



(Acting) Chair's Report for 2024 AGM

Welcome

Most of us in this room know the role that Peter Bradley as Chair of the FoBP has played in arguing vociferously for the best interests of Brockwell Park. Peter is loved by those of us who are passionate about the park. The FoBP committee pays tribute to him for his wise and steadfast leadership of the Friends over the past many years.

Work of committee

This AGM marks a time of change and renewal for the committee. The wonderful Alice Playle and Antonia Gross are also leaving the committee. We welcome new blood, especially anyone who wants to celebrate the virtues of Brockwell Park and who is outraged by the damage done to the park by commercial events.

We are thankful to Keith Fitchett for his meticulous work on the FoBP finances. He has undertaken a complete upgrade of the accounting system and has reconciled our balance sheets from early 2022 onwards.

As you will read in Keith's commentary on the accounts, the FoBP has donated funds to the Greenhouses for a new upper greenhouse and, previously, this barn; the St Matthew's Project for girls' football; benches to enhance accessibility in the park; biodiversity projects in the park and plants and equipment for the Walled Garden. We are still raising funds through carboot sales in the lido carpark -- we are grateful to the new hands on deck who have helped us run the carboot sales this past summer, as several were cancelled owing to a shortage of volunteers. We are especially grateful to Antonia who drew up a detailed RAMS (Risk Assessment Method Statement) to help us validate our insurance and maintain these community events.

Events this year

The Mayor of Lambeth, Councillor John-Paul Ennis, showed a good spirit in a rain-soaked, cheerful and moving tree celebration in July. If you would like to dedicate a tree, please do contact the masterminds of the tree donation programme, Antonia and Laura Morland -- the good news is that Antonia will be staying on in this role.

The dawn chorus bird walk in April attracted both two-legged and winged early risers! Many thanks to Czech Conroy and Antonia.

Peter Bradley led a well-received Summer Walk in July around these Greenhouse Gardens, the Walled Garden and vantage points of the events damage to grassed areas. Thanks Peter. And huge thanks to Alice and Laura for coordinating the volunteers work every Thursday in the Walled Garden, which is always inviting, beautiful, spectacular. Again there is terrific news: Alice is staying on in this role.

On 5th October, Laura organised in partnership with Lambeth Council a fantastic biodiversity day. There were 25 volunteers and two members of the Lambeth Biodiversity team who planted 1,300 tiny plants (plugs) -- all in glorious weather! All are invited to our next planting day on Saturday, 16th November, when we will plant young trees (whips) and shrubs to provide food and cover for insects and small mammals.

We have promoted all of these events through the services of a new committee member, Amy Till, who came to us with experience of London National Park City, which is a campaign to make London greener, healthier and wilder. Amy has revolutionised our communications and has produced fun online newsletters and mailouts with accessible graphic design as well!

We have also welcomed Richard Gilbert and Michael Taylor to the committee this year. Michael pioneered the successful use of a sound monitoring phone app during the Lambeth Live events. He also produced a map of Brockwell Park which compared the area used by Brockwell Live events with the total accessible areas of grass and trees. It showed that, measured this way, the events take 44% of the park. The other Michael, Michael Boyle, took detailed photos of the ground damage to the park in the wake of the summer events.

The FoBP is resolutely against the Brockwell Live events because we are against the privatisation of public space. We seek more complete information from Lambeth about the income received from commercial events; we would like to see an authoritative environmental impact report produced before and after commercial events in the park. We encourage a wider public debate about these events and we will work with anybody and everyone to this end. Midway through the year, Antonia wrote to all of us on the committee, "It is amazing what we can achieve collaboratively."

Next year the Friends of Brockwell Park is turning 40! We invite you to a celebration, we hope in the refurbished Brockwell Hall. See you there!

Adam Steinhouse
20 October 2024