



Friends of Chislehurst Recreation Ground
www.focrg.org.uk

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FRIENDS OF
CHISLEHURST & WALDEN RECREATION GROUNDS (FOCRG)
HELD ON 26th November 2020 by Zoom due to Covid-19**

Attendance	<p>Due to restrictions caused by Covid-19 lockdown, the meeting was held by Zoom with FOCRG committee members only.</p> <p>The Annual Report including financials had been emailed by MailChimp to all Friends Members and put on the FOCRG website prior to the meeting. The meeting's AGM had also been advertised on social media and questions invited.</p>
Apologies	<p>Apologies were received from Matt Male & Rachelle Harte (Committee members) and from Carroll Long (idverde) and Fabio Rossi (FC Elmstead).</p> <p>Clive Richardson left the meeting early.</p>
FOCRG Aims	<p>BA reiterated the aims of the group which remain as valid now as when they were created in 2010.</p> <p>FOCRG has been a registered charity (no. 1163405) since September 2015.</p>
Committee membership	<p>The following committee members stood for re-election and were duly re-elected:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barbara Arora – Chair Julie Covill – Treasurer Alison Stammers – Secretary Mai Bunce – Gardening Club Co-ordinator Rachelle Harte - Events Manager Pia Burbidge – Social Media Manager Ian Douglas – Consultant engineer and general factotum Matt Male – website Clive Richardson – Tennis Club representative <p>BA emphasised that the committee was made up of volunteers who give freely of their time and are very stretched. She appealed for volunteers to help, whether it</p>

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	<p>be expertise in a given area, advice or support in organising or participating in events, or in any other manner.</p> <p>Mattison & Co were reappointed as FOCRG's independent examiner. Barbara thanked Sandra Hipwell for undertaking the annual independent review again this year.</p>
Chair's Report	<p>It was extremely disappointing in our 10th anniversary year, that the events planned for the year, including Chislehurst Rocks, an inaugural Open Air cinema, and our now annual Gingerbread House making event, all had to be cancelled due to covid 19. Coronavirus also put paid to some of our planned work sessions, particularly with cubs and brownies.</p> <p>However, committee members and volunteers continued to do all they could, within the restrictions, to keep the rec looking good with gardening and watering sessions, litter picks and putting up dog poo bags. Social media was used to good effect to communicate with the increased numbers using the rec during the pandemic and children contributed to our covid snake. We continued to seek grant funding for future projects (see below). We also finally saw the installation of two table tennis tables. Once again, we displayed poppies made out of plastic bottles on our Remembrance Wall.</p> <p>The initial compilation of volunteer hours in the annual report omitted 120 hours involved in cancelling Chislehurst Rocks and this will be amended.</p>
Treasurer's Report	<p>JC presented the financial reports and grant funding to date – see financial report.</p> <p>We have less in reserves that previously as a result of a spend of £9551. As at 9th November, we had £1640 in the current account and £17378 in our savings accounts of which £2637 is restricted (£1000 Ecclesiastical grant for a picnic bench and £1637 funding for the table tennis tables which will be retained for repairs, table tennis equipment etc).</p> <p>JC reminded everyone that people can support FOCRG through use of Amazon Smile and Easy Fund Raising and thanked members who are already doing so.</p>
Table Tennis Tables	<p>It was good to see the table tennis tables installed at last. These were generously funded by the Chislehurst Playing Fields Association. Bats and balls are available for use in the Roost for a donation to Focrg.</p> <p>It was agreed that we would look to see if we could find someone to run some table tennis coaching sessions (Action: Julie).</p>

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Tennis Club	<p>Despite the fact that tennis could not be played in the two lockdowns, membership is going well with 170 members. New members are welcome.</p> <p>The club signed a new 10 year lease with LBB earlier this year.</p> <p>The top courts have been sprayed to remove moss.</p> <p>Clive expressed his thanks to the gardening club for planting shrubs by the steps to the lower courts to help stop mud flow into this area.</p>
Playground	<p>This was closed in the first lockdown and some of the swings removed. Although open after the first lockdown and since including during the second lockdown, the swings have not yet been returned and we will be asking when this will happen as there is often a queue of people waiting for them. The playground has been a very popular destination this year.</p> <p>The wheelchair accessible roundabout has failed to function properly on a few occasions, each time necessitating repair. It may be necessary to swap its location with the egg cup spinner.</p>
New benches and picnic tables	<p>Increased use of the Recs during the pandemic raised again the need for more seating. We have submitted an application to LBB for approval a proposal of 4 new benches, two new picnic tables with wheelchair accessibility, and a sheltered seating area. This will be funded by grants. We have already secured grants from Ecclesiastical Insurance (£1000) and, pledged but not yet received from People's Postcode Lottery (£12089) and are seeking the balance from The Chislehurst Society.</p> <p>We welcome applications for memorial benches.</p>
Ditches	<p>We are grateful to the Environment Agency and Thames Water for clearing the ditch in Chislehurst Rec so that the water flows much more cleanly. Idverde continue to dredge it of debris on an occasional basis.</p> <p>We are grateful to id verde for digging out the ditches and linking this to the drainage at the edge of Whytes Wood as it meets Chislehurst Rec. This will help reduce the amount of water and mud flow onto the pitches and paths.</p>
Shade Garden	<p>We continued to work on improving the looped path area. We are grateful to the gardening club who have worked hard on this area this year, including creating a new raised bed and look forward to working again more regularly with 5th Chislehurst cubs when we can.</p> <p>The bug hotel has sadly occasionally been subjected to some vandalism.</p>
Gardening Club	<p>We pay tribute to the work of the gardening club, particularly Mai and Alan who kept going throughout the year, including watering all the planters during the prolonged dry spell.</p>

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	<p>We would certainly like to get more members in 2021.</p> <p>We will ask Friends Forum if there is any way we can use Friends' Forum's combined buying power to reduce the cost of buying plants and tools.</p> <p>Jointly with id verde, we hope to tackle the stretch of snowberry and brambles that is becoming invasive on the edge of Walden Rec – pencilled in for 7th January.</p>
Biodiversity	<p>We were thrilled to get agreement from idverde in the Summer to leave a stretch of Walden Rec unmown in order to start the creation of a bee corridor. This field was once a cow pasture. Initially the area will be left unmown most of the year to see what comes back naturally. Once the returning wild flowers are identified we will seek advice on whether more species should be introduced.</p> <p>The Gardening Club in Chislehurst Rec is increasing the use of hardy and self seeding annuals which are beneficial to pollinators.</p> <p>Hedgehog sightings in Chislehurst Rec have been notified to the Bromley Biodiversity Group survey. The Gardening Club with Chislehurst 5th Cubs are actively encouraging better habitats for both hedgehogs and their food supply (slugs and worms).</p> <p>We continue to use our social media channels to raise awareness of biodiversity issues and inform park users of what they can see in the Recs.</p> <p>Once the Covid restrictions are lifted, we will resume plans for improvements to the Agnes Whyte Bird Sanctuary. Help with species identification and habitat improvement will be much appreciated.</p>
Keep Poop Away campaign	<p>We continue to obtain free bags from Pets at Home (to whom we are very grateful) and put them up on the dispensers for dog walkers to use. We also regularly fill the Tikspac container by the Empress Drive entrance. Sadly, despite this and our banners, we still have some dog walkers who do not clear up after their dogs.</p> <p>We have been offered another Tikspac dispenser which we will ask idverde to instal next to our noticeboard.</p>
Drinking water fountain	<p>The Drinking Water Fountain has been well used. We continue to clean it regularly.</p>
Awards	<p>We were awarded London in Bloom It's Your Neighbourhood level 5 Outstanding for the 4th time. This is judged on community involvement.</p> <p>We also retained our Green Flag status for the 4th successive year.</p>

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	Barbara paid particular tribute to the Gardening Club, very ably led by Mai, for their hard work in helping to achieve this, and thanked Invicta Scouts for allowing a shed (funded by The Chislehurst Society and Friends Forum) to be located in their compound.
Events	
.Chislehurst Rocks	<p>The 10th Chislehurst Rocks sadly had to be cancelled, as did a proposed open air cinema which was planned as a fundraiser for the music festival.</p> <p>It is hoped that Chislehurst Rocks will take place in 2021 and a date has been pencilled in: 26th June 2021.</p>
.Gingerbread House Decorating	<p>In partnership with the Invicta Scout Group, our Gingerbread House decorating session in the scout hut ran in 2019 but we had to cancel the 2020 event. We hope to run one in 2021 on 5th December.</p>
.Food Festival	<p>The Food Festival, run by an outside company and scheduled for September 2020, had to be cancelled. We will contact them to see whether they have any plans for a Food Festival in the rec next year.</p>
.Other proposed events for 2021	<p>Coronavirus restrictions willing, we hope to put on a number of other events in 2021, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our weekly gardening sessions, hopefully with additional volunteers - Occasional work sessions with cubs and brownies - An Easter Egg hunt on Monday, 5th April; - Possibly a dog show <p>We will also look at setting up a trail/treasure hunt for kids.</p> <p>We are hoping the Chislehurst wide Bear Trail installation will take place in 2021 and hope to organise an event around it.</p> <p>We welcome suggestions for other events and also volunteers to help organise and run them.</p>
LBB's Open Space Strategy	<p>LBB is inviting the public, including residents, stakeholders and other interested parties to express their views regarding how open spaces are owned and managed via a consultation open until 7 January 2021. FOCRGR will be responding.</p> <p>“The aim of the Open Space Strategy is to set out priorities and allocate resources across council owned and managed Open Spaces in future years, while at the same time conserving and enhancing them. The aim is to also maximise community benefit and how this may be improved. “</p>

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	https://www.bromley.gov.uk/press/article/1699/open_space_strategy_consultation
Questions from members	<p>Lighting in the Rec – this was raised at our 2019 AGM again. We subsequently asked LBB via ward councillors to investigate the costs. A headline figure we were verbally advised seemed cost prohibitive and we understand LBB does not have funds. We asked for a breakdown and specification so that we could look to obtain grant funding but this has not as yet been received. We are chasing.</p> <p>Planned changes to the use of /opening hours of Roost – There are no planned changes. The hours were extended in 2019 to allow for football club use in the evenings in the winter but there are no plans for any further changes. The uses are limited by planning and again, no plans to change.</p> <p>We passed on a request from members for a path in Walden Rec linking the current path more directly with Victoria Road in front of the container – this is a well walked shortcut and gets muddy. Unfortunately, this was declined as there is a path close by, however, improvements to that path and around the gate were promised.</p>
Physical exercise in the Rec	<p>We continue to support Bootcamp in Chislehurst Rec and were pleased to support Chislehurst Fitness who are now licenced to operate in Walden Recreation Ground.</p> <p>We have supported a request to put on free performance classes in the New Year.</p>