

The Friends of the Scrubs
Registered Charity No. 1187120

Minutes of the sixteenth Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Scrubs (unregistered) and the first Annual General Meeting of The Friends of the Scrubs (registered charity no. 1187120) held via Zoom

At 6pm on Tuesday 20 April 2021

The Chair, Sir Stephen Waley-Cohen, welcomed all the attendees to the meeting and asked for formal approval of minutes of previous meeting previously circulated to all Friends. These were unanimously approved. There were no matters arising. The meeting was then asked to formally approve the dissolution of the Friends of the Scrubs (unregistered charity) – again this was unanimously passed.

The Annual Report documents were referred to. Various existing Trustees reported on specific areas, most of which were outlined in the Annual Report for the year to April 2021 and the Chair expressed his thanks to all my colleagues over the past year for all their efforts and activities – particularly noting the work Faye Thomas did in connection with achieving the ‘alternative access route’ for HS2 from Old Oak Common Lane rather than from Braybrook Street which was available thanks to the work of David Jeffreys and Miriam Shea years before; the commitment of Smita Dave in getting a more sensible and appropriate Biodiversity Master Plan than originally put forward by the consultants, which now omits the pond and the avenue of trees cutting the sports area in half, and includes new trees and meadow/wildflower planting, and will go for further consultation shortly; to Carmel for keeping us in order as Secretary and ensuring we comply with all regulatory and Charity Commission requirements, some of which she outlined; to Miriam Shea for the huge number of meetings of the Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust Committee (WSCT) and multiple other organisations she – often with me or David Jeffreys– has attended and the myriad pages we have had to read, and for helping move the WSCT closer to financial separation from LBHF, including in the upcoming maintenance contract, and also in connection with the prospective development of Linford Christie

Stadium (LCS); and Sarah Johnson for upgrading and managing the website so well and the chat group, and indeed for setting up and organising this meeting; and finally to David Jeffreys who is standing down after many years of tremendous work for FOWWS on all legal matters, not least his successes on HS2, OPDC, TfL, and LCS matters. Miriam spoke movingly in a tribute to his work, and his charm, and David was applauded on-line by all present.

The vote on Trustees took place, very well organised by Sarah Johnson. 111 Zoom accounts took place in the election and all existing Trustees (apart from David Jeffreys who was not standing) were re-elected: Sir Stephen Waley-Cohen; Carmel McLoughlin; Smita Dave; Miriam Shea; Sarah Johnson; Faye Thomas; and we welcome Ben Novak, Jack Perschke and Emma Ranson as new Trustees.

The Chair then introduced our new Honorary Ecological consultant, Dr Tilly Collins, Senior Fellow at Imperial College, who spoke about the ecological diversity on the Scrubs, and answered a number of questions, covering grass types, brambles, trees, and wildlife. Later, we also heard from Cllr Helen Rowbotham, a member of the WSCT, who was standing in for Cllr Alex Sanderson who was indisposed. There was then a long discussion on many of the challenges facing the Scrubs. On the hedging, diverse and divergent views were expressed strongly. All were agreed on the need to protect fragile environments and nesting bird areas in the 'meadow' area but it was clear that there remain strongly held differences of opinion on whether the hedging in-filling and extension represented the best solution. No alternatives, other than voluntary restraint, which had always been respected in previous years, were suggested. It was recognised that the increased footfall due to Covid restrictions, and two very wet winters combined with inadequate path maintenance by LBHF had all had a major impact. Cllr Rowbotham confirmed that LBHF understood the need for better communication on all issues with Friends, through the chat group, which would help us all work together better in future. She also confirmed that the northern and western dead hedging was scheduled for removal after the bird nesting season in July. Other suggestions included proper laying of the hedges to the south and east of the meadow to return the open views which were one of the greatest pleasures on the Scrubs. In a discussion about LCS, there was unanimous opposition to either of the proposed major developments (30,000 sports stadium, or 20,000 indoor entertainment venue), and some support for the enhanced community sports facility, perhaps led or anchored by Imperial

College; there was very strong support for the idea of a lido for year round use, whether as part of such a sports facility, or in its place (neither of which should be detrimental to Thames Valley Harriers or Kensington Dragons), and Cllr Rowbotham agreed that this should be looked into by LBHF.

The meeting finished at 8.00 p.m., with the feeling that most topics had been well covered in the discussion and hopefully looking forward to meeting in person for the next AGM