

FRIENDS OF EASTCOTE HOUSE GARDENS

MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

Minutes of the Quarterly General meeting held on the 9th July 2018 in the Stables at Eastcote House Gardens at 11.25.am.

APOLOGIES: Cllr. Ian Edwards, Linda Wells, Tony and Rosemary Bucksey, Jenny Gurdon, Dennis Cave; Gerry Edwards

PRESENT: Steve Place (Chairman) ; Sue Place (Deputy Chairman) ; Lesley Crowcroft (Head Gardener); Keith `Barnard (Treasurer); Joan Butfield (Minutes Secretary); David Payne (President); Anne Payne; Andy Weller (Researcher & Archivist); John Marx; Liz Gambler; Malcolm Penny; Tony Swan; Heather Chamberlain; Alison Holtorp (Chairman, Eastcote Residents' Association); Catherine Dann (Vice President); Susan Toms (RN&ELHS); Chris Groom; Gill Hughes; Dinah Clements; Margaret Ray; Cllr.Becky Hagger; Jane Neave; Sue Smales; Trevor Dixon.

1. NEW CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

SP said he will seek to achieve a balance between continuity and change.

Continuity - maintaining the gardens to gold standard, supported by fund raising to buy new plants and materials for the gardens and refreshments to keep the gardeners' working.

Change - continuing the process of sharing the workload more evenly which will mean more delegation both within the committee and the Friends' membership.

2. Minutes of 6th December 2017 QGM & information circulated in lieu of cancelled 1st March 2018 QGM. No questions

3. GROUP/EVENT/ACTIVITY REPORTS

KB stated:

We have two accounts general account and a savings account.

The general account includes a publications element and craft group element. The publication element also includes the archive publications which have always been self financing.

The balance of the general fund is £4,271.02.

The publications balance stands at £5,387.03 and the Craft Group currently have £420.90p.

The HLF money transferred to the general account has all been spent apart from a very small amount (£30) which is in the general fund.

The total balance of the general account currently stands at £10,339.00.

Following the transfer at the end of the financial year of £2,500. to the savings account the balance of that account stands at £2,500.00

Craft Group

The Craft Group membership stands at 20; average attendance over the last 3 months has been 14.

At Joan's request the group produced 30 items in all for the children's card game at the picnic, whilst producing items for sale on the Craft Stall, running a lottery for a quilt donated by a descendant of the Hawtrey family, and continuing to work on four banners for "Eastcote Remembers" in November.

The quilt was won and the lottery raised £118. for the upkeep of the gardens.

The craft stall raised £97.90 which will be added to the Craft Group funds, and thanks are due to all those who helped the day go so well.

Craft Group members also brought in items for the raffle and tombola, and regularly donate books for the second-hand book sales which are held every other month.

The Craft Group will now start planning for Open House in September.

DP congratulated the group on their money raising events.

Book Reading

In the absence of JG GH presented the following report.

The Book Group has continued to meet regularly on the first Tuesday of each month. We have read a variety of books mainly, but not exclusively, fiction. So far we have found plenty to discuss about each book and always with a variety of opinions.

As always we are indebted to the staff at Eastcote Library for their advice and help in organising the sets of books for us. The number of members in the group has to be restricted because the group meet in each others' houses and also are limited to the number of books the library can supply.

Real Ale Club

See attachment read by KB as TB unable to attend meeting due to being on holiday.

Picnic and Other Events

LC said that the 2018 picnic was a very successful event. The weather was kind to us. The new attractions were very successful. Ken Carter's Jazz group, Jazzology, The Ferret Racing and Harefield Dogs' Trust with their Doggy Dash. Old favourites, the Scouts climbing wall and Children's Corner with pin the tail on the donkey and bash the rat were very popular.

The Dog Show raised £81. which was donated to Harefield Dogs' Trust. The total raised for FEHG funds was £1,708.59.

Paul and Christine Lake were very successful in collecting gifts for the raffle and tombola and running the tombola stall; a big thank you to them for taking this task over. Also to Joan Butfield for organizing such a good and varied selection of stalls.

The formula of keeping the picnic as commercial free as possible is still working.

Next year, the picnic will be organised by Chris Groom and Keith Barnard. Lesley Crowcroft having arranged nine picnics to date is taking a break

Second hand book/plant sales

We have held two in the yard so far this year, April and June. Both well attended raising approximately £764.00. We have regular attendees for both sales.

EHS Show

At the EHS Spring show on the 17th March, the FEHG entered 28 exhibits including many daffodils. FEHG achieved 8 first places, 9 second places, 6 third places and 1 commended. They were also awarded the W.E.Evans Memorial Cup for the best exhibit in class 22 (3 vases of 3 daffodils different cultivars) and a Gold Medal Diploma for the highest points in Horticulture section B.

At the EHS summer show on 16th June the FEHG entered 22 exhibits and achieved 9 first places, 7 second places and 2 third places. They were also awarded a Best Exhibit rosette for a Class 1 Rose, a Silver medal Diploma for Best Rose Bloom and a Bronze medal for the highest points in the roses class.

It has been a challenging time for the shows this year as the daffodils for the spring show were late flowering and then the roses for the summer show were over early.

Sue Place thanked all the volunteers for picking and staging the flowers.

Website

TD said that interest in the website remains fairly constant at about 60 individual hits per day. This was considerably higher in the run up to the picnic. Thro' the website requests have come for the taking of wedding photos in the grounds. These have been passed onto the Council. It is not the Council policy to charge for the photos.

AW thanks TD for looking after his website

Recent Gardening Activity

LC reported that the team of gardeners, work hard to keep all areas looking good. Some are learning new skills along the way. The prairie bed is now finished.

Work will continue to enhance the boundaries, shrub replanting along the Pamela Gardens boundary and the rest of the High Road boundary with the habitat piles and ferneries.

LC said that a resident had been dumping garden rubbish over their fence into the gardens. AW asked if it would be helpful to put a message on "Next Door" stating that the Council offer a free weekly gardening collection. GH said that the regulations relating to trees hanging over gardens should be included and clarified.

LC said that the alpine beds in the Gardeners' Yard have been much admired by visitors to the book/plant sales. The one complaint was that they can only be seen when we are open for sales. Therefore, the committee has agreed that an alpine garden outside the east gate of the yard would be a good project. This has also been approved by LBH. We have a lot of masonry lying around from EH; this will be used to construct the bed. It is hoped to carry out this work during the winter months.

EHG is included in the London in Bloom Tour taking place on Wednesday 11th July. We are still waiting for a date for the individual judging.

Forthcoming Events for 2018

Open House Sunday 23rd September

As usual there will be a Classic Car Rally by popular demand Jazzology will entertain. There will be a s/h book and plant sale held in the Gardeners' yard. If there is enough fruit from the Orchard we will also be running an apple celebration.

Tuesday October 2nd at 2pm

A showing of archive films entitled "A Hillingdon Panorama: The Making of a Borough". This is a free event but booking is essential.

November 3rd until November 17th "Eastcote Remembers".

Funds raised from this event will be donated to the Eastcote British Legion

Two weeks of concerts and talks with an exhibition to commemorate the end of WW1. Further details to follow.

Saturday 1st December at 1.30pm Tree Dressing

Paul and Christine Lake will be organising this event.

Countryside Conservation

SP informed that the monthly work parties have been well supported enabling us to build some more dead hedges to protect the meadow from intrusion by motorised vehicles. In the river, litter, fallen and over hanging branches, and balsam have been removed. The welcome boards have been installed in the meadow.

Colne Valley Park

DP stated still negotiating HS2 and the London Airport expansion and trying to get the best litigation for loss of land, bio diversity, etc.

Fortunate they have money from their HLF bid £1.7million for the park and able to make use of other monies from South Bucks Council. Two and a half million. Great boost to finances so can do more projects with in the park. Meeting in 2 weeks to decide order of projects.

10th Anniversary Picnic

SP said that the 10th anniversary picnic held on 21st June was attended by 25 volunteers/friends. The weather was fine and bright which enabled the use of the patio area of the stables.

CG spoke about how the FEHG came about back in 2008 and its story to date. He then proposed a toast to all those involved in the restoration project and presented Lesley with a personalised 'thank you' card.

Publications and Archives

AW said our publications have raised the profile of Eastcote House Gardens whilst informing about Eastcote's rich history. This is important for both long-standing locals and newcomers to the area. I continue to ship copies overseas.

The Black Horse Story sold out sometime ago. Recent contacts from Canadian and US descendants of former licensees have added to information about who ran the pub in the 1860's and 1870's. I am looking at the plausibility of a further reprint. The Eastcote House and Gardens and Secret Eastcote books have been reprinted and Secret Eastcote is to be reprinted for the 3rd time. The Haydon Hall book has sold very well and is making money. The Eastcote Connections book issued last summer is just 4 copies short of covering our printing costs. We have now more than comfortably exceeded 1,060 cash sales of our publications.

The delay in receiving the final report from AOC Archaeology has prevented completion of the book Eastcote House Uncovered: including Long Meadow. The archive has progressed. New material has been added during my research and local residents have contributed information. I have also requests for loans and in return received contributions. There is a lot of material still to be archived including the saving of the Gardens.

Finally, I have donated my old laptop as a resource for future use. PowerPoint has been added in case we need to give presentations.

Sue P congratulated AW on his great job.

4. AOB

Sue Smales asked when the picture hanging system would be installed in the Stables. Lesley Crowcroft replied that it was already installed, but is very discreet and does not show at all

The subject of hosting corporate volunteer days was raised by TS. Asking if we would have a group from Price Waterhouse Cooper again SP replied that hosting corporate groups was an occasional occurrence. The Scouts also come to help. The abilities of any group needs to be assessed to see if it is worthwhile having them. LC added that the hosting of groups from the National Citizen scheme will not take place in the future.

I

SP as Chairman, summed up the meeting by commending the high quality events, funds raised through publications and the engagement of the volunteers but on top of this is the core activity of the gardening . We have done well.

The meeting closed at 12.15

