



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

**Wednesday April 29 2020 19.30
via ZOOM online conference video**

Members / visitors to our AGM

FoFG has no chairman and the duties are shared between the committee members.

As everyone keeps saying we are living through unprecedented times and we hope everyone is managing to stay safe and act responsibly. The situation is, of course, having a direct impact on the activities of the committee and FoFG itself.

A few general points

The redesigned website is up and running and we are continually looking at new ways to attract and communicate with local residents (anyone who is interested really).

The relationships with the Parks and Events teams at Camden remain good. We meet the Parks Department for a walk around the green a couple of times a year. Earlier in the spring we held a joint gardening session mid-week with Id Verde where they did some of the heavy lifting.

During the latest meeting we looked at the vehicle damage on the green (vans driving up to the play centre and vans dropping Christmas trees off at the collection point). The damage will be repaired but despite Camden being given the information of at least one van unloading trees it appears their enforcement department aren't going to take any action. This is a disappointing for us and the parks department. We discussed installing a lockable bollard at the entrance to the path leading up to the play centre. Apparently, this has been discussed before; the concern is whether it just forces the drivers further onto the green. The manager of PACE at the centre said his delivery drivers denied they were doing it. Often at weekends there are cars in or around the centre for the parties or events held there. There is not a lot we can do except draw attention to it.

There is still anti-social behaviour at the gate by the playground, particularly at night and evidenced by the gas canisters littering the ground some mornings. We are hopeful this will diminish when the building work on the house at the corner is completed and the house occupied.

Thanks also to our ward councillors for their support and response to queries/advice.

We think the green has been looking good although it's suffering from the really dry April (after the wettest winter on record) but there are holes to fill on the main quadrant when this becomes possible.

Our challenge is to keep up the interest and enthusiasm for maintaining the appearance and condition of the flower beds. Gardening participation in our monthly Love Our Green Sundays has fallen off from the days of the newly revised garden when executing the plan was fun and engaging.

It is essential to safeguard all that earlier work and effort. We are the guardians of our successful, attractive garden space. It continuously needs us, and we would like to increase participation.

We are all lucky to have a easily accessible gardening outlet, particularly as gardening is a known beneficial habit to establish for good health and mental wellbeing.

Membership

There is again a decline in membership and unfortunately many 'members' don't pay the subscription – this year we have decided to remove them from the membership list. This means that our membership, and therefore our income, will drop but more realistically reflect the situation. A knock-on effect, and this was mentioned last year, means that we potentially have less influence on local matters as we can't claim to represent many local residents.

With the Jester Festival cancelled for this year we lose our main recruiting, and subs gathering event.

So, we have reluctantly decided to raise the membership sub to £10 per household per year in order to continue our work. As many of you normally pay your sub at the Jester Festival the new rate will start at the beginning of July – so get your subs paid before then to get 2020 for £5 as usual. This is the first increase since FoFG was set up 12 years ago.

Events:

Love Our Green Sundays (LOGS)

Huge thanks again to Scavolini for sponsoring our monthly LOGS sessions which fund the services of professional gardeners to advise and work alongside us.

The format remains pretty much the same although last summer we experimented with smaller more frequent sessions which weren't a great success. We've struggled to get many volunteers out but had a great turnout for the first 2020 LOGS in February and started the year really well with tidying up and cutting back. Then of course the lockdown started so LOGS has been cancelled until further notice. We are keeping in touch with Camden Parks, started watering the four new Judas trees and doing some light weeding to keep the sticky willie and other weeds at bay, or least from not flowering. Camden have agreed to arrange a green waste collection if we let them know when it's needed.

Outdoor film screenings

Once again, we arranged two film screenings on the green in 2019; 'The Greatest Showman' in June (kindly sponsored by Oakhill Residential) and 'ET' in August – for which we had no sponsorship, instead relying on audience donations to help cover some of the costs. Attendance for 'ET' was pretty good and people did singalong to 'The Greatest Showman'.

This is another event that is currently on hold – we have a provisional date of 6 June for a screening and the projectionists are available but it appears it is unlikely that it will go ahead.

We have discussed whether we can continue to hold two screenings a year particularly as sponsorship is more difficult to come by. A discussion that is on hold at the moment.

The Jester Festival

This has been cancelled for 2020 so no preparation or volunteers needed.

The Christmas tree on the Green and the official lighting ceremony

A joint venture with 'The Camden Society' who sourced the tree and used the event as a vehicle to promote the Mill Lane Garden Project.

This was again a great success, with lessons learnt from the previous year regarding lighting and staging, even though the tree temporarily blew down. We hope/plan that the Christmas tree event will become an annual tradition. Although we had no financial sponsorship, donations from the large crowd who attended covered most of the costs. We did have help from local businesses: the Green Room heated the mulled wine and Fortune Green Tesco, little Waitrose and Sainsbury's donated the mince pies. The Old Black Lion served hot chocolate and chocolate brownies. Brandon Hire provided the lighting (designed by Judy). St Luke's provided the tables (and delivered them).

One downside; we left a sizeable hole in the green after the tree had been removed. We are looking at alternative ways to support the tree.

Birds of Bray

We have booked Birds of Bray for early October – just as well we didn't go for their offered date in June. At the moment this is still on and we're hoping for better weather than 2018.

National Poetry Day

Once again we celebrated National Poetry Day in October by handing out copies of a poem on fake news penned by Ted Booth, local poet and former FoFG artist in residence.

Artist in Residence

We did not have an artist in residence in 2019.

Solar Walks during British Science Week

The walks in March 2019 were a great success and we have provisionally booked Mark for 2021.

What we didn't do

- We didn't apply for any 'Community Infrastructure Levy' funds for projects on the green.
- We have failed to get the railings repaired and painted. We advertised it as a Camden volunteer project but there were no takers. We have discussed it being repaired and painted and Camden have it on a list.
- We didn't have a stall at the Christmas Market on West End Green. After some discussion the committee agreed that it is more for local businesses and we would focus on publicity and getting subs in.

Things we'd like to do

Realistically all we can hope for this year is to keep on top of the weeding and the general spread of large plants. We can review this when the lockdown has been lifted.

Summary / Actions / appeal to members

We are in a holding pattern and of course the lockdown is having a large impact on what we can do and plan to do.

Please pay your subs (remember it is still £5 until July), ask your friends and neighbours to join FoFG and help us to keep our precious open space in good shape for everyone. Judging by the numbers of people out there seven days a week at the moment it is even more appreciated than ever.