

THE FRIENDS OF RICHMOND PARK

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 10.30 am on Saturday 14 April 2018 at the King's House School, 68 King's Road, Richmond, TW10 6ES

Ron Crompton, Chairman, took the chair. Approximately 100 members were in attendance.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from, Geoff Bolton, Peter Burrows-Smith, Nick Coleman, Michael Davison, Richard Gray, Sheila Hamilton, Rachel Hirschler and Sue Lindenberg.

2. Minutes of the 2017 Annual General Meeting

Janet Bostock proposed and Margaret Dangoor seconded the acceptance of the Minutes of the 2017 AGM. The Minutes were duly agreed *nem con*.

3. Annual report and accounts

The Trustees' report had been circulated in advance. David McLaughlin, Treasurer, presented the audited accounts for the year to 31 December 2017, also previously circulated. Hugh Bostock proposed and Chris Haworth seconded the adoption of the accounts, which was agreed *nem con*.

4. Election of Officers

Having already been proposed, and seconded by Florence Mitchell the following were duly elected *en bloc*

Chairman: Ron Crompton
Secretary: Richard Polson
Treasurer: David McLaughlin

5. Election of Trustees

The following people, proposed by Nigel Thomas and seconded by John Savage, were elected as Trustees *en bloc*: Nick Coleman, Mary Davies, Teresa Grafton, Richard Gray, PJ Greeves, Chris Mason, Vivienne Press and Steve Sandham.

The Chairman referred to the death of Douglas Reynolds MBE (see post) who was one of our Vice-Presidents. The remaining Vice-Presidents had a further two years to serve.

6. Appointment of Independent Examiner

The appointment of Feltons was proposed by Max Lankester and seconded by Florence Mitchell and they were duly appointed as Honorary Independent Examiner. The Chairman commented that we were fortunate that the firm was again willing to act for us pro bono and that we were very grateful for this and especially to Richard Rhodes.

7. Chairman's Report

1. The Richmond Park Film was the largest project in 2017. It was launched in April at the Royal Geographical Society in front of 600 people including over 200 schoolchildren. Since then we have been following up the film's messages with a range of actions:
 - A new Tread Lightly leaflet has been widely distributed.
 - The film has won one award and is in the final of the big Charity Film awards next month.
 - A DVD with additional material from the launch has sold over 500 copies, which covers the cost and spreads our message.
 - We have given 50 DVDs to schools and Richard Gray has visited nine of them to show the film to school assemblies and answer questions.
 - We have shown and spoken about it to various local societies, e.g. Mortlake and East Sheen Society, Barnes Film Festival, and to the Kew Society shortly.
 - With YouTube views of 150,000 and London Live transmissions of 270,000 about 400,000 people have seen it.

2. Conservation Projects: 2017 has been a frustrating year for conservation projects.
 - We received over £35k in donations including £20k from Thames Water, and a large surplus from the Visitor Centre. But a proposal for a large project at Pen Ponds was continually delayed owing to TRP's lack of resources and reorganization.
 - So we turned to other projects, including small improvements to the previous Beverley Brook work, the second phase of BB to start this year, part of the Pen Ponds proposal for fencing to protect the shoreline and wildfowl and a deer fence in Pond Plantation.

3. Elsewhere, conservation efforts have had some success: Skylarks had a good year, with 20 breeding pairs now mostly on Crown Field rather than traditional home of Lawn Field. Sand martins had nested for the first time at the nest bank on Pen Pounds built for them six years ago and there was a good migration of toads to spawn, with plans to construct a new pond to help them.

4. Also 2018 saw:
 - Installation of a massive Downstream Defender at Roehampton Gate to filter the water run-off from Roehampton Estate.
 - A Mission Invertebrate snail caravan used to educate school groups and research on ant hills in the Park.
 - Less good news was a new event, the 10 Mile Run, on the rugby/polo field which increases the footprint of sporting events. At the event there was significant intrusion on acid grassland and on Crown Field because of inadequacy of toilet facilities.

5. Campaigning:
 - The St Paul's view campaign was very successful. In February we had confirmation that the Mayor was changing the rules to extend protected views to the GLA boundary. Later in the year came the news that one big development, Olympicopolis, was halving the height of two towers that would have been in the view.

- The Royal Parks change to a public corporation and charity, gives them freedom from direct government control. The new body's objectives give prominence to nature conservation.
6. Deer: We have been less successful in stopping deer harassment, which is escalating and is an accident waiting to happen. TRP are putting up 50 new notices this year and there is talk of imposing fines for feeding deer.
 7. Volunteering: We still have over 200 volunteers involved in a range of activities. One activity has recently finished and another just started. We lost the History Project, which after eight years completed its task of cataloguing and making public the Hearsam Collection, putting over 4,000 records on the database and writing many articles and website posts on the history of the Park. Thanks are due to Rachel Hirschler and Stephen Scott who led it throughout. The new activity is Litter Picking where volunteers adopt one of the 29 areas that have been established. Thanks are due to the leader, Steve Sandham, and to all who participate in the scheme.
 8. The Visitor Centre also celebrated its 10th anniversary with a lunch in Pembroke Lodge for many of the volunteers, including 13 people who have been there since the start.
 9. Also during year, there was great sadness at loss of three stalwarts of the Friends, all of whom will be sorely missed:
 - Wendy Macaulay, one of the two founders in 1961. She was the first Hon Secretary and was heavily involved in early campaigning.
 - Doug Reynolds, Chairman for six years and recent Vice President who had led over 250 walks and given 485 talks for the Friends over 20-25 years.
 - Also Russell Ritchin who suddenly died late in the year, who was a great photographer. He had contributed many photos to the calendar – and indeed it was his idea originally; he was one of the characters of the Park.
 10. Priorities for 2018 are:
 - Tread Lightly campaign: following up on film, there is a lot more we could do.
 - Elm Tree project: almost completed with all 47 trees sponsored, four 'planting completion' events in April/May.
 - Data Protection changes and new website.
 - Organisation resources: we want to bring new people into the group of 25-30 people who run the Friends and are open to new ideas if people want to do them.
 - Volunteering: TRP's volunteering strategy has accepted that it will be decentralised and work with Friends groups. We will need to consider the implications for us.
 - We are likely to have a Ranger scheme in the Park based on a proposal we submitted to TRP. It will involve volunteers interacting with visitors, educating them and trying to lessen problems such as deer harassment. It will require a lot of work to set up and is unlikely to be in place before 2019.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance. Mary Davies referred to the Chairman's ten-year anniversary of dedicated service and the members applauded this achievement. The meeting closed at 12.45 pm.