

**Minutes**

**Present:** Colin Croggon, Sally Croggon, Hamilton Hawksworth, Ron Nicholl, Bob Benge, Rachel Dunne, Anne Clifford, Janice Welsby, Christine Williamson, Wendy Reid, Mike Murnane, Christine Kings, Tim Evans, Vivienne Foxley, Bilquis Mahmood, Euan Mills, Anna O'Sullivan, John O'Sullivan, Diane Bernhardt, Ruth Smyth, Emma Jack, Harry Hewat, Michael Row, Dave Boyes, Katy Andrews, Elizabeth Bayliss, Teddy Sawyer, Ian Rathbone (Chair), Claire Kelly (minutes).

**In attendance:** Bilquis Mahmood (National Grid).

**Apologies:** Francesca Buxton, Barry Buitekant, Deniz Oguzkanli, Jon Aldenton, Kriss Lee, Andrea Sinclair.

**Minutes of the Last AGM:** Agreed as a true record

**Report on the past year**

Ian summarised the issues that had arisen during the past year. Brian Weller the previous secretary had resigned just before Christmas and Ian noted the loss. He had been extremely committed and efficient always ensuring that members of the users group got all the information necessary to fully understand and cover all the important issues. The outgoing committee had agreed to buy a book "Hackney: Modern, Restored, Forgotten, Ignored" 40 Buildings to mark 40 years of the Hackney Society edited by Lisa Rigg and a mug with 'Millfields Forever' written on it as a 'thank you' and to use the AGM as an opportunity to record our thanks to him for his conscientious and hard work. Ian emphasised that the outgoing Millfields Users Group committee had maintained a record of good attendance at meetings throughout the year and generally done a good job. He thanked them for their work.

Ian Rathbone then gave a brief summary of the main issues to have arisen during the year. Firstly the Masterplan which had been time consuming and turbulent with consultations and disagreements, however is likely to end now as a result of budget cuts. All that is likely to move forward is one path across the park which once there is a clear proposal will come to the Users Group for consultation. There is also a proposal for a bridge over to Essex Wharf presumably linked to proposed development on the Wharf as there is no reason to cross there at the moment.

The Masterplan originated largely out of the expressed desire of park users to have a Centre: a ranger base, toilets, place for cricketers to

change etc. and we will have to revisit this original idea in the new financial climate. The Community orchard planned and carried out by the Users Group has been a great success. The National Grid consultation over traffic access which has been another dominant feature of the past year is still ongoing, with Route 4 still being explored and a route through the EDF station.

More recently Essex Wharf arose as an issue with dense development of flats being proposed. Planning permission has now been granted and the only outstanding issue is the height of the proposed blocks. Ian reported on attending a Public Enquiry in January at Waltham Forest Town Hall to argue that the height and aspect of the development would deeply impact the landscape of the park. He pointed out this was the thin end of a huge wedge of development of flats along Leabridge Road on the Waltham Forest side which would impact our infrastructure.

During the year the playground has had some repairs but the toilets are still kept locked and an initial approach to the council for the Users Group to run the kiosk and keep the toilets open has been rejected as they require a 'proper procurement process'.

Ian reported that most people are fairly happy with the park as a minimally developed 'pastoral' environment and are not too sad to see the Master plan slip away preferring small changes around repair and upkeep.

However Ian emphasised that a Users Group is important and if there is a Users Group in place the parks department will work with them. The political changes afoot ('Big Society' and 'localism') may indeed be a chance for the Users Group to take more control over the park. He wished the new committee well in their endeavours and reminded people he was still around giving support where appropriate.

## **Finance Report**

Claire reported that during the year the Users Group had raised £340 in donations and £1408.05 in grants, £908.05 of which was restricted to advertising and refreshments aimed at increasing the membership and had to be spent by 31/03/11. In addition around £350 had been donated to the group by the former User Group specifically for the summer Fun Day. Spend during the year was £10 on a plaque to the memory of Gerald Laufer a former committed park volunteer (Clapton Pond Neighbourhood Group paid the rest of the cost and the parks dept had contributed and installed the bench) and £525 had been spent on the Fun day (Total cost £875). Of the committed funds £500 had been set aside to spend on a web site and the rest had been

mostly committed to the costs of the current AGM. A request for a donation was received from the floor and this was directed to the first committee meeting.

### **Change of Name**

The Committee had agreed to recommend that the name of the group should be changed from 'Millfields Users Group' to 'Friends of Millfields'. Ian outlined the issue. In favour of the proposal was the desire not to be called 'MUGS' and against was the fact that the Users Group title brought the group in line with other Users Groups in the borough. A vote was almost unanimously in favour of maintaining the name of Millfields Users Group.

### **Elections**

The following 14 individuals were nominated as potential committee members:

Harry Hewat  
Claire Kelly  
Michael Murnane  
Barry Buitekant  
Andrea Sinclair  
Diane Bernhart  
Michael Row  
Tim Evans  
Bob Bengé  
Jon Aldenton  
Emma Jack  
Wendy Reid  
Vivienne Foxley  
Ruth Smyth

This went to a vote and a secret ballot was held.

After the votes had been counted, the Committee elected was:

Harry Hewat  
Claire Kelly  
Barry Buitekant  
Andrea Sinclair  
Diane Bernhart  
Michael Row  
Tim Evans  
Bob Bengé  
Jon Aldenton  
Emma Jack  
Vivienne Foxley  
Ruth Smyth

**Presentation: Biodiversity and natural life in Millfields Park.**

Due to the illness of Kate Mitchell, LBH Biodiversity officer, a presentation was made at short notice by Tim Evans, based on the London Wildlife Trust habitat report and recommendations. As the meeting was now running late, the presentation was limited to what is now present on Millfields, principles of habitat creation, the park's habitat types and general techniques for their maintenance. There was not time to present and discuss the specific proposals, and it was agreed to do that at the next group meeting.

Meeting closed around 9.30 pm