

Highfield Park Trust

Minutes of 20th Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 27 September 2016 at 7.30 pm
Trestle Arts Base

Present

Trustees

Tim Abbot, Kevin Barnes (CHPC), Mike Curtis (Treasurer), Jamie Day (SADC), Sue Gaylard, Sarah Graham, Andy Grant, Roger Thomas (Chair).

In attendance

Richard Bull (Park Manager & Company Secretary), Ian Carter (Gowers / Auditor), Peter Cook, Juliet Crisp, Lisa Dunstan (LKP Accountants), Liz Grant, Steven Wittich, Elizabeth Wittich, Sue Hawkins, Carol Prowse.

1 Welcome

Roger Thomas opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the meeting. He thanked Trestle Arts Base for allowing use of their facilities.

2 Apologies for absence

None

3 Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting

The Minutes of the AGM held on 29 September 2015 were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

4 Matters arising

- 4.1 Roger congratulated Kevin Barnes and all those involved in making the Highfield Lane crossing a reality.
- 4.2 There has been an ongoing issue with the allotment gate, but this has hopefully been resolved by reinstalling it and adding the jockey wheel.

5 Presentation of Annual Report - Chairman

The Chairman presented his annual report to the meeting.

- 5.1 He started by presenting the aims and objectives of the Trust, a brief overview of the finances and a review of the events and activities undertaken during 2015-16.
- 5.2 The financial position of the Trust has continued to improve, despite a slight fall in income, expenses have been tightly controlled. A number of projects have been possible financed by grants. There are still a number of projects that the Trust would like to undertake and it will seek funding for them.
- 5.3 Since the previous AGM the following grants have been received: forestry; Big Lottery Celebration; Locality Budget; Tesco's 'bags of help'. An application to Tarmac is currently underway.
- 5.4 A number of projects have been completed including: resurfacing of the football track with help from SACYFC, installation of two history boards, installation of three new RADAR gates and a new play area at Trestle Arts Base.
- 5.5 The Trust has run a number of successful events during the year including: Apple Day, Bug Hunt, History Event 'What Lies Beneath', Bunny Hunt, Clean for the Queen, Beacon Lighting, History walk and Minibeast Safari. Other events included an outdoor theatre production, screenings by Luna Cinema and the St Albans Country Show. A new event, Bat Night was introduced. The Trust also attended Larks in the Parks at Fleetville. He thanked all those who had taken part and assisted with the organisation and running of the events.

- 5.6 A number of other activities have taken place in the park including the Highfield Mutt show, a Triathlon, sponsored walks, 6-a-side football competitions, archery tournaments and two 10K runs.
- 5.7 He explained the engagement with the local community that has occurred and highlighted the continued links with Cunningham Hill Junior School and talks to local clubs. The Hertfordshire Health Walks continue to use the park several times every week. Roger explained that the Trust continues to build strong links with local organisations using the park on a regular basis including St Albans City Youth Community Football Club, Elswood Bowmen (Archers), St Albans Boot Camp, allotment holders, the Petanque groups and Community Development Association (CDA).
- 5.8 The Trust has continued to research the history of the hospitals. The history event in November was a great success and the art work commissioned from Oaklands College is now displayed on information boards. Another history event 'What Lies Beneath', this time concentrating on Cell Barnes is being organised for 4 November at Trestle Arts Base.
- 5.9 The Trust has continued to work with a number of volunteer groups including: regular Tuesday volunteers, a community volunteer day and corporate volunteering with groups from the University of Hertfordshire (IT staff), Mercer & Hole and AON Hewitt and Metro Bank. Roger thanked all for their efforts on behalf of the Trust.
- 5.10 He went on to thank all the trustees for their hard work, enthusiasm and dedication to the work of the Trust. He outlined the current staffing structure and thanked the staff for their work.
- 5.11 The Trust has a number of projects planned for the future. The main one being the new visitor centre which received planning permission in July. Other ongoing projects such as the maintenance of the new woodland, research in to the Park's history and sowing wildflowers in the park will continue.
- 5.12 He concluded by publicising the forthcoming events planned for the coming year.
- 5.13 Roger invited questions and comments.
- 5.13.1 The history event will be ticketed with payment in advance to minimise the number of 'no-shows'.
- 5.13.2 Visitors centre: Designs for the building are being finalised and then tender packs will be produced, it is hoped building will begin in the Spring with completion in the Autumn.

6 Presentation of Accounts year ending 31 March 2016

Ian Carter presented the accounts.

- 6.1 The total reserves have fallen from £8.631mil to £8.577mil. There are three main reserves: Restricted (Pavilion and forest); designated (property and investment values) and unrestricted (the day to day pot). The restricted and designated reserves have reduced through depreciation of the Pavilion and depreciation and changes in property values, but there has been an increase in the unrestricted reserve.
- 6.2 Property
 Ahead of major changes to the accounting rules (with the introduction of FRS102 next year) the Trustees have followed up the change in valuation basis last year and looked at the allocation in the accounts for the long lease hold properties. Investment properties are held for rental income, are revalued every year and are not depreciated (in line with UK Generally Accepted Accounting Policies (GAAP)). Long leasehold properties are held in fixed assets and are held for use in the trust or for other purposes. The Trustees have decided that the Park Centre and half of West Lodge are better shown in the accounts as Investment properties and as such amendments have been processed in the accounts to reclassify these assets. Moving these assets is very much consistent with the other assets held in Investment properties. A prior year adjustment has been made to reclassify and reverse out the deprecation associated with these assets and this has had a positive effect on the reserves – increasing from £8.1mil to £8.577mil as a result of reverse deprecation. Any gains are only considered unrealised as the properties are unlikely to ever sold. There is an increase in valuation in the year amount to £51,163.

The property produces rental income which was slightly up in to £85,600, from £83,871 in 2015.

Also note mast income was approximately the same as last year.

6.3 Investments

The value of the investments has fallen in the year by £53,920 (last year increased by £130,303), again, this valuation is one of the unrealised reserves as they are unlikely to be sold. Note not all funds decreased, there was an increase in the COIF Charities Properties fund - some £11,556.

The income generated from these assets was slightly down at £64,683, in 2015 it was £65,518. This is the second year the income was less than the previous year.

6.4 Reserves / performance

Total reserves have decreased in the year from £8,631,765 to £8,577,481, a fall of £54,284, but this is after accounting for 'non cash' adjustments in the year.

Restricted and Designated reserves have fallen by £71,670. This is because depreciation of £68,913 has been provided on the properties, a decrease in investments value of £53,920 but an increase in the value of the property of £51,163, giving a total of £71,670.

6.5 Unrestricted funds have increased in the year by £17,386, compared to an increase last year of £14,142. There is actually an operating surplus for the year amounting to £27,402 (2015: £23,882). This is despite income having decreased slightly, so it means expenditure has been well controlled, having actually reduced in the period.

6.6 There was income from a number of grants: £7,533 from Forestry commission for new wood and maintenance, £500 from Hertfordshire County Council Locality budget for the printing of a new general park leaflet.

6.7 Costs: The largest cost in the accounts i.e. wages have fallen. Office cost has greatly reduced down with the new copier agreement (copier lease costs in 2014: £7,680). Park maintenance have decreased in 2016, but 2015 was high compared to 2014 and there is grant income to cover some of these costs. Legal costs are higher in the year with planning in the year and insurance costs have increased.

6.8 The Chairman thanked the LK Partnership for their work over the year and Ian Carter and Gowers for the audit of accounts.

7 Adoption of Accounts

7.1 A motion that the annual accounts for the year ended 31 March 2016 be adopted was proposed by Mike Curtis and seconded by Tim Abbott. **This was agreed.**

8 Appointment of Auditors

8.1 A motion that Gowers Ltd. be re-appointed as the Highfield Park Trust auditor for the year 2016/17 financial year was proposed by Jamie Day and seconded by Kevin Barnes. **This was agreed.**

9 Questions & Discussion

9.1 A question was raised about the policy on rubbish bins. The Park Manager explained that experience has shown that more rubbish accumulates around the bins and so it was not planned to increase the number of bins in the park and park users should be encouraged to take their rubbish home with them. Issues with parents of footballers will be taken up with the football club.

9.2 There was concern about the uncultivated plots at the allotments. The Park Manager explained that some non-cultivation notices had been sent out, but if tenants do not keep their allotments tidy their tenancy would not be renewed next year.

The Chairman thanked the Park Manager and staff for their work throughout the year and everyone for attending and invited everyone to join trustees in refreshments. The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.