

**FRIENDS OF EASTCOTE HOUSE GARDENS
QUARTERLY GENERAL MEETING**

MINUTES 11th January 2017

Minutes of the Quarterly General Meeting of the Friends of Eastcote House Gardens held on Wednesday 11th January 2017 at 10.45am at The Stables, EHG.

Present: Lesley Crowcroft (Chairman); Keith Barnard (Treasurer); Rosemary Bucksey; Paul Busby; Joan Butfield; Dennis Cave; Trevor Dixon (Webmaster); Linda Furnell (Deputy Chairman); Chris Groom (President, Eastcote Residents' Association); Jenny Gurdon; Alison Holtrop (observing for ERA) Jon Marx; David Payne (President); Anne Payne; Sue Place, Steve Place (Countryside Conservation); Margaret Ray; Jackie Solomon (Minute Secretary); Karen Spink; Susan Toms (Ruislip, Northwood & Eastcote Local History Society); Ron Voinquel; Andy Weller (Researcher & Archivist); Linda Wells

Apologies for absence: Tony Bucksey; Liz Gambier; Gill Hughes; Jane Neave; Ruth Ryan, Cllr. Catherine Dann, Cllr. Becky Haggard.

MINUTES

1. There being no matters arising, the minutes of the Quarterly General Meeting held on 8 June 2016, previously circulated by e-mail, were approved as a record of the meeting.

2. **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman gave an oral report as follows:

2016 was a fantastic year for FEHG with the biggest honour being the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. London in Bloom Volunteer Awards we gained Level 5 – Outstanding– in "It's Your Neighbourhood" with Gold for "Our Community". In the Local Authority section of London in Bloom, EHG received Gold in the Park of the Year category and Long Meadow Conservation Area achieved gold ; of 41 entries only 8 were awarded gold.

Hillingdon had won gold in the Large Cities category. We kept our Green Flag Status – a national award. The Restoration Project was given a Gold Award by the Green Apple organization –this is an international award.

Plus we had well run events with good results from fundraising, FEHG publications selling well. We recruited new volunteers with the garden projects coming in on time and within budget. From feedback a great deal of customer satisfaction. Difficult to beat in 2017.

3. **Treasurer's Report**

Audited Accounts, 1st May 2015 – 30th April 2016 were received and approved. The Treasurer gave an update on finances and the following points were noted:

Money had been transferred from the Restoration Fund to the General Fund and the General Fund was now run under three heads: HLF projects, Publications and the General Fund. Publications sales had been particularly successful with a balance of c.£4,900 ready to fund re-prints and new titles. The Chairman added that information leaflets which are given away are also funded from this account.

Other items of expenditure from the Heritage Lottery Fund [Restoration Fund], already purchased or planned, included:

- Update of the tool store.
- Display systems for art exhibitions
- Dovecote: a locking display case for archaeological finds
- Blinds for the Stables
- Marking out the footprint of the former Eastcote House with a new Interpretation Board
- EverEdge for the lawn edges in the Walled Garden
- a portable, battery operated pa system

- announcement and directional signage for use in advertising forthcoming events

4. Projects

The chairman reported on projects as follows:-

- The Herb Bed renovation project had worked well with leaflets available for the 2016 Picnic.
- Planting in the former Laurel bed, now the Hazel bed has been completed. The Park Officers working with Nick Porter are clearing the laurel from the rest of the border ready for replanting Autumn 2017.
- The first section of new hedge at the rear of Pamela Gardens has been completed and the next section will be planted in the Autumn of 2017.
- The Prairie Planting project is on-going. The Chairman and Nick Porter had visited Park Lodge Farm in Harefield, acquiring an old plough to use as a centre piece for the prairie garden. Estimates for restoring the plough are in hand and it will be installed on a secure concrete footing. An information board for this area is also planned. Thanks were due to Eastcote Residents' Association for a donation towards the cost of purchasing the grasses.
- Walled garden, after clearing out some of the more thuggish plants, different types of plants will be added this spring.
- Rockery – due for some replanting this spring.
- Chris Groom had led replanting of the two beds at the Field End Road entrance.
- Bulbs have been planted in the beds around the Courtyard.
- The bed between the Driveway and Ha-ha has been tidied and planted with more shrubs, bulbs and polyanthus.

5. Supporters of EHG

It was noted that Joan Butfield had volunteered to assist the Chairman with administration.

6. EHG Reading Group

Jenny Gurdon reported that the group was in its 5th year with meetings now in a regular slot of the 1st Tuesday of the month. As the group met in each others' homes it was probably at capacity and while the library continued its support with reading suggestions its ability to source multiple copies was also a limit on member numbers.

7. Craft Group

Rosemary Bucksey reported as follows:

- The group was coming up to its first anniversary on 2nd February. Meeting three times each month on Tuesdays, the group graduated from meeting in the Gardeners' Cabins to using The Stables. The use of this venue, with good light, space and accessibility is a real asset in growing membership to, currently, 19, recruiting some non-gardeners into EHG's circle of Friends.
- A patchwork cushion project ran very successfully in August 2016 and the group has contributed to London Open House; Tree Dressing and In Voice and Verse by selling craft items, providing Christmas decorations and knitted toys. Results can be seen in the picture gallery on our web page – thanks due to our Webmaster.
- Plans for 2017: running a Craft Group stall at the June Picnic; extending patch working skills to create a lap quilt with a view to raffling this as a fund raiser at the Picnic.
- The Group's "poppy project" commemorating the end of the Great War, 1918 is underway. We are grateful for support from FEHG in covering some of the costs.
- After minute: A working group of: Susan and Philip Toms and Andy Weller had held a preliminary meeting to discuss the local history element of the exhibition. It was agreed that plenty of relevant material was available. Given the time frame further action was postponed and would be dependent on later decisions regarding exhibition space and budget for display materials.

8. Eastcote Horticultural Society Shows

Linda Furnell reported that FEHG had quite swept the board at the shows with many entries taking gold or first prizes. Thanks were due to the Friends who had helped in picking and staging items for show so successfully despite unseasonal weather conditions.

Show dates for 2017: 18th March; 17th June and 9th September

9. Web Site

Trevor Dixon reported that the site continues to get 40–50 hits a day, rising to c.200 before events like the Picnic. Tweaks to content were made regularly, sometimes with surprising results eg. a change requested by Andy Weller prompted an order for 8 copies of a book from Washington, D.C.

10. Community Archive and Publications

Andy Weller reported that:

- AOC's 2016 report on archaeology at EHG had been deposited in the archive
- Eastcote House & Gardens and Secret Eastcote were being reprinted
- Documenting the development of the Gardens and Long Meadow was in planning
- A new book title: "Eastcote Connections" would be available shortly
- Work on the next title: "Eastcote Uncovered" was scheduled for the next two years

11. Countryside Conservation

Steve Place reported that the river was generally clean and in good condition. Work had been undertaken as follows:

- Clearance of bramble, scrub and some seedling trees to open up the ground, leaving some oak seedlings for the future.
- Large Poplar and Alder near the allotment site felled as they had been affected by fungus growth.
- Replacement of riverside path and bridge which had been damaged in floods in summer.
- Back water re-dug after silting up to recover this for wildlife.
- Footbridge re-surfaced with plastic planking.
- A proposal made that LBH install hard surface pathways with eg. stone chippings to replace trodden paths where muddy footfall wore away surrounding vegetation.
- A Butterfly Survey had been carried out which showed some changes but tracking results over a 5 year period was necessary to gauge the position.
- First draft for information boards had been received from LBH.
- Long Meadow would go for a Green Flag Award in 2017.
- Volunteers to join a Bird Watch survey were sought.

12. Fund Raising Projects

Sales

- Calendars –the print run for 2017 sold out, the purchase of the calendars was from the Community Archive account.
- Logs – sales were expected to exceed previous years total
- Second Hand Books –The Chairman proposed that a regular slot for S/H book sales be established, to help increase awareness, possibly once a month. Some dates would combine with a plant sale or coincide with other events. Establishing a pool of volunteers who could help regularly would be helpful.
- Quizzes: Tony Bucksey had organized one on line quiz, one Sweepstake plus the Quiz Night on 29 October 2016. After reviewing Tony's feedback and observations re the Quiz Night it was agreed that the format be retained for 2017 as it had worked very well and thanks were due for all the preparations involved.

13. Events 2017

- March: Plant and book sale
- May: Tree Walk – over-subscribed in 2016 so a repeat planned
- June 3rd: The Picnic and Dog Show – issues with LBH had been resolved, the Chairman and Joan Butfield would undertake planning for 2017
- late June/early July: Archaeology
- September: London Open House and Classic Car Rally
- December 2nd: Tree Dressing
- Competitions: FEHG to enter 'It's Your Neighbourhood' and 'Our Community' again once again, judging takes place 26th June – 14th July.

- School Visits. To better cope with the size of school groups, Paul and Christine Lake will assist in compiling educational packs. Using these should also ensure the teachers take an active role in these events.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at: 12.00pm.