

## FRIENDS OF EASTCOTE HOUSE GARDENS

### AUTUMN GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 21st October 2019 at 2pm in the Stables.

#### PRESENT

Steve Place, Sue Place, Margaret Ray, Chris Groom, Mary Sewell, Linda Wells, David Payne, Audrey Newell, Susan Toms, Joan Butfield

#### APOLOGIES

Liz Gambier, Paul Lake, Christine Lake, Michael Paddy, Christine Wallace, Andy Weller, Tony Swan, Keith Barnard, Lesley Crowcroft, Gerry Edwards, Catherine Dann, Trevor Dixon, Sue Smales, Anne Payne.

#### MINUTES OF SUMMER GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 17TH JUNE 2019

No matters arising

#### TREASURER'S REPORT

In KB's absence, the Treasurer's report was read by SP.

Account balances are as at 18th October 2019

Balance of General Account	£4,847.51
Balance of Archive/Publications Account	£6,090.36
Balance of Craft Group	£420.90 plus the money held by SS
Balance of Savings Reserve Fund	£5,009.84

#### OPEN HOUSE JB & ST

Susan and I organised our first Open House event this year. We would like to thank everyone for all their help and support in enabling us to arrange such a successful event. We'd especially like to thank Lesley for sharing her knowledge and expertise with us.

The weather forecast was appalling, but the Classic Cars turned up early and both Jazzology and Stumbling Block decided to come and support us which they did in grand style.

FEHG volunteers worked tirelessly to get everything set up on time and also dismantled all the equipment and returned it to its correct place in the pouring rain.

Both the Deputy Mayor and her escort were touched by the warm welcome they received despite the heavens opening as they arrived.

ST reiterated the thanks expressed by JB and stated that all events are dependent on the volunteers. The events were also dependent upon how much help we will get from LBH. No help in the form of staff was given this year and queried if it would be the same in the future. LBH did provide the First Aid, Waste Bin and traffic cones.

JB has not yet received a reply to her e-mail to Josh Wallington requesting the Stables for the Saturday afternoon, 19th September and all day Sunday 20th September together with the same services provided this year. (Since the meeting JB has received confirmation that the First Aid, Waste Bin and traffic cones will be provided but no help available).

JB contacted the outside organisations, but many were unable to come due to other commitments. On the day, due to the weather everything had to be indoors and so there wasn't space for the bill hooks exhibition. St.Vincents did not turn up nor did the two art groups. But the lack of outside groups did not seem to affect the success of the event.

ST queried whether we should continue with the outside stalls or just concentrate on the buildings and classic cars with a few stalls in the Stables, e.g. History Society and FEHG stalls. This appeared to be the general opinion of the meeting and it was agreed to discuss the issue at the next committee meeting on 12th November.

## RECENT GARDENING ACTIVITY

Once again FEHG have achieved the highest possible awards in the 2019 London in Bloom competition. Five awards in total.

Long Meadow - Large Conservation Area - Gold

EHG - Park of the Year - Gold

Walled Garden - Gold

Our Community (a volunteer award) - Gold

It's Your Neighbourhood (a volunteer award) - Level 5 - Outstanding.

Sue and Dinah represented FEHG at the Awards ceremony in September and collected the awards.

FEHG are indebted to the assistance given by LBH Green Spaces Department, especially Will of Grounds Maintenance, who has looked after EHG with FEHG for more than 11 years. Working together we can achieve the impossible.

All volunteers can rightly share in the glory these awards bring. A year of constant dedication and hard work, thank you all so much. Now we start again ready for next year!.

Nick Porter, site manager, has left Hillingdon Council. FEHG benefitted greatly from Nick's presence on site, and he is greatly missed. We are awaiting information regarding the future of the post of Site Manager.

No new projects to report. This autumn/winter the next section of hedgerow at the Pamela Gardens boundary will be planted. This will leave one more section for next year (2020).

## EVENTS

Events at EHG are many and varied. Apart from the three big events, picnic, Open House and Tree Dressing many smaller events take place - all organised and staffed by dedicated volunteers.

## PLANT & SECOND HAND BOOK SALES

These sales were held from April-October in the Gardeners' Yard. Plant sellers were often selling in the rain. We now have a regular set of customers. There were 7 book sales and 4 plant sales raising a total of £1,975.79.

Visitors are eager to purchase plants from the Walled Garden, another testament to FEHG gardening skills. Another thank you to gardening volunteers.

Next step is potting up. Audrey Newell wears the crown for Queen of the potting shed! Ably assisted by Mike Paddy and others who are dragooned in from time to time.

Selling on the day thanks go to Lesley Crowcroft, Norman Moody, Janet Green, Laura Newell, Mike Paddy and most of all to Dinah Clements, Assistant Head Gardener, who covers all areas including sharing extra visits with Lesley Crowcroft to EHG during hot weather to keep the plant stock watered and healthy for the sales.

Books - accolades go to Sue Smales who organises the book shop, sorting through piles of books to make interesting displays and organising help with the sorting and serving on the day.

Helpers - Linda Wells, Margaret Ray, David Plummer, Audrey Newell.

With extras drafted in for big events - Jackie Solomon, Rosemary Bucksey, Linda Furnell, Madeleine Horsbrugh.

A special thanks to Keith Barnard who puts up the advertising banners for every sale. Truly a brilliant team effort.

## UNIFORMED GROUPS

This year, there have been 4 visits from uniformed groups, the 4th Eastcote Wednesday Beavers visited twice, the 4th Eastcote Monday Beavers and the 4th Eastcote Scouts once.

The Beavers took part in quizzes and a nature treasure hunt, plus clearing up fallen crab apples. The Scouts litter picked in Long Meadow. We hope to welcome more uniformed groups again next year.

Thank you to Lesley Crowcroft, Keith Barnard, Paul and Christine Lake, Malcolm Penny and Sue Place.

## WALKS & VISITS

There were two walks held this summer. May - a tree walk led by Lesley Crowcroft and a Herb Walk in June in the walled garden led by Varsha Soneji herbal medicine practitioner, assisted by Lesley Crowcroft. Both were well attended and will take place again next year.

Two groups visited: Hillingdon Partially Sighted Group and FiSH from Barnes South London. This is a group that helps elderly people stay living in their own homes. The group from Barnes said it was the best outing they had ever had - although it was showery. They were so pleased to receive such a warm welcome from FEHG.

Thank you to the Craft Group for allowing the Hillingdon group to have use of part of the stables for tea and biscuits, and to Dinah Clements and Lesley Crowcroft for leading the group around.

Thank you to Lesley Crowcroft, Tony Swan, Malcolm Penny, Chris Groom and Irene Groom, Margaret Ray, Linda Wells, Audrey Newell, Roger and Sallie Pinkerton for giving the Barnes group the best outing they had ever had.

#### DOVECOTE SUMMER OPENING

The Dovecote was open the second Tuesday of each month - May to September 1.30-3.30. As well as opening during the picnic and Open House. Each opening has a steady stream of visitors, all of whom are appreciative of the buildings and its history. Hopefully we will be able to open again next year. Thanks to the team who work on a rota basis - Keith Barnard, David Payne, Susan Toms, Trevor Dixon, Christine Wallace, Joan and Terry Butfield and Lesley Crowcroft.

A big thank you to the Craft group who supply tea and biscuits to those on Dovecote duties. This is so much appreciated.

#### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

DP queried what progress had taken place on the maintenance of the buildings as there was concern about the state of the mortar on the walls. CG confirmed this and said he was no longer allowed to climb the ladder to remove the weeds from the top of the walls.

ST was at a meeting recently which Paul Richards attended. Hopefully the Building Surveyor will come again quite soon.

ST stated that maintenance needs to be constant and unless LB H is reminded frequently we will be back to square one.

DP said it would be very nice to see a Council schedule and ST said there was talk of a specialist coming in to see all listed buildings in the Borough on a regular maintenance schedule. Maybe a letter should be sent to Mark Butler, Borough Conservation Officer.

SP said that LC as Chair of Eastcote Conservation Panel was dealing with these issues and was the obvious person to continue taking the matter forward.

SP said he would just finish by mentioning the photographers whose photos adorn our calendars, leaflets and event/activity reports and our website.

The meeting closed at 2.35pm