

## The Friends of Richmond Park Annual General Meeting 2020

Dear Member,

The Friends of Richmond Park traditionally holds its Annual General Meeting in April of each year, which is usually attended in person by up to 100 members. We cancelled the meeting that was planned for April 2020 because of COVID-19 restrictions. Since then we have been considering how best to hold the AGM, report on the Friends' activities and provide a means to respond to questions and concerns from members.

We have reluctantly concluded that a physical meeting of the type held in previous years will not be possible soon. **We therefore plan to hold a 'virtual' meeting using a Zoom video call on Saturday 22 August at 11.00.** We have been using Zoom successfully for Trustee and ad hoc meetings and we would expect that we can have a useful AGM meeting this way.

On the back of this leaflet is the formal notice and agenda of the meeting; on the inside pages is the Trustees' review of the year, which includes updates on planned activities due to COVID 19. The formal Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2019 and the minutes of the AGM held in April 2019 are on the AGM page of our website at [www.frp.org.uk/agm/](http://www.frp.org.uk/agm/)

**If you would like to be on the call, please email the Honorary Secretary, Roger Hillyer at [secretary@frp.org.uk](mailto:secretary@frp.org.uk) by 16 August.** He will keep a list of those wishing to attend and, nearer the time, will send you details of how to access the meeting. Please note that only members can attend and only those on the list will be sent details of how to access the meeting. If the number of members requesting to attend is greater than our usual meetings, we may need to restrict attendance to ensure the technology works efficiently.

Given the nature of the meeting, **we are requesting that members also submit questions or concerns by 16 August to [secretary@frp.org.uk](mailto:secretary@frp.org.uk).**

As usual, the formal business of the meeting should take 15 minutes and the Chairman's summary of the year a further 15 minutes. Following these, we will open the meeting to questions and discussion for an hour or so, starting with the written questions received in advance. The meeting should not last more than an hour and a half.

While this is a different approach to previous years, we trust that, in the circumstances, this is regarded as a reasonable approach. If you have any concerns with this, please do contact me at [chairman@frp.org.uk](mailto:chairman@frp.org.uk).

**Ron Crompton**

Chairman, The Friends of Richmond Park

# Friends of Richmond Park Review of 2019

Last year was a busy one for the Friends! As well as a new website, a year-long Heathrow flight paths campaign, changes to the Visitor Centre and a range of new conservation projects, we also launched our 2020 The Year of the Tree programme in November with the limited-edition Royal Oak prints by Mark Frith. Unfortunately, many of our plans and activities came to a halt in March 2020 due to COVID-19, including all our volunteering activities.

## **New Friends' website and online sales**

The Friends' new website went live in February 2019, with the immediate advantage that we can now accept membership applications and payments online. In October, a shopping page was launched for sales of the 2020 Richmond Park Calendar and, subsequently, the limited-edition Royal Oak prints, which were only available online.

## **Heathrow flights campaign**

The Friends responded in detail to Heathrow's January Airspace and June Expansion consultations and over 400 members responded individually by email. We had good media coverage in the Times, Guardian and ITN News about the effects of noise on wildlife and on mental health and wellbeing, and produced a short video giving the Park's users' views of the proposals for flights over the Park. We also met Heathrow three times to put across the case for protecting the Park and to try to agree on the treatment of the Park in the Heathrow's planning application, but without success. Since then, COVID-19 has meant all Heathrow's plans have been delayed or postponed.

## **Managing the Visitor Centre**

At the beginning of the year, Mary Davies and Liz Hunt stepped down from running the Visitor Centre after many years in the role. Diane Peake now manages the volunteers, and Marilyn Watkinson and Gillian de Beaumont manage the stock and how it is displayed. They have given the Visitor Centre a bright, attractive and spacious new look.

Sales increased by 15%, with more than half by card payment rather than cash. There were excellent sales of the Friends' Calendar, Christmas cards and other merchandise. The Visitor Centre surplus goes towards conservation projects in the Park, which included Beverley Brook, gorse and hawthorn planting and veteran tree protection.

## **Litter picking and conservation of the Park**

The Adopt an Area programme continues to thrive, with around 100 volunteers regularly covering the entire Park, including 20 young people doing the Duke of Edinburgh award. A separate small group of volunteers did a clear up of Beverley Brook in the spring and autumn and worked on various wildlife surveys.

The practical conservation volunteers completed ten years of work clearing rhododendron and other unwanted growth from Pen Ponds Plantation and replacing it with new planting and fencing to create rich wildlife habitats. They also worked on the new gorse enclosures.

## **Discoverers**

Discoverers encourages families with school-aged children to become practically involved in the life and preservation of Richmond Park. New activities in 2019 included butterfly surveying, studying the Park's moths and taking part in a 'Star Count' to study light pollution.

## **Public walks and talks**

Our monthly free public walks and our talks with walks for members continued to be popular and well-attended, particularly the Dawn Chorus and Boxing Day walks. The separate weekly informal bird walks organised by members of the Park's Bird Group attract many Friends' members.

## **Funding conservation projects**

We funded three large and some smaller conservation projects in the Park during the year. The major projects comprised the second stage of the Beverley Brook restoration works; further fencing to protect Pen Ponds Plantation; and gorse and hawthorn planting and fencing. The Beverley Brook work marked the completion of the Friends' eight-year long Ponds & Streams conservation programme.

In addition, we provided smaller donations for the proposed Heritage Centre; the Swan Sanctuary to help their work to protect the swans in the Park; and minor works on Beverley Brook, including a drone survey of the impact of the Phase 1 work.

## **Volunteer Community Rangers (VCRs)**

The Royal Parks started a three-year trial of VCRs in spring 2019 following a scheme originally devised with the Friends. There were over 50 rangers in Richmond and Bushy Parks, with plans to double them in 2020. We and the Friends of Bushy Park continue to be involved. With their highly visible orange uniforms, their role is to educate visitors about the Parks, including about behaviour that is harmful to the Park and its wildlife.

## **Year of the Tree (YOTT)**

The Friends launched its YOTT programme in November, with Sir David Attenborough as its patron. The aim is to give the visitors to the Park a greater appreciation of the importance of trees to the Park's ecology and so encourage visitors to treasure and protect them.

As the campaign's emblem, we commissioned the artist Mark Frith to create a detailed drawing of the Park's Royal Oak, which was unveiled at the launch event. The successful sale of 100 limited edition signed high-quality prints of the drawing raised over £20,000 for tree conservation projects.

Other contributions to YOTT during 2019 included the publication at the launch of the first set of Richmond Park Walks with Remarkable Trees, the opening of the first (Winter) of four seasonal photographic competitions, and the start of a large programme of tree conservation projects, which have continued during COVID 19 restrictions.

# Friends of Richmond Park AGM 2020

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of The Friends of Richmond Park will be held at **11.00am on Saturday 22 August 2020 by Zoom.**

**Please arrive on the call between 10.45 and 10.55 so we can start promptly.**

**Members wishing to attend should email the Honorary Secretary, Roger Hillyer at [secretary@frp.org.uk](mailto:secretary@frp.org.uk) by 16 August, and he will send you details of how to access the call. Questions should also be submitted to the Honorary Secretary by 16 August.**

## Agenda

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the AGM held on 13 April 2019.
3. To receive the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2019.
4. **Election of Officers.** The following have been nominated:

(a) Chairman:	Ron Crompton
(b) Hon Secretary:	Roger Hillyer
(c) Hon Treasurer:	Hugh Deighton
5. **Election of Trustees.** The following have been nominated:  
Janet Bostock, Nick Coleman, Teresa Grafton, Richard Gray, PJ Greeves,  
Chris Mason, Vivienne Press, Steve Sandham.
6. **Patrons.** The following have been nominated to hold office for three years:  
Sir David Attenborough, Baroness Kramer, Dame Jacqueline Wilson.
7. **Vice-Presidents.** The following have been nominated to hold office for three years: Peter Burrows-Smith, Sheila Hamilton, Max Lankester, Richard Polson.
8. Honorary Independent Examiner. Feltons have been nominated.
9. Chairman's summary of 2019
10. **Questions to Trustees and discussion of matters of concern**

The minutes of the last AGM held on 13 April 2019 and the Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2019 and the Trustees' review of 2019 are on the Friends of Richmond Park website at <https://www.frp.org.uk/agm/>.