

2017 Annual General Meeting

The Friends of Mycenae Gardens held its sixth Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, 22nd March 2017 at 7.00pm at the Greenwich Steiner School, Woodlands, 90 Mycenae Road, SE3.

These Minutes were approved at the AGM on 22 March 2018.

Committee members present: Mark Barnes (Chair), Eileen Bell, Adrian Dow, Ann Hill (Minutes), Tim Hoe, Mark Johnson-Brown.

10 General Members attended.

Apologies were received from Jean-Jacques Aune, Shirley Broughton, Margaret Ellis, Colin Gillespie, David Jervis, Marilyn Little, Caroline and Robert Owen.

1. Minutes of the 2016 Annual General Meeting

Mark Barnes opened the meeting by welcoming all those present and introducing himself as the new Chair. The Draft Minutes of the previous 2016 AGM, which had been circulated on the website and as hard copies, were approved and adopted, there being no comments.

2. Chairman's report

Mark first outlined how the support and involvement of members are of vital importance to the functioning of the Friends' Group and to the future of the Gardens and how Groups such as ours are valued by the Royal Borough of Greenwich. For example, Groups can play a part in the management of the Borough's Open Spaces by providing a means of reconciling conflicting ideas and requirements of different users and interest groups at the local level. Mark welcomed the fact that during the 6 years since the Group's inception, the Group has been able to shift its focus towards a far more active role in protecting and improving the Gardens as less time has been needed for reconciliation. Having tangible and visible improvements has reassured people that this is an active Group bent on 'doing rather than arguing' and that problems are being recognised and addressed. This was evident in 2015 with the clearing and planting in the Dell and in 2016 in the various projects in the Gardens which are described in the Spring Newsletter (<http://mycenaegardens.org.uk>).

Mark thanked the outgoing members of the Committee (Eileen, Shirley and Ann), stating that he will miss their energy and expertise. He thanked them most warmly for all they have done and the new course they have helped to set. Gifts were presented in appreciation of their contributions. Eileen has been a tireless chair and one of Ann's inspired moves was to enlist the help of GoodGym volunteers who did much of the very heavy work in the Gardens. Unfortunately GoodGym were unable to be present to receive the thanks in person, but their work is acknowledged in the Newsletter.

Mark then asked Tim Hoe to give more details of activities during the year. Tim concentrated on two aspects of the volunteering work, namely a) decompacting the area under the ancient plane trees and b) renovating the shrub beds. Tim showed photos of happy volunteers engaged in the arduous work of aerating the compacted area under the plane trees. This was quite an undertaking and involved forking deeply every 6-8 inches over a large area. This would have been impossible without help from GoodGym who came (running) from several London Boroughs. The forked areas were then mulched to keep the holes open and to provide a protective cushion. Two volunteer days were spent on this activity, followed in each case by well-earned refreshments. More recently several of the shrub beds around the lawn have been renovated and 91 shrubs have been planted. A further 2 volunteer days have been spent on this activity and the beds have been edged with rope for protection. Steiner School students of Class 5 (2015-16) and their teacher took responsibility for renovating and planting the bed nearest the school. Tim ended with a collage of pictures of camaraderie from the volunteer days and PARKSfest and thanked the volunteers.

Mark reported that a new garden seat and bench have been provided and thanked the Ward Councillors for making this possible through the Localities Fund and David Jervis for making the bench.

3. Treasurer's statement

In the absence of Colin, Mark reported that as of March 1st the £833 71 carried over from the last AGM has reduced to £49.56. However, this amount would improve slightly after allowing for pending reimbursement for the benches and from PARKSfest.

4. Elections to Committee

Eileen retired in January 2017 and Ann and Shirley are retiring at the 2017 AGM. There were two nominees - Dick Allard (Mycenae Road) and Mara Lemos-Stein (Glenluce Road). Dick was invited to introduce himself and he described how he has lived in Mycenae Road for over 40 years and used

to kick a ball around in the Dell with his 2 boys. Mara was unable to be present but Eileen said Mara was active in the Gardens and would like to be part of the community. Both were duly elected, there being no other nominations.

5. AOB

Mark J-B suggested that Mycenae House and the Friends Group could do more to raise funds jointly. Mark B. agreed and suggested that PARKSfest was one such opportunity where the Friends could be more proactive. Mark J-B went on to say that the Mycenae House team have decided to adopt a good cause each year and Mark J-B would like to see the Friends as the first recipient. Mark B said thought should be given as to how to capitalise in 2023 on the bicentenary of John Angerstein's death and suggested that Lloyds might be approached. This might also be linked to having a Blue Plaque.

Helene Barnes asked about the patch of experimental turf and Mark explained that this is rhysomatous, drought and shade resilient grass. It is just about surviving without protection and if it does well, then a greater area may be turfed but this will be expensive.

Sophie Spencer asked about benches and if the plan is still to chain them in areas off the grass. Sophie's concern is that with better weather benches may migrate onto the grass. Eileen explained there is a plan but the Council has the anchors and they have been too busy to install them. Mark B's preference is to be flexible and monitor the situation.

Doreen Grandon wondered if the various classes that use Mycenae House know about the activities of the Group and whether they might like to make a financial contribution.

As for the forthcoming year, Mark said there is a need for a) continuing maintenance and b) protecting the eroded area on the slope at the back of the Gardens. Mark thanked Mark J-B for providing wine and the meeting ended at 8pm.