

FRIENDS OF ABBEY GARDENS

AGM | 2 October 2010

Salvation Army Hall, Paul Street, London E15

Minutes

Present

Friends of Abbey Gardens	Andreas Lang <i>Chair</i>	Ashley McCormick
	Dasha French <i>Treasurer</i>	Tim Olden
	Lydia Thornley <i>Secretary</i>	Charlie Seber
	Hamish Liddle	Jason Lennon
	Louis French	Elisa Petlicka
	Tim French	Alison Gibson
	Catherine French	Frances from Manor Primary School
	Torange Khonsari	Erwan Guillo Lohan
	Terri	Jen Currier
	Somewhere	Nina Pope

Topics

Introduction Andreas

- | Recap of foundation of Friends of Abbey Gardens

Recap of the year Andreas

- | Events focused on themes around garden: Harvest Festival, wildflower seed planting, tree planting, Open Garden Squares, The Big Lunch
- | Cultural activity on site: Rhyzom workshop involving researchers and students but also open to the public. Press idea from workshop used at Tate workshops and other ideas being developed.
- | Group visits to site including ODA arts strategy people but clear that it is not an Olympics project
- | Decision-making opened-up through monthly group meetings
- | Two emailing lists developed: a newsgroup for active FOAG members and a wider mailing list for events
- | Smaller working groups developed depending on interest
- | Delivery of £45,000 grant: gate; mobile honesty stall; benches; outdoor sink and worktop; grass; wildflowers; trees; materials for compost bins; solar and windpower; various items for shed. Acknowledged in follow-up report that very good work done. Contingency held back for grass remediation
Delivery of the grant was problematic via a group - needed one person in charge

- Hamish employed. Last year, Chris was employed through Somewhere; this year, FOAG became the contractors. Advertised through several channels, about 25 applicants shortlisted to five. Interview panel: Liz Shearer from LB Newham, Nina, Dasha and Lydia. Unanimous decision to appoint Hamish. Applications this year much higher standard, likely to be because offer was to join an established project. Funded by three small grants, sustainability grant and some money from previous year
- Boundary with station: reinstating passageway and boundary to garden. FOAG has asked for fence and raised bed in which to plant a screen. DLR has agreed to fence but ongoing pressure for clarity needed on other elements. Suggestion that Kevin from LB Newham deals with issue including extra remediation if required. Tim agreed to take on contact with DLR engagement officer

2009 Minutes
Lydia

- Brief summary of last year's minutes including aim for FOAG to take a more active role in the running of the garden; Orange Rock Corps work last year with potential to build corporate responsibility involvement and plans to participate in The Big Draw and the feast on the Greenway; formation of interest groups

Garden Club sessions
Hamish

- Garden club sessions on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday - some sessions more popular than others
- Saturday most popular with core of regulars and sporadic attendance by others
- The nature of sessions being come and go as you please, organisation of group activities has been difficult but when possible, they have worked very well
- Low take-up of Tuesday Summer active centres paid for by LB Newham. Terri commented that outreach helpful in introducing the garden and building confidence - older people need calm session
- Manor Primary School sessions have worked very well.
- Thursday session mostly parents with kids - kids enjoy session but limited value for them as organised garden club. Least productive session in terms of looking after the garden. Elisa commented on the value to kids of even small activities - maybe something to build on. Scope to give session more structure
- This year, more regular gardeners have keys to the cabin and can come and garden independently.
- Suggestion from Charlie about storing green tomatoes in shed to ripen indoors
- Dasha commented that the more detail we have about Hamish's sessions and what we want from garden club sessions, the better for fundraising

Alternative evaluation
Dasha

- Comments and suggestions box introduced to enable us to gather our own evaluation of the project with broader scope than the formal Council evaluation

Appointments
Andreas

- | Benefit of positions rotating around FOAG introduced. This year's list expanded to include fundraising and events. Outreach added to the list. Job share agreed as a principle where availability around other commitments is difficult
 - | Clarification of roles: treasurer's role has included many other functions and being main point of contact. Suggested that contact on website expands from current single point of contact to a list pointing enquiries at outreach, events, fundraising etc. Chair's job felt to be easier next year without major grant to manage. Request from Torange for budgets for areas of activity
 - | Appointments proposed and seconded:
Chair: Erwan Giullo Lohan; Deputy Chair: Tim French
[Andreas Lang for handover]
Treasurer: Dasha French
Events Coordinator: Torange Khonsari
Fundraising Coordinators: Alison Gibson and Fiona Pettitt
Secretary: Lydia Thornley
Publicity Coordinator: Alison Gibson
Outreach Coordinator: Ashley McCormick, with Terri as over 50s Ambassador
 - | Six month review and people to raise any difficulties at monthly meetings
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Somewhere's involvement
Nina

- | Overseeing planting plan, fruit trees, wildflowers, honesty stall, appointment of Hamish, WWTHB blog and database and funding advice
- | Official involvement ended; Somewhere still has overview until end of next year. Encouragement to ensure that Council review happens for ongoing plans for the garden. Initial proposal had been two-phase, with whole site seeming daunting at start for small group
- | Recipe section added to plant database - hardly used, encouragement to use more next year
- | Good to see Harvest Festival run well by FOAG
- | Nina would love to see more cooking in the garden based on the little bits we've done together and the huge success of Garry's cooking for the Harvest Festival, perhaps we could offer to cook lunch for whoever comes to Saturday sessions between ourselves now we have facilities on site
- | Nina also wanted to suggest that everyone in the group agrees to do something to bring more people in - no matter how small - it could just be to bring one friend along, this approach would be interesting to try in addition to the established routes (posters/Newham Mag etc.) which are being done really well already
- | Karen's input, via email to Andreas: Recommendation that we should maintain Hamish's time and expertise; more ambitious use of site eg wedding venue, cabin as meeting room with sliding scale of charges [contractual aspects to be checked]
- | Any ideas by members of friends group (such as renting out the cabin space or lending our equipment) should be presented at the monthly meeting or emailed to the group and agreed by the group
- | Comment from Dasha to review and update aims in the constitution for clarity of communication
- | Comment from Andreas that there is scope to amplify cultural use of the garden and develop other uses from members' personal interests/impulse

Planting plan
Hamish

- | Small meeting two weeks ago - Hamish will email list of suggestions and wants to find out what people would like to grow and harvest
 - | General feeling that we should grow more herbs, possibly linked with fundraising in establishing links with local restaurants / cafés
 - | Long-term issue of things that take up a lot of space eg onions
 - | Last year's garden bolder, this year's felt to be patchy. Possible return to more symmetry in some planting
 - | Planning sessions will look at succession planting across the two growing seasons and good yields of popular vegetables
 - | Second planting planning meeting scheduled for Saturday 9 October
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Fundraising
Dasha

- | Cash position currently £3375. Second half of sustainability grant, £1000, to come. £100 due to Jo Cass, florist at harvest festival. Still £2200 to spend from sustainability: includes budget for events (600) and the remaining money due to Hamish (1600) = £2100. £425 still in accounts payable for invoices still to claim including steelworker and underpayment to Stewart Landscape pending discussion of some details. £1600 of unrestricted cash. Tim not yet paid for expenses related to new webcam
 - | Sustainability grant money available until next June
 - | Basic annual budget to be worked out for equipment, netting, seeds, fertiliser
 - | Comment from Nina that Chiltern Seeds might be willing to sponsor us again this year
 - | Agreed to fundraise for big grant to cover £7000 - £6000 for Hamish and £1000 for toilet and sundries. Recommendation from Nina and Torange that we make several applications - three bids recommended for one successful application
 - | Suggestion that we also apply for Go For It grants eg for improving website
 - | Public Liability insurance renewal in November - to be reviewed
 - | Rates to charge groups - suggested at £25 for first hour, then £20 per hour.
 - | Sustainability of garden discussed:
 - Lea Bank Square wants to borrow marquee - possibility to hire out more via Royal Sun Alliance scheme which includes insurance
 - Enquiry from Living medicine who do herb walksThese sorts of possibilities to be passed to Saturday forums for discussion
 - Approach from restaurant to discuss sponsorship; Dasha to find out more
 - | Comment from Jen that entrepreneurship should get going this year
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Any other business

- | Jason suggested providing overalls; Andreas said that question could be raised at a monthly meeting as something to fundraise for
- | Charlie in art film made by a friend of Nina's, to be shown on the upper concourse of Stratford Station