

## **Friends of Eaton Park**

### **Annual General Meeting held in the Community Centre, Eaton Park**

**Thursday 26 November 2009 at 7pm**

#### **1. Welcome by Christine Wilson, Vice-Chairperson**

In the absence of the Chair, Eva Scurfield, who is unwell, Christine Wilson, Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced new members to the committee.

#### **2. Apologies for absence**

Eva Scurfield (Chair).

#### **3. Chair's report from Christine Wilson**

Report attached. Christine concluded by thanking committee members for attending committee meetings so assiduously and for working hard to make so many things happen.

#### **4. Treasurer's Report**

During the period we raised £1,000.97 from grants, donations, membership fees, tea monies and the stall we ran on two occasions with a raffle.

However we also managed to spend £1,264.65 on a variety of things from office supplies and website costs through to gardening supplies, room hire, insurance etc. Full information is set out in the accounts presented here for inspection. Garden supplies included a large number of bulbs, flowers from which attracted many compliments.

Overall we started the year with assets of £2,022.13, and with the expenses exceeding income by £263.68 we finished the year with a bank balance of £1,758.45. This was made up of restricted funds of £210.12 left of the Norwich City Council community grant, which we have spent in the current year on insurance and new display boards, and £1,448.33 of general funds.

#### **5. Election of Officers and Committee**

Proposed, seconded and elected; Chair, Christine Wilson; Vice Chair Judith Lubbock; Honorary Treasurer, Kevin Moore, and Honorary Secretary Helen Mitchell.

Existing members of the committee wishing to continue to serve were Glenys Banks, Liz Davies, Victor Howe and Cynthia Gooda, while Harry Herring is a life member. These members were voted in unanimously. Additionally Jemma Surplice was nominated as a new member and also voted in unanimously. It was agreed that, with her agreement, Eva Scurfield be co-opted onto the committee.

#### **6. Appointment of Independent Financial Examiner**

Kevin Moore proposed and Judith Lubbock seconded that we continue to use Mr Ian Couzens. This proposal was carried unanimously.

#### **7. Any Other Business**

##### **7.1 Proposed cuts to sports facilities**

Norwich City Council has announced possible cuts to sporting facilities at Eaton Park and other city parks, and is inviting feedback. The proposal is to remove one bowling green, four grass tennis courts – with the addition of two new hard courts, one adult-sized football pitch and a croquet green.

There was a wide-ranging debate about the issue. The Friends' recent survey highlights that people do not know what is happening in the park. Peter Medhurst commented that he has noticed an increase in park use and Helen Mitchell concurred that Norwich and District Model Engineers, who are well placed to comment since they run the model railway, have also recently drawn attention to an increase in numbers of people visiting the park. When the park

appears to be attracting more visitors, members felt there must be potential to attract more income. On this subject, Jemma Surplice mentioned that UEA has recently lost a number of previously well-used tennis courts – a potential new market to tap for tennis court users.

Judith reported that one option the City had presented was for user groups to manage facilities themselves. Jemma Surplice commented that this would be a high risk strategy that would need careful management. Judith Lubbock said that maintaining bowling and croquet greens was hard work and users, some of whom are quite old, would find this demanding. Generally the meeting was not supportive of the idea.

The importance of the park in relation to issues around health and well-being was discussed. Parks directly support health and well-being and with growing interest in these areas, it seems wrong to be considering cutting back resources.

It was agreed that there is still untapped potential to increase use of the park, and therefore income, by improved promotion. Responsibility for promoting activities in the park needs to be clarified and resourced sufficiently.

It was agreed that Judith Lubbock co-ordinate our response to Norwich City Council by;

- o Asking what evidence there is that facilities are under used and what, if any alternative approaches have been considered in relation to Eaton Park and cost cutting.
- o Asking for a meeting with Simon Meeks and possibly other staff and members. The object of the meeting would be to look at alternative ways to make savings or increase earned income, and to offer Friends of Eaton Park's help in finding and delivering these solutions. Judith Lubbock, Christine Wilson, Helen Mitchell, Kevin Moore and Peter Medhurst expressed interest in attending this meeting.
- o In the event of it not being possible to set up a meeting, Judith to set up a meeting of the same group to formulate a response to the consultation from Friends of Eaton Park.
- o Individual members were also encouraged to make their own contributions.

## **7.2 Vote of thanks**

Vic proposed and Harry Herring seconded that a letter be sent to Eva Scurfield thanking her for her work as Chair, and to Ann Lawson thanking her for her work on the committee.

## **8. Dates of next meetings**

Thursday 10 December, 7pm, Eaton Park Community Centre, Christmas bring and share.

Sunday 6 December, Santa Run, midday to 4pm, Eaton Park Community Centre.

(Glenis and Cynthia reminded members that they will need items for the Friends' tomobola stall in good time).

Thursday 28 January, 7pm, Eaton Park Community Centre, next committee meeting, where dates for 2010 meetings including AGM will be set 7pm.

Friday 12 March, 7.30pm, Eaton Park Community Centre, Talk by Andy Anderson on The captain and the Parks.

Sunday 25 April, 10am to 1pm, meeting place tbc, Tree Identification Day with Richard Hobbs, ex-Norfolk Wildlife Trust.

## **9. Closing Remarks**

Christine thanked everyone for attending and looked forward to a positive future for the park with huge potential to increase activities and use of the park. To achieve this potential a priority for the coming year would be to build membership, and increase involvement by Friends of Eaton Park.