

**MINUTES
of ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
of FRIENDS OF THE HAMPDEN PARK
held on 3 February 2009**

Apologies

Chris Hookham, Nigel Waterson MP, Mrs Hurt, Mrs Stride, Lynn & Gareth Wilkins.

Minutes 2008 Annual General Minutes

Signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record. Proposed: Bryan Renn, Seconded Jess Baker.

Chairman's Report

Welcome this evening to members and Friends and please bear with me if I start with a bit of history.

The Friends of Hampden Park were formed in early 2005 by interested residents. The Chair was taken by Chris Hookham initially. We went through the traumas of the lottery fund sourcing and this is now my second annual report as your Chairman. Where do the years go?

Over the years we have worked closely with the local authority parks department and have co-operated with them and funding park signs and a map, a guide to the park (which was updated and reprinted last year) and the Arboretum. We have funded restoration work on fencing, benching and planting and recently found sponsors to renovate and restore the park war memorial. I'm delighted to invite each and every one of you to the rededication service which will take place at 12noon on Saturday 28th March (please be there a little early as that is the time the service starts).

My personal and particular pleasure is to tell you that the Queen's representative the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex has accepted my invitation to come to the event and be our guest with his lady wife.

We have worked over the years with South Downs College when a group of youngsters designed the renovated water garden, planting the seeds, grew them on and planted out their design. This is an ongoing project. We are working with the parks department this year to plant the old water garden with colourful, tuneful and scented plants to create this as the new sensory area in the park and seating is already in place with the streams creating the babbling brook background.

We have worked again with the Probation Service, having teams of youngsters on community pay back. Also this year a team from the Princes Trust chose the park as their project for the year and have painted the children's play area railings and helped the park contractors planting colourful and scented geranium beds in the area to become the new sensory garden.

In addition, the Friends committee members have set up a working group to liaise with surrounding commercial operations including the café and sports clubs, the parks dept., the College, David Lloyd and Sainsbury's to encourage them to assist with our campaign to keep the park and surrounds clear of litter.

St Andrews School in the Meads as you all know took on, as its winter handicrafts project in 2007, the making of a quantity of nesting boxes for use in the park and these were erected prior to the 2008 nesting season.

The Friends have undertaken funding the Arboretum on the old bowling green site with the theme of the history of trees through the centuries. This is another ongoing project with further planting of bulbs and shrubs planned, as well as changing some of those there which, when they came up, turned out not to be what it said on the packet !

Its prime aim is still for it to be an outdoor history classroom for local school children with educational material, quizzes, etc., provided by the Friends.

We are also hoping to involve local children in raising plants from seeds and/or adopting plugs that they can grow on and then help plant out. This is all aimed at getting the community involved even from a very young age.

For two years the Parkland Infant School has been involved in a Bluebell Dell scheme, planting between 500-1500 bulbs each autumn; they took on a project to grow snowdrops for the park and plant them on a shady bank. In 2008 Hampden Park Infant School took their turn planting over 500 bluebells in a woodland setting. All in all we've had in the region of 300+ children age from 4-18+ working on Friends projects in the park this year.

I try to keep you all informed of social events and park happenings via the newsletter and another initiative for 2009 will be the setting up of a website with ongoing information. This has been designed by students from Ratton School and will now be carried forward and finalised by members of the Friends.

The Friends get involved every year in assisting the Hampden Park Village in Bloom committee with their work in convincing the South and South East in Bloom Judges to regularly award them medals in the annual competition and for the last three years the Friends have themselves received a certificate of Excellence for the work they have done and the interest they have initiated in the young in the area.

Events are run in conjunction with other local groups, one being the RSPB, who find the natural habitat of the park and its abundance of wildlife useful for the Great Garden Bird Watch as well as regular ornithological walks for their members and Friends.

The Friends have formed an umbrella group which is called the Focus Group, to bring together representatives of all park users, companies and sports clubs and hold regular meetings inviting police, Councillors, MP, Leader of the Council and Highways representatives to discuss and analyse problems as and when they arise and hopefully sometimes before they do. To this end the Friends were instigatory in getting the traffic calming installed on the road through to park to ensure motorists remember they share the park with pedestrians and small children.

The Friends have worked with local groups to source funding for restoration of their facilities e.g. the Scout Hut which had been in need of assistance with decoration and security all of which has now been undertaken with the compliments of Tesco and some other local funding sources.

In the Spring of 2009 the Friends are setting up a new initiative with Ratton School Science Dept. whereby an after school club of young scientists will be undertaking, with assistance of Friends committee members, an ecological survey and some experimentation work within the park, culminating in a presentation to the Friends Membership on the work they have undertaken and the benefits experienced. We are hoping to inspire more young scientists.

The current projects the Friends are undertaking have included sourcing grant funding from the Lottery and paying for the improvement, renovation and restoration to park paths to make them wheelchair and push chair friendly. Some of them, particularly in the woodland area of Ham Shaw, are suffering from sinking and subsequent flooding.

Other initiatives include working with the parks department to source funding and encourage expenditure on children's play area equipment which hasn't been replaced for some many years. £100,000 is to be spent this year on this area.

The toilets in the children's area have had to be demolished due to excessive vandalism but the Friends have been able to encourage the Council to renovate and decorate the toilets that are provided in the park adjacent to the Lakeside Café.

The rifle range buildings have also been demolished and two members of your Friends are on the committee to discuss and bring forward various ideas on the future use of the old rifle range field.

The Decoy, as the water feature in the park is known, is as always the main focus of the Friends and the ultimate aim is for this to be completely renovated, partly dredged and planted with reeds and lilies to enable the water to be self cleaning but this will take not only time but a great deal of funding.

However, to date funding has been found for a full Consultant's report on the condition of the water, bed, islands, periphery and dam which has identified work that needs to be scheduled as soon as possible to try to make good many years of non investment. Fingers crossed the Council will be able to find some pennies and the Friends will continue their constant quest to find money for the park.

All in all the Friends are active and working hard for the improvement of the park and the involvement of the community as a whole in their undertakings.

We welcome ideas, input, finance and sponsorship and would be delighted to discuss ideas or initiatives and assist with the way forward.

2009 is a year for hope regarding the Decoy; of achievement regarding the children's play area; of celebration with the rededication service for the war memorial and the visit for this of the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex as guest of the Friends; and unstinting optimism regarding the range of achievements within the Friends capability with a little initiative, hard work, persuasion and enthusiasm.

To further promote the park and the organisations within it, we are hoping to organise a 'Have a Go Day' in the summer, so please watch out for more news on this.

I commend the Friends to you all. I thank you for your unstinting support over the last year and for your letters (I'm just sorry I can't answer all of them).

Lastly but not by any manner least, I thank my committee for taking on the tasks they do, to the volunteer gang for the cakes and elbow grease they contribute to our projects.

Thank you.

If anyone has any questions on my report I shall be happy to answer them. There were no questions.

Treasurer's Report

I am before you again giving the Treasurer's report this year as Bob Jones stood down just before Christmas, as you have been advised, and Hugh, who has kindly agreed to take over as Treasurer, is unfortunately on holiday.

Income

Our membership fees are slightly down on last year but that had been an exceptional year. Grants and donations are similar insofar as, although we didn't have any major grant as per the previous year, we did receive £500 from the major clubs in the park towards the reprinting costs of the park guide; we received £445 from EBC as a grant (we spent this on providing new signage for the park which replicated the map we had produced inside the new guide) and we were delighted to receive members donations of over £100. When I made Parkers Bulbs aware of where their bluebell bulbs were going and who they were being planted by (the schoolchildren) they refunded the cost of the bulbs and gave us a donation towards further work totalling over £352.

You will see the small bank interest shown which is historical from when we had a grant sitting in a deposit account awaiting expenditure, and the sundry income is a fee for a talk the I as Chairman gave to a local ladies group on the work of the Friends. We are delighted that the Fun Day at the Rugby Club, the two Treasure Hunts our Secretary Lindsey organised, the collection at the RSPB evening and the raffle at our last meeting between them raised over £100. All gratefully received.

Expenditure

We have spent money in the park as usual. Over £800 on reproducing the amended park Guide and over £400 for signage. Room hire costs are similar to last year and the other main cost is the computer software which I have referred to in the Chairman's report. Post, etc., is kept at a similar figure and sundry expenses include a present to the Auditor and flowers to contribute to the centenary celebrations of St Mary's Church this year.

The balance at the bank carried forward is over £1,000 which gives us a working figure to ensure we can finance booking the hall and the printing of the newsletters but we are, naturally, constantly asking for donations each year from members to ensure we can continue keeping you as well informed as we hope you feel we do. That is a veiled request for hands deep in pockets please.

We have a bumper year coming up with a major grant from part of the National Lottery called CommunitySpaces to pay for path improvements.

Can I ask please if you have any questions? There were no questions.

Can I ask please if you will adopt the accounts? The accounts were adopted. Proposed by: Fred Lane, seconded by Wendy Renn.

Proposals

There are two proposals to put before the membership this evening.

Proposal from the committee: At present our constitution states

Membership shall be on payment of a specified reasonable registration fee, the amount to be decided from time to time by the membership.

This has not changed from the original £2.

PROPOSAL from your committee that commencing our fifth year that this fee be increased to £5 per person.

All present were in favour of the increase. Agreed unanimously.

Amendment to Constitution

For administrative purposes, to cover holidays and illness, it is proposed that the current constitution is changed with regard to cheque signatories.

Currently it calls for: *signatories to be the Chairman and the Treasurer.*

PROPOSAL from the committee : We have as signatories two of the three officers (e.g. Chairman/ Treasurer/ Secretary). All present were in favour of the amendment.

Election of Committee Members 2009

Chairman	Sandy Boyce-Sharpe	<i>agreed</i>
Hon. Treasurer	Hugh Ball	<i>agreed</i>
Hon. Secretary	Lindsey Gwynne	<i>agreed</i>
Membership Secretary	Carol Hunter	<i>agreed</i>
Committee	Chris Hookham	<i>agreed</i>
	Bryan Renn	<i>agreed</i>
	Peter Birchall	<i>agreed</i>
Social Secretary	Chez Akchich	<i>agreed</i>

All present agreed to the election of these committee members. *After the meeting, Rosey Smith was also co-opted on to the committee.*

First Committee Meeting of new committee to be held 24th March '09.

Any other Business

There was no other business. Refreshments were served, followed by a short but interesting talk by Lionel Jones on his collection of historical postcards of Hampden Park.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm

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Signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.....

Dated