

Minutes of the AGM of the Friends of Sir Joseph Hood Memorial Playing Field

Meeting held at the Pavilion, Sir Joseph Hood Memorial Playing Field, Marina Avenue, Motspur Park on 30th June 2024

Present

M Halsall (Martin, chair)
B McAlister (Bernie, treasurer)
J Oliver (John, secretary)
C Ventom (Caroline, supporter)
R Milligan (Ruth, supporter)

Apologies

Jonna Leigh

1) Martin opened the meeting

2) Martin gave an account of the activities undertaken in the last year and a look ahead to future plans

i) Attempts have been made to work closely with the Council team

This has been more fruitful recently as the renewing of the Green Flag award was being decided (outcome not yet known)

ii) There have been some substantial improvements during the year especially the re-surfacing of the paddling pool and the tennis courts

ii) New bins have been provided. They prevent litter being strewn across the park.

However they are all concentrated in a small area and other parts of the park have no bins.

The Council installed the new bins without communicating with the Friends which was felt to have been a lost opportunity to get some good publicity for both groups

iii) Martin has also attended meetings where Friends' Groups of other parks have got together to share information and best practice

iv) Martin mentioned the visit by Nettie from the RSPB who has written a report on the opportunities for encouraging bird life in the park

v) Martin described the project to construct a walkway through the wooded area of the park

The Council has offered £15k towards the cost (to be spent by May 2026)

Barretts (who are building flats at the Tesco site in Burlington Road) have offered volunteer labour but this would need to be taken up quickly as others are interested too

vi) The Council have budgeted for a drainage project involving drilling thousands of holes to be filled with gravel. Members of committee believe that proper maintenance of the ditches around the field would lead to a big improvement in drainage. Bernie emphasised that the car park area is regularly flooded and this needs to be the focus not the occasional major flood.

vii) Fulham Football club have approached Merton Council to utilise the park for training purposes and offered to refurbish the Pavilion. It was agreed that we needed to find out details of the proposal.

viii) With the current level of resources we were struggling to do more than keep the Hut going and hold monthly litter picks

We need to recruit more people to enable us to do more

One area of particular need is social media/communications

(It was agreed to contact Sara Thorne about the Facebook page)

ix) Contact has been made with the local scouts and there may be areas in which we can work together.

x) Martin praised the volunteers like Ruth and Jonna who keep the park tidy with frequent litter picks

3) The Treasurer presented the accounts for 2023

The Statement of Financial Activities showed a surplus of £2,136.78 for the calendar year 2023

The Balance Sheet showed reserves of £17,209.88 after providing for a payment to the London Borough of Merton (which has since been made)

In the current year the Hut has been operated from an earlier date than previously and has broadly broken even so far. We have had two regular workers Emilia and Lavinia who are very competent.

4) Elections were held for the committee

Chair - Martin nominated by Bernie, seconded by John - was elected unanimously

Treasurer - Bernie nominated by Martin, seconded by John - was elected unanimously

Secretary - John nominated by Caroline, seconded by Ruth - was elected unanimously

5) General Discussion

i) Ruth asked "can there be other meetings besides the AGM?"

It was agreed that there would be meetings every 3 months to which all supporters would be invited. The next one would be in September on a midweek evening.

ii) Bernie requested that conversion to charitable status should be kept on the agenda although at the moment it would be hard to resource the additional regulatory requirements

This was agreed

iii) Bernie reminded the meeting of the Alf Acott award. This was granted to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the playing field. It was last awarded in 2017.

The AGM agreed to making awards to the previous committee members

(Jane, Diane, Sarah, Kate, Caroline, Sophie). First we have to find the trophy.

Caroline recalled that the Friends were originally formed because the paddling pool was threatened with closure.

iv) Caroline described the monthly sampling that takes place in the Beverley Brook to monitor the various species to be found there. Over the 4 years this has been going on the bio-diversity has improved.

v) 2025 is the centenary of the opening of Motspur Park railway station which lead to the development of the area. The Friends wish to be closely involved in the project.

vi) Other ideas included:

- sowing wild flower seeds (which can be obtained from the Woodland Trust)
- putting up signs showing the various trees that can be found in the woods

The meeting closed at 3.30pm