



## **The Friends of Richmond Park Annual General Meeting 2021**

Dear Member,

This year's AGM will be on Saturday 24 April 2021 at 11.00 am.

We will hold the meeting using Zoom which we have successfully used for last year's AGM and for recent webinars. We are reverting to the usual April timing having held last year's AGM later than usual.

This leaflet has the formal notice and agenda of the meeting and a summary of the Trustees' review of the year. The formal Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020 and the minutes of the AGM held in August 2020 will be on the AGM page of our website at [www.frp.org.uk/agm/](http://www.frp.org.uk/agm/)

**If you would like to attend the meeting, please book a place by using the Eventbrite booking system <https://frp-agm-2021.eventbrite.co.uk>. Questions can be submitted when registering or can be submitted by 17 April by sending an email to the Honorary Secretary, Roger Hillyer at [secretary@frp.org.uk](mailto:secretary@frp.org.uk).**

Given the nature of the meeting, please book your place and submit any questions at least a week in advance of the meeting.

The formal business of the meeting should take 15 minutes and the Chairman's summary of the year a further 15-20 minutes. Following these, we will celebrate the winners of our Year of the Tree Photography Competition Awards, and then we will open the meeting to questions and discussion for an hour or so, starting with the questions received in advance i.e. a total time of up to an hour and a half.

After many years serving as your Chairman, I am not seeking re-election. Roger Hillyer has been proposed as your next Chairman. He is currently our Honorary Secretary and a trustee, has lived in East Sheen for 25 years and is a regular visitor to the Park.

**Ron Crompton**

Chairman, The Friends of Richmond Park

# Friends of Richmond Park Review of 2020

## COVID-19, lockdown and Richmond Park

The year was dominated by COVID-19 and lockdown, which had implications for Richmond Park and for the Friends of Richmond Park. The Royal Parks closed the Park to cars in March and then to cyclists (except under-12s). The roads in the Park, occupied by people strolling and children riding their bikes, became quieter and more family friendly. Many people asked whether some of these features could be retained.

Cyclists and then cars returned later and, with other activities curtailed, many more visitors came to the Park and it was at times overwhelmed. Litter, deer harassment, destruction of wildlife habitats and erosion of the landscape increased enormously. The increase in cyclists also caused problems for pedestrians in crossing the roads and walking safely on shared-use paths.

## COVID, lockdown and the Friends

COVID required either suspensions or restrictions to our volunteer activities. It is a tribute to our team leaders that we were able to continue activities at all. Some volunteers, especially the litter-pickers, continued to work in a personal capacity.

COVID also stopped all public walks and talks from March. To compensate we expanded our online activities focused on Year of the Tree.

## Through traffic and car parking charges

In August, The Royal Parks began a six-month trial of restrictions on through traffic, closing the road on the east side of the Park except for car park access and the Sheen Gate link at all times and the road on the north side at weekends. We welcomed the trial. It meets our charitable objective to protect the peace of the Park and our monitoring suggested big benefits in that regard; also, many visitors like it.

The Royal Parks also consulted on car parking charges in the Park. We supported them as a reasonable way to tackle car parking congestion at weekends, reduce weekday commuter parking and fund traffic-related Park infrastructure. It also gives The Royal Parks income when their finances are under great strain and encourages more non-car travel to the Park. However, we considered that there needs to be some mechanism for reducing the costs for frequent visitors.

## Heathrow

COVID's impact on the aviation industry meant the proposed Heathrow expansion has been delayed and the planning process for a third runway stopped. However, we still face the prospect of re-configured flight paths in the southeast of England with flights directly over Richmond Park. Our campaign against them continues.

## **Year of the Tree**

Our Year of the Tree initiative was intended to be the centrepiece of our 2020 activities and continued to be so. As planned, we launched a second set of printed 'Walks with Remarkable Trees', produced online our free 'Tree of the Month' series for children, and ran three of the four seasonal Tree Photography competitions. In addition, we quickly produced a series of short self-guided walks from all the Park's gates, tailored to the then permitted one hour of exercise, and free to download. We also sold over 100 small prints of the Mark Frith Royal Oak drawing. We have extended our Year of the Tree into 2021, and this includes the postponed spring tree competition.

## **Conservation Projects**

As part of Year of the Tree, the Friends funded three major conservation projects in the Park during the year: £20,000 for veteran tree protection, £6,000 for the planting of fruit trees at various locations and £4,000 for willow/goat willow with a donation from a local family trust. We also provided a further £4,000 funding for other conservation projects.

## **Litter and Adopt-an-Area scheme**

The substantial increase in visitors led to a significant increase in litter. In June 2020, 42 tonnes of litter were collected from the Park, a figure which generated much media attention. We now have about 120 litter-picking volunteers whose work supplementing the Royal Parks contractors was critical in dealing with such a high volume of litter.

## **The Visitor Centre, online sales and Friends' calendar and Christmas cards**

The Visitor Centre had a difficult year, closing in March because of the lockdown and opening again in August with reduced hours and with COVID-19 related procedures. To compensate, we launched an online shop initially selling the Friends' 2021 Calendar and Christmas cards, then extending this to 'click and collect' with a wider range of goods.

The online shop proved to be popular with the calendar and most cards sold out a week before Christmas, when the Visitor Centre had to close again.

## **Members and volunteers**

Membership has continued to increase, this year by 13% to 3,200 members. We think this is because we have become better known and was helped by the increase in visitors. We now have 265 volunteers, an increase of 5% on 2019, largely due to more Adopt-an-Area litter pickers. We thank all our volunteers for their hard work and flexibility during a very difficult year.

# Friends of Richmond Park AGM 2021

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of The Friends of Richmond Park will be held at 11.00 am on Saturday 24 April 2021 by Zoom.

Members wishing to attend should book a place by using the Eventbrite booking system <https://frp-agm-2021.eventbrite.co.uk>.

Questions should be submitted when booking or sent by email to the Honorary Secretary at [secretary@frp.org.uk](mailto:secretary@frp.org.uk) by 17 April.

## Agenda

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the AGM held on 22 August 2020.
3. To receive the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020.
4. **Election of Officers.** The following have been nominated:

(a) Chairman:	Roger Hillyer
(b) Hon Secretary:	Max Lankester
(c) Hon Treasurer:	Hugh Deighton
5. **Election of Trustees.** The following have been nominated:  
Janet Bostock, Nick Coleman, Teresa Grafton, Richard Gray,  
Chris Mason, Vivienne Press, Steve Sandham.
6. **Patron:** Clare Balding has been nominated to hold office for two years.
7. **Vice-President:** Ron Crompton has been nominated to hold office for three years.
8. Honorary Independent Examiner. Feltons have been nominated.
9. Chairman's summary of 2020
10. Tree Photography Competition Awards.
11. **Questions to Trustees and discussion of matters of concern.**

The minutes of the last AGM held on 22 August 2020 and the Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020 are on the Friends of Richmond Park website at <https://www.frp.org.uk/agm/>. The review overleaf is a summary of the Achievements and Performance section of the Annual Report.