

# Friends of Mycenae Gardens AGM

Wednesday 20 March 2019, 7pm  
Room 9, Mycenae House

THESE ARE DRAFT MINUTES THAT WILL BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL AT THE 2020 AGM

Chair: Mark Barnes (MB)

Guest: Fiona Machen

Committee members present: Amanda Douge, Jo Brodie, and Mark Johnson-Brown [MJB] representing Mycenae House.

## Agenda

1. Approval of the minutes of the 2018 AGM
2. Treasurer's statement
3. Election of Committee members
4. Chair's Report
5. The knowledgeable expert - Fiona Machen
6. Questions
7. AOB

## 1. Approval of the minutes of the 2018 AGM

Mark Barnes (Chair) opened the meeting by welcoming all those present. The Draft Minutes of the 2018 AGM (which had been circulated on the website and as hard copies) were approved and adopted, there being no comments.

A number of Committee members were unable to attend the AGM because of ill health.

## 2. Treasurer's statement

Mark reported, on behalf of Colin, that the previous balance carried over was £739.98 and that we've spent £100 on plants and some money to Tim Hoe for the costs of maintaining the WordPress website subscription in past years. New balance: £633.50.

## 3. Election of Committee members

MB and Mara Lemos-Stein retire by rotation after a three year period and were both re-elected.

## 4. Chair's Report

*Woodchip:* MB welcomed the long-awaited arrival of the woodchip for the lawn from Greenwich Council, and the even more welcome sight of around 40 Steiner parents and children (led by Amanda) working together over several days to rake it out and spread it. This is probably not sustainable either in terms of person-hours or good relations with parents and MB has asked that the Council use mechanical spreaders on the day of delivery.

*Leaders' Breakfast:* MB and Amanda will attend a Greenwich Leaders' Breakfast (for locals involved in volunteering) on the morning of Tuesday 26 March, to reinforce that we need help.

*Re-seeding:* Greenwich Council have said that they will re-seed the lawn during the school's Easter holidays (which run from 6-28 April 2019). This may involve a staggered process of ground preparation and fertiliser before seed-spreading. A concern is that nothing seems to be locked in to the Council diary for this to happen, and for information to be communicated to garden users that an area of the lawn will be unavailable and cordoned off for around six weeks.

MB has applied to the *Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust* to cover costs for an authoritative 'turf survey' of our lawn which will strengthen our case for requesting funds elsewhere.

*Lawn damage:* There is persistent damage to the areas used by weddings (and other events) caused in part by self-organised football games by schoolkids. The school is not currently pushing parents to desist, though they are in favour of Committee erecting a "No ball games" sign. An official ban would require a byelaw change.

*Barrier damage:* Rope barriers around shrubs are still being deliberately cut though the willow barriers around the bulbs are surviving. Fiona has suggested Richard Vidal to the Committee, aka the Willow Wizard, who has offered to create very sturdy willow barriers on site. Timing depends on the willow harvest (and Council re-seeding plans). He can create the barriers alone but could do it with children from the school as a project. Richard would need help in transporting long stands / withes of willow to the gardens.

*Angerstein plaque:* 2023 is the 200-year anniversary of the death of [John Julius Angerstein](#), a local businessman and Lloyd's Name. We are trying to get a Blue Plaque on Mycenae House but it is slow going [see [History of Mycenae House](#) for more].

## 5. The knowledgeable expert - Fiona Machen

The Committee has been seeking support from a knowledgeable gardener to help us determine what things need to be done in the garden, when and how we can best communicate that to Friends (level of commitment involved, tools, aims) and Fiona has very kindly stepped in. She is a long-term gardener involved with community gardens and spoke about her background and experience.

Fiona had some ideas about areas for planting and practicalities of that, including a mini-meadow area. That may interrupt the wedding-space but also may be an Instagram resource! It will be easier to harmonise planting plans with natural [desire lines](#) formed by children and dog-walkers - actively working with the children and involving them in decisions may get their buy-in, perhaps reducing trampling. She highlighted that for the general public, often the lawn is the most important thing whereas fans of wildflowers don't care so much, and a meadowed area would bring in other wildlife.

At Fiona's garden the kids are involved in creating barriers and are asked where they go when they run about, and where a safe (or dangerous) place might be for plants to be.

She had some suggestions about planting indigenous woodland plants such as aconites, bluebells, campions, foxgloves - not expensive (<£100) and they're pretty hardy.

Fiona's suggestion of creating a calendar with times when something needs to be done that can be shared with Friends, with info about how much time / energy is needed was warmly welcomed.

MB raised applying for the Council's 'Growth Fund' which supports discrete projects (as opposed to ongoing improvements). MJB commented that Mycenae House is already in receipt of Growth Fund money and can't go for Round 2 of the funding while their project is live. Round 3 is in the Autumn.

## 6. Questions

An audience member asked (during the re-election discussion in #3) who was on the Committee and Mark Barnes responded that the Committee can be up to nine people, currently we are eight. Two representative roles are reserved, one each for Mycenae Gardens and the School (Greenwich Steiner School is next door, uses the gardens after school). The remaining seven members (currently six) are elected.

Ann Hill thanked the Committee for their work and expressed disappointment at the resurgence of the after-school football. Discussion ensued on what might be done, short of standing in the gardens during the games. Committee members Amanda and Mara are drafting a letter to the School in the hope that he might share it with parents. MJB suggested that a Mycenae-focused leaflet about the appropriate use of the entire facility (including keeping loos clean, avoiding bringing dirt onto the carpet) and respect for the wider environment could also reference this (mis)use of the garden.

## 7. AOB

ParksFest in July may be difficult to run this year in part because of funding but also it might clash with the recovery needed after re-seeding the lawn (roping off expected to be 6-8 weeks, if done in April as intended should be ready in time). MJB noted that around 1,200 visitors arrive during the day and that a lot of garden work is needed beforehand, eg buying topsoil to fill in any holes in the lawn created by kids or dogs.