



Friends of Northcote Nature Reserve

MINUTES

Meeting: EGM: Friday 9th June, Isleworth Allotments hut, 7.30pm

Present: Vanessa Smith, Lyn Halstead, Alan Smith, Hilary Thomson, Jo Bonner, Jean East, Andrew Micklewski, David Vroegindeweij

Apologies: Martyn Day, Cris Edgell, Scott Doyle, Aimee Dadswell, Ben Driver, Surya Cooper, Ursula Lehnert.

Printed copies of the existing and new Constitutions were provided (the new Constitution was emailed to those present in advance of the meeting).

Hilary introduced the EGM by explaining the background and reason for the meeting: FoNNR have been working with the South West London Environment Network, an umbrella group supporting volunteer environment and Friends groups in LBRUT and LBH. SWLEN have recommended all groups working with them adopt their model Constitution as this represents best practice.

She explained that SWLEN have helped FoNNR set up their website, are advising on sources of funding and also hold quarterly meetings at which their affiliated groups can meet up, discuss current issues, swap information and hear the latest position on local authority and contractor issues.

Those present were asked if they had any specific issues they would like to raise about the model Constitution and/or how it differed from the existing one.

Jo Bonner asked why 'supporting the boating culture of the tidal Crane' was included in the Vision and Purposes of the Constitution. She felt this was at odds with the idea of a nature reserve, which requires tranquillity.

Hilary said dogs will be allowed in the Nature Reserve and that there are now 28 boats on the tidal Crane. That apart from the Manns' and the Greenwoods' boats, there are some small boats up river of the Northcote footbridge, at the bottom of gardens along the 'natural' stretch of Crane alongside the allotments. Their owners used to use them but are less able to do so currently as that stretch is silting up. She added that the Richmond Canoe Club come up the Crane during the summer months (12 or so canoes at a time). Andrew

said some of the people on the other side of the island also had boats that they use.

Jo said there are no boats on her stretch of the river.

Hilary said that because of the nature of the tides on the Tidal Crane and the weir by the Northcote bridge, which is impossible to pass if you have a boat with a keel or an engine, the only boats likely to navigate to this end of the river are canoes, kayaks or shallow-bottomed small boats – in other words rowing or paddling craft, which by their nature are quiet.

Jo said this clarified the situation.

Vanessa suggested discussing point 7 in the new model Constitution which states “The Secretary shall maintain a register and index of Members. The register shall be open to inspection by any Member upon application to the Committee.”

Hilary explained that Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) responsible for Data Protection had pointed out that any use of members’ data other than the ‘expected’ uses (in our case communicating with members about Friends matters, meetings etc) should be flagged up when members join.

It was agreed this could be done via the Membership form, when it is created.

Membership was discussed. Vanessa stated that it was felt impractical to charge for membership at present as this creates work collecting subscriptions, book keeping etc. It was agreed that the detail of membership could be discussed at the AGM and should be one of the main items on the Agenda.

It was agreed that the register of members should be names only and that if a member wished to communicate with another member on a specific issue, this should be done via the Membership Secretary.

There was a brief discussion about the lack of gates on the final vision document. Vanessa and Hilary explained the background to this: local authority cuts and the fact that there had been some attacks on volunteers closing gates, which led to difficulties with insuring them.

The AGM date was agreed as Thursday, July 13th.

MEETING ENDED