



Friends of Chislehurst Recreation Ground
Registered Charity Number 1163405

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

The Friends of Chislehurst and Walden Recreation Grounds, also known as FOCRG, was established in 2010 and became a charity on 3 September 2015. It is governed by its Constitution, most recently amended 30 July 2015. The charity's principal objective is to assist in maintaining and improving Chislehurst & Walden recreation grounds and associate community facilities for the benefit of the inhabitants of the area with the object of improving their conditions of life. Funds are raised through grants, events and by encouraging donations from local people and businesses. We rely on this funding and volunteers to provide free community events and park improvements. The Trustees of the Charity are the committee:

Chair	Barbara Arora	Social media & marketing	Pia Burbidge
Secretary	Alison Stammers	Gardening Club	Mai Bunce
Treasurer	Julie Covill	Consultant engineer & factotum	Ian Douglas
Events	Rachelle Harte	Member without portfolio	Clive Richardson

Our financial year began with the run up to Christmas 2019 and a second very successful Gingerbread House event, held in conjunction with the Invicta Scout Group. 2020 started with planning various events, including a bigger than ever Chislehurst Rocks to celebrate our 10th Anniversary year, and a Recycling Roadshow with Chislehurst Society and local environmental groups.

We managed a small birthday party for supporters on 10th March, the anniversary of our first AGM. This was held in the Roost cafe in Chislehurst Recreation Ground pavilion, an apt location as support for building this facility was one of our first objectives. However early Covid-19 precautions were already in place and sadly the rest of the year's events were cancelled.

Cancellation of events meant limited opportunities for fund raising. We looked for grant funding opportunities and were fortunate in being awarded £500 from Southern CoOp's Love Your Neighbourhood Charity for development of the gardening club, and another £1000 from Ecclesiastical Giving's Movement for Good, for installation of a picnic bench. Small sums are received when supporters make purchases through Amazon Smile and Easy Fund Raising.

Achievements include installation of two outdoor table tennis tables and ongoing provision of bats and balls. These can be borrowed from the Roost in return for voluntary donations. Grants from The Chislehurst Society and Bromley Friends Forum funded a shed for the gardening club's equipment. The Invicta Scout Group kindly granted permission for the shed to be located in the security of their compound. In return the Gardening Club is helping them with planting projects. We also persuaded the Environment Agency and Thames Water to investigate the source of water running into the drainage ditch in Chislehurst Rec. They cleared out a backlog of debris and the water now flows much cleaner.

Working in partnership with idVerde, we retained our Green Flag status for a fourth year. We also earned Outstanding in the RHS London in Bloom "It's your Neighbourhood" award for the fourth time although due to Covid-19, judging was based on a written submission. The judges were

impressed by the progress of the gardening club and our efforts to promote environmental projects. The gardening club now has 8 regular volunteers. Gardening is acknowledged as beneficial for physical and mental wellbeing and prior to lockdown we had begun to promote our club to local GP surgeries. It is hoped that once Covid-19 restrictions are relaxed we can resume this initiative and grow our volunteer base.

The Covid pandemic has greatly increased use of parks and open spaces. Our recreation grounds have been busy with both regular visitors and many newcomers. During lockdown regular volunteers used their permitted exercise periods to litter pick, fill dog poo bag dispensers, clean the water fountain, do gardening work, water plants and generally try to keep on top of things. Our social media presence was also very important during this time, reminding members of the public of responsible behaviour, promoting environmental issues, suggesting children's activities, including painting rocks to make a Connie the Covid snake, and an anti-litter campaign. We also promoted activities for other community groups. We continued to work closely with idVerde on environmental matters and have agreed an area in Walden Recreation Ground which will be left unmown to encourage return of wildflowers for a bee corridor. We continue to work with other Friends Groups through Bromley Friends Forum and are represented on the new Bromley Environment Network.

Moving forward to 2021, with the Recs now so well used, our first priority is extra benches. After listening to park users, FOCRГ and idVerde submitted a proposal to London Borough of Bromley for several new benches and a sheltered, curved seat. Bromley must approve the plan, but funds must be found by us. While we await permission, we have already started searching for possible grant funds. Sponsored memorial benches will be another option.

Membership of FOCRГ currently stands at 562 households, 842 members. People do seem to appreciate our efforts to make the Recreation Grounds a safe and pleasant environment but the number of actual volunteers remains low. We have a committee of 8 plus a further 6 – 10 regular volunteers, mainly family and friends of committee members, who can be called upon for projects. We have missed the help of Chislehurst 5th Cubs. Due to Covid restrictions they have only been able to help tend the shade garden and habitat haven on a couple of Saturdays but they remain enthusiastic, and the gardening club is making a noticeable difference.

Despite Covid-19 restrictions, the Gardening Club have given 503 hours this year. With Covid-19 restricting work parties and events, other volunteers still contributed approximately 1020 hours. That's an amazing total of 1523 hours to protect, promote and improve our Recreation Grounds. We started the year noting this would be our 10th birthday. Most of us have been on the Committee for all of those years. To keep FOCRГ strong and effective, we need some commitment from new volunteers. If that could be you, please get in touch.

Barbara Arora
Chair FOCRГ 9th November 2020

Gardening Club Report

The Gardening Club started on 1 May 2019. Our first report to the Committee covered the period 1/5/19 until 13/11/19.

This is the second report to the AGM and covers the period 20/11/19 until 31/10/20.

The gardening club continued through lockdown although it was mostly just me [I did my daily constitutional]. Members started coming back on 27 May, and by 10 June we were back on track.

The total volunteer hours was 503 including watering and other chores.

The most volunteers we had was 16 in the summer. There is a regular group of 8, sometimes boosted by FOCRG members.

Our heartfelt thanks to

- Our wonderful volunteers who turn up in all weathers – and remain enthusiastic, even when it rains
- Idverde for supplying plants – gratis, and supplying a copious amount of compost – also gratis
- FOCRG for supplying plants, tools and their ongoing support
- Ian, Andrew and Barbara for ‘rescuing’ the timbers used for the raised bed
- Barbara for cultivating plants and over-wintering so many plants
- Pia for media coverage
- Alan for his carpentry skills
- Park users who have donated plants
- The Roost for supplying half price drinks on Gardening Club days
- Invicta Scouts who allow us to use the compound
- The 6th Chislehurst cubs for putting in plants and bulbs

I feel we have excelled ourselves this year. I feel quite proud of our progress. We over-wintered a number of plants and, thanks to Barbara, raised plenty from seeds. We aim to over-winter again and increase the number of bulbs thus reducing the cost of plants.

Mai Bunce
Gardening Club Co-ordinator

Appendix. Volunteer Hours

Work parties: 543 hours

- Regular weekly Gardening Club plus individuals working alone during lockdown (503)
- Chislehurst 5th Cubs Saturday work mornings x 2 (35)
- Remembrance Poppies for wreath and gate. (5)

Events 138 hours

- Build a Gingerbread House. Fund raiser in conjunction with Invicta Scout Group. Includes planning, collecting materials, making up samples, feed back (48)
- FOCRG 10th birthday party – including preparation of banners, photo board timeline and refreshments. (90)

FOCRG Committee Meetings 69 hours

- 1 Regular meeting (48)
- 1 x Zoom meeting. (6)
- 1 x AGM Zoom (15)

Meetings with idVerde / LBB 8 hours

- Green Flag and management plan meetings (3)
- Site meetings to plan Bee Corridor (5)

Interaction with other organisations Approx 17 hours

Participation in Bromley Friends Forum (8)

Liaison with Ward Councillors and various LBB officers from environment and green spaces, properties, planning, enforcement & security departments. This involved meetings, emails and phone calls (3)

Chislehurst Rotary, Chislehurst Town Team and Visit Chislehurst for joint community events (3)

Chislehurst Society Symposium (5)

Invicta Scout Group and Chislehurst 5th Cubs (1)

Behind the scenes 580 hours

Emails and phone calls, minutes and newsletters (40)

Website management (20)

Identify and apply for grants, donations, awards (30)

Treasurer's duties i.e. book keeping, banking, dealing with accountant, submitting records to Charity Commission (90)

Social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram – used to generate interest, explain policy and works in the Rec, advertise events, raise awareness and stimulate discussion of environmental and community issues. Monitor and edit comments on our various platforms. Research and design for campaigns, posters etc. (400)

Ongoing tasks 168 hours

Supply of poo bags – collect from sponsors, fill dispensers daily. (100)

Litter picking, cleaning up dog mess. (35)

Cleaning drinking fountain (10)

Printing, laminating and distributing posters in the community (10)

Management of notice boards (8)

Graffiti removal (2)

Preparation of equipment for loan/hire. Checking and storing on return (3)

Total volunteer hours 1523