

**FRIENDS OF VICTORIA GARDENS**  
**10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**28 July 2017**

1. **Welcome:** Hugh welcomed the attendees and thanked them for coming to our 10<sup>th</sup> AGM held in the park.

Introduction of committee: Hugh Daghish the Chairman, Treasurer Liz Bennett; Secretary Gary Ellison; Membership Sec Diana Pasterfield; and members, Val Daghish, Carol Fowler, Dorothea Tettenborn and Andrew Pasterfield.

2. **Apologies:** Martin Harrison, Jean Hignnett, Carol Davies, Nikki & Michael Bennett, The Wades, Joyce & Harry, Beata
3. **Minutes of last AGM** were approved Actions arising were:
  - a. Dead tree on the far side needs removing - Done
  - b. Cover and lock on tap near sloped entrance is required – Done but since broken.
  - c. Support from Barbara & John Martin to, i) without commitment encourage individuals to join and ii) talk to Phil Davies to see if the tap cover can be accelerated.

#### **4. Chairman's Report.**

The Chairman reiterated the principle aim to recruit as many friends as we could, in order to demonstrate the value local people place on Victoria Gardens, in the belief that a Friends Group could help protect them and steer their fate.

The general principle steering the committee's actions is that the Gardens are a small, sheltered and peaceful place where priority is given to the bowlers, very young children with their parents and those who like to sit quietly. This does not exclude other activities but defines the Friends' emphasis for everyday use.

This year we maintained approximately 104 friends.

Committee has met three times in the past year, and using their time and funds raised from subscriptions and donations for the following activities:

- a. Preparations for the annual Neighbourhood Picnic, which was held on a fine day and a great success. It raised £432 - £316 banked after expenses
- b. We have bought three new benches, one with money provided by a grieving family in return for a plaque in remembrance of their young relative who had died. All the decrepit old benches have now been replaced with the new design.

- c. Our “adopt a bed scheme” has flourished and is a very important part of the park’s attraction, with all flower beds in the hands of local people who bring their individual ideas to the planting. The current holders have done a wonderful job which makes a big difference to the gardens. We make up to £50 a year available per bed for the cost of plants with an initial adopter’s allowance of £100.
- d. The central bed has been planted and tended by the Committee and other volunteers and is cut so that small children have a passage to run through.
- e. We have a general clear up on the first Saturday of every month between 10am and 11am at which all are welcome to help.
- f. We have been active participants in the Wirral Parks Forum which speaks for us in the bigger interactions with the Council. We consult with Martin Harrison (\*Ashton Gardens) and Peter Ryan (Coronation Gardens).
- g. The Secretary maintains the website which shows commitment as well as being informative. This has been running since 2010.
- h. We enjoy a good relationship with the Parks Department officers who have generally responded well to maintenance points. We would like to acknowledge thanks to the gardeners who do a very good job on lawns, ivy, hedges, and take away our waste from the clear-ups. Member said number of gardeners down from 45 to 12 Chairman requested AGM support thanking the gardeners – *proposal approved.*                    **Action:** Chairman
- i. We have an annual meeting in the park with officers to run through our suggestions.
- j. The committee welcomes any suggestion on which to spend funds.
- k. The park was awarded the Green Flag in July 2014, and again in subsequent years. The result of short notice inspection this year was another award. The Green Flag is a recognition that the park is serving the community well. For us, this was a means of getting improvements to the park made by the Council which might not otherwise have happened: paving re-laid (removing trip hazards, the bowlers’ lavatories and our notice board replaced when it was damaged by storms; a large welcome sign on the corner of South Parade, masonry repaired, bowling green boards replaced and painted, pavilion roof floor and doors replaced. The award also recognizes the excellent work done by Council gardeners, and by the Friends: money, gifts, time and concern, for the Gardens’ upkeep and use which I describe below. The Green Flag is prized by the Council and we hope this means they are less likely to think of alternative uses for the land. The inspectors return every year to check that Victoria Gardens are still worthy of the Green Flag keeps everyone on their toes.

- I. We have had some vandalism but also some firm police action against alcohol consumption in the park. We quickly clear up the mess and report it to the police and to the Parks Department. In this way the police take action if the problem persists. We sought police guidance on anti-vandal measures last year but the Council was not supportive of them. If you ever see any criminal damage, under-age drinking or anti-social behavior call Merseyside Police on 101 and mail the incident number and brief description to [enquiry@fvg.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@fvg.org.uk), so that we can log it.

**5. Treasurer and Membership Sec Report.**

- a. The Treasurer presented the accounts.
- b. Closing account 30<sup>th</sup> April 2018
  - i. Income £1,448 – subscriptions/donations and £700 donated for a Bench
  - ii. Expenditure – £617 on garden improvement/maintenance, picnic costs, donation of £50 to Wirral Parks Forum and administration expenses
  - iii. Account balance - £3,396 (£1000.00 reserved)

c. Over 9 years ....

Our income has been £6,526 raised by the Friends and £6,609 from a legacy in 2015 - £13,135 from the community for the gardens

We have spent the money as follows:

£265 on admin, mainly the hire of this hall for previous AGMs - just 2.7% of expenditure

£1540 on the picnics – donations to the bowlers, banners, bunting, insurance

£4,945 on the gardens – 4 benches, plants, maintenance, plaques and gardening hand tools

£2,915 on the pavilion kitchen refurbishment in 2016-17, thanks to the legacy.

In all, £9,665 spent on improving the gardens and amenities.

The rest, £3,396 was in the bank on 30 April.

We have since spent £1650 on three new benches, and reimbursed the bench donor with £150, the benches costing less than anticipated at £550 each; plus £150 on plants, £50 on plaques for benches, £23 on admin, £25 on voucher for auditor. With £318 in subs received we have £1665 in the bank - £665 to spend

- d. The Treasurer thanked the auditor Peter McElevy (16/6) and proposed providing vouchers as a gift – *proposal approved - £25 voucher.*
- e. Future expenditure – Liability insurance for picnic ~£62, plants etc. All the major items have been completed with last of the old benches replaced.
- f. Subscriptions were approved for next year 2016/17 – staying at £3 and £5 for a household. Maintained prices – *proposal approved.*

- g. 94 members have renewed subscriptions, plus 10 bowlers; and the Nursery has honorary membership. We still have around 104 Friends. Chairman requested all attendees help recruit new friends.

**Action: ALL**

- 6. **Parks Department Update.** The Parks Department are still working under considerable budget cuts. We always say that the Council must not rely on Friends groups but manage parks properly on their own; and they have been very good at this. We do, however, add value, not least by telling them what they need to do. Recognition recorded that the workers do a great job and cover six parks in all.

## 7. Achievements Summary

- a. We have raised or been given £13,135 and spent **£11,289** on the Gardens: plants, benches, tools, new kitchen, taps and annual picnics. We have had donations in kind, cakes, raffle prizes, etc from people for the picnic.
- b. People, not just the committee, have given their time – working on the flower beds, clearing up, putting on the picnic.
- c. The committee keeps a close eye and reports dilapidation and damage to the authorities and it organises events – time spent on the gardens.
- d. Around 104 Friends show concern for their continuing wellbeing and appreciation for the amenity.

Money, gifts, time, concern - from the community - for the gardens' upkeep and use. This demonstrates a community commitment to the gardens which must help preserve and improve them. The result has been improvements to the gardens and greater use by the community. None of this - money, gifts, time or vigilance - would have happened without the Friends

## 8. The future

As we look ahead we want to

- a. Hold another "Neighbourhood Picnic" on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September from 12 to 3pm, with spare day Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup>, aimed at the local people. You can help by
  - i. Coming with your picnic and bringing others
  - ii. Donating a cake, or garden produce for sale
  - iii. Donating raffle prizes – the Chairman proposed to have fewer raffle prizes. One alternate suggestion from an AGM attendee was to look at a Tombola – committee to review next meeting.
- b. Continue to encourage adopt a bed and tidying and planting by the community.

- c. Keep in regular touch with Parks department on maintenance and improvements, and seek an annual meeting with officers to discuss maintenance priorities as shown in the new Management Plan
- d. We will develop and improve the new website for the gardens
- e. We will try to increase the number of friends

Attendees were asked to encourage others to join the Friends and to come to the next picnic. The more we have, the more we demonstrate neighbourhood commitment to the Gardens and the better we can defend them against unwelcome developments.

The committee would be grateful for ideas, by note, e-mail or quiet word. If anyone would like to adopt a flower bed, please look at the notice board for details.

**9. Stand down old committee – elect new committee.**

- a. The committee stood down, offered themselves for re-election, and were re-elected.

**10. AOB.**

- a. AGM attendee raised the following bowling matters
- b. Note of thanks
  - i. Kindly raise by Barbara Martin to the committee for their continued efforts
  - ii. By the committee to the Chairman for his dedication and support
- c. It was agreed to be able to co-opt up to 2 people onto the committee per year.
- d. Observations
  - i. Park is a great gift to the community and lovely seeing young children playing happily
  - ii. Bowlers fixing the bowling green wooden borders

11. Next AGM – sometime in June or July 2019 – venue to be confirmed.

The AGM was closed at 14:58

Gary Ellison  
Secretary

Hugh DGLISH  
Chairman