves that have regular, well-established open days.
- Given the success of the family afternoon other themed open days could be considered.
- It would be useful to have a standard leaflet\map of the reserve available for this kind of occasion - the Devonshire Road hand-out was cited as an example.

The desire to attract further funding was also discussed as this could support many other initiatives:

- The group should be in a better position to apply for grants now they have established some momentum and a bank account.
- Some research will be required to identify where to apply and how best to frame an application.
- Other fundraising approaches were discussed such as acquiring sponsorship through local businesses or even Network Rail.

More use could be made of the shed at the front of the reserve. It is largely unused, except as occasional storage for one of the forest schools. The interior is currently in a state of some disrepair, but it shouldn't take too much money and effort to clean it up.

The path outside the reserve remains something of an eyesore that could be targeted with future funding. Jess Kyle can find out who in the council is responsible for this area.

AOB

Forest schools

A teacher at Dalmain school has been enquiring about the possibility of setting up a new forest school at the reserve. Jess Kyle was doubtful due concerns over the impact this might

have on a site that already supports two forest schools. These tend to be distributed fairly thinly across reserves in the borough.

Invasive plants

The need to control invasive plants was raised by residents of Beadnell Road who have a particular problem with giant hogweed. The infestation appears to straddle the border of the reserve and Network Rail land so it is not immediately clear who is responsible for controlling it.

Jess Kyle offered to make enquiries to establish the current position.

Open days in 2017

Ernie currently plans to open the site on the current days in the remaining summer season:

- Saturday 29th July
- Saturday 19th August
- Saturday 9th September

Next committee meeting

Once the membership of the committee has been confirmed a meeting will be arranged for September to discuss priorities for the coming year.