



Members/ visitors to our AGM:

FoFG has no chairman and the duties are shared between the committee members. To bring you up to date with the committee; Peter Lane volunteered and was co-opted to become a committee member during the year. He is very welcome (and prepared to stand again).

At the completion of our 11th year we are, in some ways, into a different phase of our existence. That is to maintain and keep up the tremendous start we have had and the improvements to the green that have been made. But we can be doing more with more ideas and volunteers.

A few general points

We have revised and updated the FOFG web site on www.fortunegreen.org.uk. Please have a look and give us feedback and ideas for how we can present ourselves better and to a wider audience.

There is an ongoing relationship with the Parks and Events teams at Camden Council and we find them helpful and willing to meet and listen to our comments and concerns. This doesn't always result in actions and results but they are, as always, working within tight constraints. That said, the wire trip fence has been repaired; three trees have been recently planted, the grass was reseeded and top dressed (not very well which they admit) and rubbish bin collection frequency has been increased. We have met them and their volunteer project partners about repairing and repainting the original railings along Fortune Green Road. No takers yet.

Membership

The financial situation is stable and about where we want to be. Sponsorship is an ongoing job and would be helped enormously by an increase in membership subscriptions meaning less reliance on hard pressured local businesses. Now we are not advocating an increase in the £5 fee per year for individual and family membership but for a push to increase the number of members. This has declined of late and we now only have 150 paid up members. If every member took on the responsibility of recruiting a friend or neighbour that would be great. If this is successful and next year we make the same appeal, then the year after that and so on within 6 years we could have the entire population of West Hampstead as members.

We can claim to represent a reasonable number of local residents when we are consulted by the Borough of Camden on ideas or issues concerning the green and we'll talk about our proposed response to Pines and Needles selling trees on the green later. The more people we can say we represent, the more weight our opinions and comments will carry.

Of course given the demographic of local residents a number of people will move on and we need to find effective ways of being visible and an organisation that people moving into the area want to join. This is one of the reasons, but not necessarily the main one, we hold events on the green. This leads me naturally onto the events we have hosted or run over the past year.

Events:

Love Our Green Sundays (LOGS)

One of our main events and in some ways the most successful is maintaining the flower beds on the right hand side of the Green on a regular, once monthly, basis from February to October. Gardening (LOGS) on the Green for a couple of hours on usually the last Sunday afternoon of the month proceeded this last year with the loss of Mark Stonebanks, our great creator and inspiration for gardening greatness and beauty on Fortune Green. With the help of the PODS Garden Design horticulturalists and the sponsorship of Scavolini by Multiliving Store we attracted a keen group of volunteers to maintain and improve the planting over the year. The 'Green Flash' bulletin, now updated with the new logo and fresh look, continues to be sent out to remind the FoFG membership about forthcoming LOGS activities with plenty of notice prior to each session.

Nine sessions were held. An average of 12 people were present per session to enjoy the camaraderie, gardening therapy, cakes and tea. October bulb planting was particularly successful as evident now with the additional February Gold daffodils, orchard-flowered narcissi and alliums soon to follow.

We look forward to seeing more neighbourhood folks out to give a few hours on a Sunday afternoon towards keeping the planted areas looking wonderful into this year, infinity and beyond. No previous experience required.

Outdoor film screenings

Another really important couple of events we hold are the evening film screenings where local families picnic on the Green and enjoy a free open air film. Last June on a glorious warm evening we showed 'Ferris Bueller's Day Off'. It was a hugely successful evening with, we think, record attendance and also record donations. This is just as well because for the second film of the summer in August which was 'Paddington 2' we attracted no sponsorship (see previous comments) and it was self funded. It was another very successful evening.

The general plan is to have a more adult film in June because of the later start time and a family oriented film in August as the nights are starting to draw in.

Current plans are for a film screening of 'The Greatest Showman' on Saturday 8 June. We are open to ideas for the second film provisionally planned for Saturday 17 August.

The Jester Festival

FoFG always have a prominent stall at the path crossroads on the Green during the Jester Festival and it is an important event in promoting what we do, attracting new members and raising our visibility. We always struggle a bit to get folks to help, for instance be on the stall taking subscriptions and telling visitors about us, maybe run an activity. Please put Saturday 6 July and Sunday 7 July in your diaries. If you have ideas for activities to attract visitors to the stall then we are very keen to hear about them.

The Christmas tree on the Green and the official lighting ceremony

In response to feedback about the commercial use of Pines and Needles on part of the green in December 2017 we organised a Christmas tree in conjunction with, and donated by, the Camden Society to be on the green during December 2018. The official lighting ceremony with Bill Nighy was attended by (we estimated) nearly 500 people and caught us a bit by surprise in terms of numbers to cater for. Overall we had very positive responses to this and hope to make it an annual event. More about this later further down the meeting agenda.

Dawn Chorus

Last year this was very thinly attended and so we don't propose to organise it this year. However if there is someone out there who wants to take it on, he or she has our full support and we will publicise this event on Eventbrite.

Birds of Brey

We organised and funded a static exhibition of birds of prey on a miserable wet and windy Sunday in October. Despite the weather there was a steady stream of visitors of both passersby and families who came out specially to see the magnificent and tame birds. It was three years since the Birds of Brey team visited us and we hope to make it a biennial event.

National Poetry Day

Once again we worked with Friends of West Hampstead library to celebrate National Poetry Day by handing out copies of a poem penned by Ted on the theme of change. The poem was focused on the changes over the years to the occupancy on what is now the ski shop on the corner of Fortune Green Road and Achilles Road and I was able to point to the building and tell people it was about that place.

Photographic Workshops

During 2018 our artist in residence was the photographer Peter Coles. He ran a series of four workshops with varying levels of attendance covering the four seasons. Some of the photos taken have been posted on the web site and Flickr. These workshops were free ticketed events advertised on Eventbrite but clearly we need to work on how to advertise events like this more widely as for the October workshop no tickets were "sold".

Solar Walks during the British Science Week

It was three years since we helped set up walks across the solar system for Science Week. This year we repeated the exercise at fairly short notice with Mark Jacobs, sadly missing Peter Abrahams. The walks are excellent and informative and those of you who didn't go missed an entertaining hour, but probably not the wind, rain and cold. This is another event we are considering to hold biannually.

What we didn't do

We didn't have a stall at the Christmas Market on West End Green. We need volunteers to help as this was a step too far for the resources of the committee.

Things we'd like to do

London is becoming the world's first 'National Park City'. There is to be a National Park City Festival from 20 – 28 July and we'd like to put on an event. This can then be promoted by them online and in their printed guide. But we need ideas and volunteers please.

Summary/Actions / appeal to members

Invite friends and neighbours to get involved and become members

Get involved

Come up with ideas for events and put your effort where your mouth is