

Friends of Queen's Wood AGM 9 July 2024 at Queen's Wood Lodge at 7.00pm

Present: 15 members

1. Introduction Members attending were welcomed and introduced themselves.
2. Apologies Lucy Roots, Alison Watson, Jane and David Warren and Susie Lada, Sarah Graham-Brown, Mike Hacker.
3. Minutes of AGM 2023 Agreed
4. Chair's report. John Dorken said that the wetter weather had been beneficial to the wood although there remained problems because of bare and eroded ground. The Council had suffered from shortage of money and staff which meant that they had made little progress on key issues and the Friends did not always know what was going on. In particular nothing had happened on the paths. There were problems with schools overusing parts of the wood, which were neither organised nor supervised well by the council. We had made our views known to the relevant Cabinet member who had promised a follow-up meeting, but it had not yet taken place.

There had been a changing of the guard in the committee with Lucy Roots and Jane Warren moving on and with new younger members coming forward to take their place.

Ros Abrams asked what the position was about the streams. John explained that the council was still committed to take action to protect houses in Wood Vale from flooding but, despite pressure on them, they had not shared any plans with the Friends to take the place of the scheme which they had withdrawn.

5. Treasurer's Report Michael Johns said membership and income had stayed stable. Expenditure had been lower than the previous year because there had been no major projects, partly because of uncertainty about the council's plans. Reserves stood at nearly £8,800 and we hoped to undertake some surveys or small projects soon.
6. Election of committee Lucy Roots and Jane Warren were retiring from the committee. Laura Dekker had come to the end of her term but was re-elected to the committee. Helen Mabelis who had been co-opted during the year as part of the ecology team and Susie Lada who was taking over as Treasurer were also elected. Michael Johns explained that in addition, Alison Watson was giving up her membership role although she would remain on the committee and a new member was likely to be co-opted shortly.

The Chair proposed a vote of thanks to Lucy and Jane for all their past contributions which was passed unanimously.

7. Election of Chair John Dorken was re-elected.

8. Any other business

The Chair invited questions and comments about the wood.

Ros Abrams said David Bevan had been very unwell but would welcome phone conversations from past contacts.

She also said that there were plans to alter the neighbouring meadow in the Crouch End Open Spaces. Laura Dekker and Helen Mabelis agreed to contact the Chair of CREOS to see if Friends of Queen's Wood could give any support.

Geoff Hunt, supported by many others present, complained that many paths were impassible for months during the winter and asked what could be done. It was suggested that grants might be available for such work and that FQW could launch a crowd-funding campaign. The Chair said that the Council had said they accepted the need to do something and would look into the possibilities but the person recruited to do this had resigned and the Friends were not aware of what they planned to do next. Grants such as lottery funding or grants from the London Mayor and crowd funding were both possibilities but the work was too big for the Friends to do. Jonathan Samuels explained that the Council had to be in the lead because there were health and safety implications of unsafe paths and they had to take responsibility for that.

Mark Cohen asked whether FQW did enough to advertise what it did. The Chair said we held four or five information stalls a year in the wood which were very successful; we also put up posters and included information in the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association newsletters. Helen Mabelis suggested we should circulate notices to local WhatsApp groups. Linda Leroy said she already did this for her block. Mark suggested it might be worth publicising the booklet which included memories of a person who lived in the Lodge. It would be worth contacting the Hornsey Historical Society to see if it was still in print and, if not, whether a reprint was feasible.

The Chair invited members to let the committee have any ideas for future surveys of flora and fauna.

Michael Johns

10 July 2024

