

MINUTES
for **Annual General Meeting**
of the **Friends of the Hampden Park**
held on 5th February 2010

1. Welcome to visitors: The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence: Nigel Waterson MP, Cllr David Tutt, Cllr Mary Pooley, Mayor Greg Szanto , Jonathan Morris (Sussex Downs College) Rosey Smith, Chris Hookham, Mrs Hookham

3. Adoption of Minutes of 2009 AGM

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

4. Chairman's Report

The chairman opened the meeting by welcoming everyone here on this cold, dark evening and confirmed the Friends had been formed 5 years tonight. Talk ranged over the walks and talks with RSPB and the two committee members who ran a talk evening; the ecology club initiated by Ratton (now swiftly follow up by ETC) and the development of the Friends website, again initiated by Ratton and now in the hands of our Webmaster. As this website has all the newsletters for the last 2-3 years it was hoped more people would volunteer to access their newsletter this way in future. It could be viewed on screen in colour and downloaded if required.

September 2009 saw our first K9 event in the park organised by the local Neighbourhood Police and EBC officers. This was a great success and is to be repeated this year, only bigger and better. There will be two arenas, and competitions and demonstrations for dogs, their owners and all the family to enjoy. More information in future newsletters.

The National Children's Day organisers for Eastbourne chose Hampden Park for their event this year and the fields were full of tents, children, toys and games. When I know more details about the event this year I shall put information on the website and in the newsletter.

Once again we gave youngsters in the community ownership by involvement. The students from Parkland Infant School, Hampden Park Infants, ETC and St Andrews in the Meads all planted bluebell dells for us this year. 300+ children from 4-14 planted 2,000 bulbs donated kindly by EBC and Wyevale. Many thanks. The great joy is to see the little faces concentrating on getting the pointed end pointing to the sky when they are putting the bulbs in the prepared ground. Thanks to the volunteer gang, committee and EBC officers for their help plus the park keeper from Wyevale and the local PCSOs who got down on their knees and helped out.

The old children's toilets, long ago vandalised and taken out of use, were finally removed, together with the rifle range buildings that had been the subject of an arson attack. This left more room in the children's play area to place further pieces of equipment financed by the central government grant funding under the Play Pathfinder scheme. £50,000 was spent on Hampden Park.

The Friends managed to obtain their largest grant so far this year when they were awarded £14,500 to upgrade and replace some paths in the park, particularly in Ham Shaw. The work undertaken by this grant money was supplemented by EBC who upgraded and improved other paths in the park at the same time. Great co-operation.

A donation from a member of the Friends has ensured that we will be able to plant a bog garden adjacent to the part with the raised path, to create a colourful and interesting area along the walk.

This achievement inspired Hugh to design a walk in the park, commencing at the Lakeside Café. This is being made available as one of the walks produced by the Eastbourne Society but is already available on our website, together with a map. I'm sure you'll enjoy some aspects of the park that perhaps you didn't know were there. We have a few copies available for you here this evening.

I was away when the judges for the South and South East in Bloom visited the park this year and Bryan kindly stepped in for me on the day and walked and talked with them. I am delighted to advise you that not only did the village gain another silver medal but the Friends, once again, achieved a Certificate of Excellence for our achievements in the park.

I know I spoke last year about our hopes for a new use for the area that used to be the rifle range. There are proposals on the table for covered seating, scented planting, adult exercise/play equipment (swings for the over 14s) and possibly an earth stage in front of the wall. It is hoped we may be able to incorporate a sculpture park for local artists and we were consulted by, and gave a presentation to, the Cultural Strategy Group set up by EBC this year. There is a lot of work to be done to the area, funding to be sourced and decisions to be made regarding the final design. We consulted the students at ETC as to what they would like in the park that wasn't currently available, as well as older members of the community. The discussions are ongoing - more news when I have it.

We have been in talks with parks and gardens department regarding the old sensory garden and the fact that the trees are now so large in that area the plants are not thriving. In addition we've been discussing the planting for the area known as the water garden (although there hasn't been a fountain there for many a year) and it has been decided that with current planting supplemented with bulbs, etc., this will become the new sensory garden. This will be officially opened in the spring.

The highlight of 2009 for me had to be the sourcing of a sponsor for the renovation of the war memorial and the subsequent rededication service in early spring when we welcomed the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex Peter Field together with all the local dignitaries, officers from EBC, the Royal British Legion together with their standards, local cadets, school children, police and most importantly for us our guests who were representatives of families of those commemorated on the memorial. The whole event was extremely successful and those who were able to be there will, I am sure, agree with me, very moving.

Our thanks went to the sponsors, and to Rev Howard John and Fr Robin Tree who conducted the service. And it was so successful that Fr Robin and the PCT agreed to hold a service at the memorial on Remembrance Day and this will now become an annual event at 11am on 11th November. Well done Friends and everyone.

Lots of achievements to look back on in 2009 but let's now look ahead to 2010.

We have prepared a series of social events for you which include a talk on the history of the area; opening of new sections of the park; a family fun day when we hope to reproduce a day representing 100 years ago when a brass band played, people took picnics and children played in the park. We have a series of walks and talks and a quiz night to look forward to and we hope you will all be able to join us at as many as possible

The number of new members joining this last year has fallen and your committee have decided we need to make more residents aware of the work of the Friends. To this end we have managed to get Sainsbury's to offer us the use of their foyer on 20th March. We will be handing out leaflets and telling people about our. However, your committee won't be able to do this by themselves and would like to invite you to offer an hour or so on that Saturday to help the Friends. Another way you could help getting the word around is by passing on your newsletter when you've read it to a neighbour or taking an extra one or two this evening to give to friends. If you'd like to be one of our members that could put a poster up at their gate or dentist, doctor, etc., please let Lindsey know.

I'm delighted to be able to tell you that when the Cabinet were guests of your committee in the park last autumn they advised that a further £47k had been allocated to improve the children's play area in the park and we are hoping to increase the size to incorporate the stream and trees right up to the path alongside the Bowls Club. This will enable seating to be placed in the shade and the children will have bridges to run through and around. It also means we'll have room for more play equipment. Those of you who are able to be in the park after school, at holiday time or during the weekends will know how popular this area is.

Following the work on the paths and Hugh's walk we are seeking funding for more signage boards so that when you are in the woods you know where the café is and when you are in the north of the park you know where to find the loos without having to ask someone. Meetings have taken place between Hugh, Chris and EBC to finalise the design and position of these and advice regarding the grant is expected in the spring. Our Hampden Park Ward Councillors have offered us £500 towards the expenditure from their Devolved Ward Grant.

In addition, I have met with a representative of Southern Rail who has agreed to signpost the park from the railway station at Hampden Park; put one of our interpretation boards at the station in place of the present ESCC general board; and to link us to their website. All useful for helping others enjoy our Hampden Park.

I have had meetings with the Environment Agency regarding the pond and streams in the park and have every hope that they will play an active part (and partially fund) a new wildlife pond and plant reed beds in the feeder stream. Rotton Councillors had offered a grant but I await firm advice.

Your committee has approved an official Friends polo shirt for the summer as modelled this evening. Details of how to obtain one are available in the last newsletter and are on the website. The cost has been negotiated to £7.95 plus p&p which I hope you will agree is competitive. You just ask for the Friends of the Hampden Park official polo shirt and they will know the colour and design.

EBC has received a grant to fund the appointment of a Play Ranger on a three year contract and it will fund equipment and events. The Friends are represented on the committee agreeing a programme of events for all the parks and play areas in the town. More details are available on the EBC website.

The Chairman then went on to commend the work of the committee this year and named them individually explaining their roles and offering grateful thanks. The full committee had agreed for their names to be put forward for a further year.

Finally I would like to congratulate us all that after 5 years of talks, discussions, pleading and begging, EBC's current Cabinet have accepted the case we put to them for renovation of the Decoy Pond and has allocated £60,000 this year to commence the restoration work. No mean commitment considering the financial constraints on everyone.

I'm also delighted to be able to tell you that following our own lottery bid application we heard at Christmas that we have passed Stage 1 of the process for our application to Community Spaces for £49,000. We are currently going through the procedure for Stage 2 and then hopefully full grant funding. Fingers crossed everyone.

As I said earlier, the Environment Agency are considering our application for funding for the feeder stream and we are still endeavouring to source funding from sponsors and grant providers where possible. You will have read in the local paper a week or so ago I am sure about the Bovril fund that I applied for last October/November. No news yet but that is just one of a number of smaller grants that we are constantly applying to, not always successfully, but ten for trying.

However, the overall bill for our renovated pond is estimated to be in the region of £300,000 and, although we are well on the way now to financing the first phases of the work, I would like to seek your approval tonight for the Friends to launch an appeal to the whole of Eastbourne to contribute to turning our polluted pond into Swan Lake.

Being the most popular park in Eastbourne it attracts visitors from all over the area. Hundreds of children enjoy the various sports facilities from tennis, to football, to rugby plus the cubs, scouts, brownies, etc. Older ones in the town attend clubs from David Lloyd to the Bowls; mums and toddlers in buggies meet every week to exercise in the park; walkers, talkers, cyclists and joggers, parents and children, teenagers and twitchers all enjoy Hampden Park. I want to give them all an opportunity to contribute to the work being done.

I'd like to launch an appeal tonight, through the media, and I will ask for your approval to do so during this meeting. Please consider it.

That is the end of my Chairman's report to the Friends of the Hampden Park for this AGM. If I have left anyone out for thanks my sincere apologies.

I humbly submit myself to stand again as your Chairman for 2010.

If anyone has any questions I will be happy to answer them. There were no questions.

5. Treasurer's Report

Accounts have been left with the AGM agenda, etc., on every chair and the Hon Treasurer went through each item. Hugh further pointed out that grant applications are very time consuming and he can only contemplate handling two at a time. If there are any volunteers with knowledge of sourcing grants we'd be grateful to hear from you.

6. Adoption of Audited Annual Accounts

The Accounts were adopted. Proposed: Wendy Renn, Seconded: Peter Bailey

7. Election of Committee for 2008

All members of the committee are willing to stand again. Proposed en bloc Caroline Ansell, second Peter Bailey

Chairman	Sandy Boyce-Sharpe	Peter Birchall
Hon. Treasurer	Hugh Ball	Bryan Renn
Hon. Secretary	Lindsey Gwynne	Rosey Smith
		William Pratt

Membership Secretary Carol Hunter
Committee Chris Hookham Social Secretary Chez Akchick

8. Proposal to launch appeal for pond restoration.

The Friends would like to launch an Eastbourne-wide appeal to raise some more money towards the pond renovation. The works are estimated to cost in the region of £300K, so even after the £60K from EBC and the possible £49K grant from Community Spaces, there is still plenty of room for fundraising.

Mrs Renn asked, 'what exactly is going to happen to the pond?' EBC's Project Plan has not yet been revealed by Parks & Gardens. However, the Friends' preferences include: dredging the centre of the pond, making it suitable for swans again, and depositing silt at the edges to create planting shelves. Plant these shelves with reeds and plants attractive to insects etc to encourage ecological diversity. Secondly, to improve the filtration system for the stream before it reaches the pond. At present, the stream is practically ~ 5 ~ecologically inert; poisoned by run-off from the roads. Hopefully the Environment Agency will fund the building of filtration ponds in this area. During the spring, EBC will start thinning trees and self seeded saplings in the Rose Garden area and on the islands. Leaf litter is one of the pollutants in the pond. Managing the trees will create wildlife habitats, nesting areas etc and open up vistas. Existing nesting areas will be protected and we will aim to eradicate rat habitats. All work will be phased, so that projects can be undertaken as funds become available.

All were in favour of the launch of the appeal.

9. Calendars.

A member of the Friends has offered to co-ordinate the production of a calendar to be sold in aid of the Friends. All members are invited to contribute photographs of Hampden Park through the seasons to the Friends' email address for consideration for inclusion in the calendar. It is hoped that calendars will be available to purchase at events from August.

9. End of 2010 Annual General Meeting and thanks to everyone for attending.

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