

Minutes of the Friends Eastcote House MAG
Quarterly General Meeting
held at College pavilion on 9th January 2014.

Meeting opened at 8.45pm

1. Present. Lesley Crowcroft, Chris Groom, Keith Barnard, Joan Butfield, Jenny Gurdon, Jane Neave, Linda Furnell, Cllr. David Payne, Marg Bacon, Rob Cousins, Zoe Drewett, Heather Chamberlain, Susan Toms, Steve Place, Sue Place, Rosemary Bucksey, Gerry Edwards.
2. Apologies. Bob Densley, Trevor Dixon, Linda Wells, Ian Murray, Cllr. Catherine Dann, David Bennington, Frances Hawkins, Karen Spink, Ed Fuller, Nick Woodley, Carolyn Morrissey, Gill Hughes, Anne Payne.
3. Minutes of the meeting held Tuesday 3rd September 2013 were approved
4. Matters Arising. Not on the Agenda
 - Further to the item re Waitrose Ruislip and the £308 received, thanks again to Joan Butfield Waitrose Northwood have EHG as one of their subjects for the month of January. If you shop at Waitrose Northwood, please put your token in our pot.

5. Chairman's report.

Having wished everyone a Happy New Year LC summarised 2013 as both exciting and at times frustrating. The HLF process appeared to have taken forever, but the awards, accolades and funding gained were exceptional.

Awards The results of the London in Bloom were as follows:-

It's Your Neighbourhood. Champion of Champions.

Park of the Year Gold Award

Community Garden 2nd Place [Discretionary award from the Worshipful Society of Gardeners]

FEHG also took part in the Hillingdon Show, gaining 2 First Places and a 3rd Place.

From Eastcote Horticultural Soc we were awarded the Banksian Medal for highest points in Horticultural Classes.

Funding Nearly 1.3 million of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

20K from the Mayor of London's Big Green Fund for Long Meadow.

The Restoration Fund now stands at over 14K, the latest addition being £90 from the Christmas Quiz organised by our Quiz Master, Tony Bucksey.

Grants from the Ward Budget-our thanks to the Ward Councillors, £1,200 from the Big Lottery Fund for extra tables, chairs and Gazebos.

We have to ask how can we follow that in 2014?

L.C. gave her congratulations to everyone and asked them to keep up the good work.

6. Projects:-

Restoration time frame.

- Removal of trees along the Ha-ha, in the areas for the new building and the new site for the car park is due to take place in Feb/March before the birds start nesting. The hedge behind the South Wall will also be removed. A new hedge will be planted after the Gardeners' compound is completed. There will be extensive

replanting of trees around the car park. Each tree removed will be replaced by at least one other.

- AOC Archaeology have been appointed, and a draft plan has been issued. Their work will be concentrated on the area of the old house Setting up the site will take place 25/26 of June 2014, with an Open Day on 27th. There will be workshops and other open days as well as the opportunity for volunteers to take part in the dig. Schools and Young People's groups will be invited to take part. More detailed dates to follow. The dig will close 14/15 July 2014
- Both Planning Permission and Listed Building consent has been gained.
- During the first few months of 2014 tenders for the overall work will be sent out, ready for works to begin in August 2014 Those who expressed anxiety that this time scale did not allow for any delay in putting out for tenders were advised they could let Charmian Baker know of their concerns
- Before the work starts AOC will take laser readings of the stables to see what is behind the walls.
- The Ha-ha has been inspected by Owlsworth ijp, specialists in flint stone walls. The construction is a traditional flint stone core with lime mortar filling. The practice of building a Ha-ha with a brick wall faced with flint started during the Victorian era. Before repairs begin, a full investigation of the damage will be carried out, and AOC Archaeology will investigate the foundations to try to estimate the age of the structure.
- **Activity Plan.**
- This is now the most important part of the project, the HLF will be monitoring the progress for the next 5 years. In particular they will be looking at the use being made of the buildings and community involvement. Most of the areas in the fund raising projects below will be included, also training for volunteers, expanding the Volunteer base, and working with other groups.
- FEHG will be joining forces with Rural Activities Garden Centre. West Drayton Road, Hillingdon, UB8 3JZ, which provides employment and volunteering opportunities for residents with extra needs. After the restoration there will be a monthly session at EHG where the home grown fruit, vegetables and plants from RAGC will be on sale. FEHG can also sell their produce at the same time.

6.Supporters of EHG. Jenny Gurdon reported that the December Newsletter had been sent out and that we had gained 2 new members as a result of the Chairman's talks to local groups

7.EHG Book Reading group has met regularly since December 2012.It is a small group of 9 but as it meets in members' homes it is not feasible to enlarge it much more at present. We are most grateful to the staff of Eastcote Library and to Gillian Edwards in particular for their help in sourcing sets of books.

8.Website update. Trevor Dixon.

The website is updated very regularly, with news of forthcoming events and photos of past ones. This may help to explain the number of visitors it receives: most days somewhere between 20 and 50, but occasionally far more than this. There were even 5 on Christmas Day! For the future, we intend to keep an up-to-date progress report

on the Restoration Project and add further pages, with information and resource material.

The Chairman added that much praise is given for the excellence of the web site, including comments from the HLF. In the last 2 days alone 5 people had contacted her via the website.

9. Fund raising Projects, Events.

Picnic 7th June

Joan Butfield reported that preparations were underway and all previous participating groups had been contacted. She appealed for suggestions of organisations she might contact to put an entry on our Advertising Board. Rob Cousins suggested we might use a publicity leaflet and offered to forward the names of companies who had contributed to similar leaflet which he had produced.

Keith Barnard confirmed that he was organising the Tug of War and the Classic Cars. St Lawrence Players are to present a play and the popular Dog Show is to return. The Fire Brigade and the Tai Chi club have also been approached. Jane Neave will organise refreshments in addition to Vintage Teas.

Bat & History walks are to be scheduled.

- **Calendars.** Sales have not been very good this year. The cost of 200 calendars was £532.07. There are 50+ unsold, total sales to date £718.00. It was agreed that LC would investigate the cost of a smaller print run next year with the possibility of supplying only those which were pre ordered.
- **Sale of Logs** Steve Place reported that all wood that had been felled was either sold for firewood or for turning or used as temporary fencing in the garden. As a result £80 had been earned so far, as well as saving the cost of removing it from the site.
- **Sale of Books** Linda Furnell reported that thanks to the number and quality of books which had been donated they had sold well at every event. The use of the stables meant that sales could take place even in wet weather. Storage of the books will be a problem when work begins on this building and after completion when the stables will be used by other groups. L.C suggested that there was space in the decontamination unit which might be available for storage.
- **Sale of Plants** Hanging baskets had sold well last year. L.F. has 580 bedding plants on order for this year, T.D. is raising vegetable seedlings and C.G. has prepared cuttings.

Craft Work Rosemary Bucksey introduced the idea of starting a new group where a variety of craft goods could be produced and eventually sold. She mentioned a wide range of skills from crochet to jam making which could be shared and invited suggestions for others as well as asking for the donation of raw materials for the group. People who are interested should contact Rosemary.

- 10 Countryside Conservation.** Steve and Sue Place outlined the work which had been carried out by this group. The tree survey identified 30 species and 9 veteran trees which have been registered with the Woodland Trust. 50 species of flowering plant

have been found and over 200 butterflies were counted during the butterfly survey. All these results were entered on the website.

This year they hope to extend work on bumblebees and they are conscious that much more remains to be done, e.g. investigations into grasses, invertebrates and birds.

In managing the site the aim is to maintain the balance between grassland and woodland. Encroaching trees and hedges have been cut back. This year the group plan to do work on the river.

Sue has produced an I Spy Chart for Children to use in Long Meadow. This can be used by families or youth groups and it is available on the website and, with support from Hillingdon Green Print, printed copies are also available. They are working on an ecology trail.

11 Future Events.

Gardening and Countryside Conservation session as usual.

Community Picnic 7th June 2014.

Archaeological Dig. 25th June – 15th July

Bat Walk To be arranged

History Walk To be arranged in July.

September Possible fete at the Southbourne Gardens groups, EBL, EHS and 6th Eastcote Scouts and as FEHG will be homeless then we have been asked if we wish to take part.

Invitation to Northwood Hills Independent's day 21st June 2014.

- 11 The Treasurer** reported that the General Account stood at £2610.32 with £38.25 in petty cash. The Restoration fund contains £14294.83

There was no AOB and the meeting closed at. 9.45pm