

Fortescue Park Residents' Association

You are reminded of the restrictive covenants which attach to all houses on the estate. No extensions, conservatories or other external alterations are permitted without the prior written consent of the Residents Association.

MINUTES OF THE 2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FORTESCUE PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION (FPRA) HELD ON MAY 23RD 2023 AT PRINCE OF WALES

1. Welcome

- Warm welcome to everyone who was able to join us at the meeting room or via our new zoom option. 33 Residents joined us for this meeting plus 10 Committee members.

2. Introductions

Giles Norman – Chair
Clare Marsden – Secretary
Christine Ryan – Leads Gardens
Charles Owens – Most experienced member here and policing co-ordinator
Lloyd Reynolds – Maintenance issues
Mike Dennis – Treasurer & Financial Whizz
Paul Butler – Gardens & Communications
Vanessa Cozens – Gardens & Communications
Madeleine O'Keefe – new Communications
Sam Kamleh – new Treasurer

3. **Acceptance of 2022 AGM Minutes** – available on the website and each resident will have received a copy – approved
4. **Treasurer's Report** – Mike (our outgoing treasurer presents the financial statement together with explanations). Attached is a comparison of year end 2021 and year end 2022 for the meeting. 99.9% of fees collected. Everyone bar one of two pay on time or by standing order. Increase in debtors equates to one household in 2022.

No increase to fees in 2024 is proposed so the item was not raised. Our gardening team Thorburn have held fees for 2021 - 2023 and we hope this will continue into 2024. Hopefully, expenses can remain fairly static and we expect to retain a fund of approx. £60 - £68k at year end. There are some potential legal fees (£2-£3K) in relation with expertise required to support the covenants.

Q: Do we need a sinking fund of £68k? This question is posed most years and the answer is the same in that we need a fund available for any unexpected wall repairs/large tree removals etc. It protects residents' from having to find extra monies in an emergency situation.

Q: Do we earn interest? Yes we do and it has improved over the past six months with changes to banking interest rates.

Q: We know from year to year what monies we have therefore could we not invest to gain a higher return? We do not wish to take risks with the resident's funds but if anyone has skills to offer to guarantee higher returns please contact the Committee.

5. **Gardens Report (Christine)** – Some very large trees are attended to each year by the Tree Company and weather damage has killed off several trees and shrubs which will require replacement. Thorburn will probably increase fees this year. We no longer plant annuals to keep costs down. We make our own compost which is fantastic but please help us by only putting dry leaves in the compost baskets by the top shed. We are coming towards the end of no mow May and love it or hate it the results in the quality of the grass are worthwhile. Please water areas close to your home during very dry weather and fill birdbaths. Other expenses have been small wall repair around the estate and on Stanley Road laurels have been planted after the storm destroyed a large tree.

Leah is leaving the team at the end of August to join Kew as a University student. We wish her well and hope they find a replacement gardener as good as Leah.

Q: Present for Leah as leaving gift? Yes, this is in hand

Q: Who looks after the alleyways between and behind houses? In the main the committee take care of this – not the gardening team. Weeding/ removal of items that have been fly-tipped by some residents. Let us know which alleys need some attention and leave gates unlocked.

A resident who has lived on FP many years thanked all those involved in keeping the gardens looking so lovely.

6. Fortescue Park Neighbourhood Watch

- Still looking for a resident to be our NW coordinator – please talk to Giles/Clare or Charles if interested. *(Ed: And we now have a volunteer!)*
- We have new signs all around the estate and each household was delivered a window sticker with the last newsletter a couple of weeks ago. They peel apart and say NW on one side and CyberHood watch on the non sticky side.
- We believe that we still have one of the lowest crime rates in the whole of London

7. Strawberry Hill Residents Association Contribution

- FPRA stopped making an active contribution in 2021 but are now reconsidering. It is clear that residents' do not tend to read the online newsletter and would be much more inclined to read a doorstep one. Sam Kamleh and Duncan explained how worthwhile our support is to this organisation. Besides keeping Strawberry Hill station and the surrounding area free of litter and full of flowers they are a strong lobbying force in the community. An amount of £500 was suggested but Sam is not sure if this would cover costs to supply copies to all residents of FP. The motion to support was carried subject to receiving paper copies and Lloyd offered to distribute. More dialogue is required and we will update.

8. Community Events (Paul / Vanessa / Madeleine)

- Summer Picnic - date to be advised (July)
- Flowering Doorstep Competition (Vanessa) but sunflower competition not
- Xmas carols – weather permitting

9. Madeleine O’Keefe – our 2nd newest Committee Member: Madeleine spoke about what we all do from sending out emails to all whose emails are on our database or by hard copy if no email available. The constant updating of monies paid for fees especially this year with the increase – much time spent on reminders. Also a great deal of time spent on researching issues for general interest or specifically for resident’s issues. Legal advice/referrals. Garden research, development of areas requiring improved maintenance, planting of bulbs ourselves to keep costs down. Maintenance of gates, requesting quotes for work etc. Treasurer is an unpaid role and yet a very responsible one. She urges residents to try to react to emails regarding standing orders/ fly tipping etc – be mindful of the scale of communication that is often required.
10. Clare contacted Sweetings management agency to obtain a quote and an idea of what would be involved. The base fee would be an additional £140 per annum but this would increase every year and there would certainly be additional costs.

One resident spoke about his appreciation for the work of the committee, but Clare explained it is not about needing appreciation but the concern about an interest in joining the committee going forward. If there is no one to replace members to run the treasury and coordinate the company secretary duties then there will be a need for external help despite this not being necessary in the 50 years the estate has been built. Two Committee members are standing down, our treasurer Mike and our communications specialist Paul and we offer them our huge thanks for all they have done over the years.

Q: What is the optimum number for the Committee? Giles states there is room for another member to join.

Q: Is there a handover period between roles? Yes, there is and in fact with regard to the treasury role Mike will continue to support Sam until the end of the year and beyond if required.

Q: Giles asked if anybody attending had legal skills but there was no response

Q: Do we currently circulate the AGM minutes? Yes, to all emails on database and a hard copy to those residents not on database and also all AGM minutes can be found on our website.

Motions:

- Re-appoint the members of Committee - Approved
- If anyone would like to consider joining the Committee – please contact Clare or Giles

11.

Any Other Business

E bikes – often left blocking pavements- do contact Richmond Council ebikes to report any problem with these bikes

Solar Panels –Green Energy Together has not been a good experience for the three residents who tried to implement the scheme. Their service levels have been very poor. Reminder that this was the only pre-approved scheme. Sam

Kamlah is preparing a breakdown of best suppliers/solar panels/ value etc. and the summary will be sent to all residents in due course. Duncan mentions that it is best to hold on to old meters if you are considering solar panel installations.

Q: Is it worth doing solar panels? Giles is satisfied that he is going to pay considerably less for heating fuels going forward. Sam mentions a figure of £1900 per annum in saving.

Richmond upon Thames parking plans - As you may be aware we have emailed all residents requesting that they no longer park across their driveways. Richmond Council had plans drawn up to impose yellow lines, however, as long as residents are considerate and don't block drives nor the roadways this will not be imposed. Wellesley Road already has single yellow lines across all drives. We attach a map of the plans considered by the council which would mean losing more than 50% of our available on street parking slots.

Q: What about builders vehicles during renovations? They can use parking permits and unload/load across driveways for very short periods.

Q: Do we need the council to tell us what to do? The road is not private and there are strict guidelines regarding how narrow the road can be, can fire engines get through at all times etc.

Q: Have they indicated how often we would be monitored? No

Q: What about steep and short driveways? Each house had an integral garage when constructed from 1972. It is a fact of life on the estate and we can only manage this by consideration.

Comment made by Giles to request residents to ensure they put away their refuse bins, blue and black recycling boxes and green bins either in the garage or the bin store to keep the estate looking as lovely as possible. Also the bins do not last long when left open to the elements.

Q: Regarding covenants - what are we spending legal fees on? We are looking at which of the 12 covenants we should enforce going forward. Many have been broken but it needs some legal support to understand what some of the content actually means. We have been pursuing the solicitors for over six months and may need to look elsewhere. We need to clarify the legal meaning of the covenants for the benefit of all shareholders, as well as understand any legal ramifications.

Q: Has decision been made to change the covenants? No, we have not clarified with the solicitors as yet and we need approval by 100% of estate householders to make any changes.