



Friends of Chislehurst Recreation Ground
Registered Charity Number 1163405

ANNUAL REPORT 2021 -22

Structure, Governance and Management

The Friends of Chislehurst and Walden Recreation Grounds, also known as FOCR, 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.	Environment & Biodiversity	Gary Tyler
Events	Rachelle Harte	Member without portfolio	Clive Richardson
Consultant engineer & factotum Ian Douglas			

Objectives and Activities

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.

Achievements and Performance

At our last AGM, the future of Recreation Ground events was still uncertain following the Covid epidemic, but we were determined to normalise things as soon as permissible. And we have!

Technology mastered during the pandemic e.g. Zoom, WhatsApp, Teams, Twitter, Facebook, continues to improve our communication skills with supporters, volunteers, other community groups, Friends Forum, LBB and idVerde, but proper face to face contact is also firmly back in place.

Our first event, on November 28th, was reinstatement of our popular Make a Gingerbread House in conjunction with the Invicta Scout Group and Cavemen Explorers. Yes, we were more socially distanced and hand sanitised, ventilation was improved and some wore masks, but it was wonderful to see people coming together again.

By June we'd entered full swing into celebrating the Platinum Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth. The Gardening Club designed and built a very imaginative planter from old pallets and filled it with a "carpet" of plants spelling ERLL. Earlier in the year we used grant funds from Groundwork UK to plant a living willow "crown" in the children's playground. When fully established, this will not only make a fun playhouse but will also help to take up excess ground water and prevent development of mud puddles in the winter. The grand finale was the evening of 2nd June when, at exactly 9.45pm, at our free Jubilee Picnic in the Park, we lit a beacon as part of the national chain. The gas fired beacon was funded by a grant from the Chislehurst Society, entertainment was provided by the London Concert Chorus who also led singing of the National Anthem. Local Cubs and Scouts provided ceremonial flags, games and refreshments. Thanks also to Malcolm

Fox, Group Scout Leader for providing the propane and giving us safety instructions. We all agreed this sort of community event is what parks are for.

June 18th saw the return of Chislehurst Rocks, our free music festival. Over 11 years, ChisRocks has developed well beyond the capacity of our amateur management skills so we enlisted the help of ClearSynergy, the not for profit division of Lollipop Events. The free day out was once again a great success with emphasis not only on good music and fun, but also safety and inclusivity.

The Gardening Club has gone from strength to strength with a growing number of volunteers for their regular Wednesday work parties, many of whom also help with other projects. The group recognises the importance of team work, inclusivity and tackling loneliness. Friendships and support are developing between members. Work sessions end with coffee, biscuits and chat. A Christmas lunch was another perk. Grant funding from the City Bridge Trust is in place to support the Gardening club for 5 years from May 2022, so we anticipate continued development.

The year has seen them working with a particular emphasis on sustainability and adapting for climate change. They are very adept at up-cycling and recycling materials, nurturing, propagating and overwintering plants, and have installed rain water storage barrels and a composting system. The drought this summer was particularly challenging but thanks to regular watering by our team of volunteers, the planters and new shrubs survived. The London in Bloom It's Your Neighbourhood judges awarded us Outstanding for the 6th year in a row. In conjunction with idVerde we also retained our Green Flag for the 6th year. Special thanks and recognition must go to our very dedicated Gardening Club coordinator Mai Bunce, and her husband Alan, who designs, builds, fetches and carries as required.

Grants raised by FOCRГ enabled installation of a sheltered bench and improved surfacing around our table tennis tables. The table tennis tables are now used all year round. The shelter is proving a popular place for people of all ages to meet. There have been a few issues with overly noisy teenagers but on the whole it has not proved to be the major focus for antisocial behaviour which some people feared. If particularly bad behaviour is noticed, the Police Safer Neighbourhood Team are happy to investigate, but members of the public need to take responsibility and inform them.

Apart from our publicised events and work parties, FOCRГ volunteers routinely pick up litter, provide dog poo bags and clean the drinking fountain. We work with Duke of Edinburgh award students and a dedicated group of Cubs from the Chislehurst 5th Group and liaise with other Scouts, FC Elmstead, the Tennis Club, Bootcamp and other park users. We also worked with idVerde to devise a plan of work for a Community Payback Team. Numerous hours are routinely given to background tasks like publicity, event planning, learning new skills as required, applying for grants and dealing with LBB and idVerde, sometimes collaboratively but sometimes seeking modifications to their plans, or simply some action. We have not forgotten LBB's plans for building a school in part of Walden Woods and, thanks to a grant from the Chislehurst Society, were able to commission an initial environmental survey.

Other FOCRГ park improvements have focussed on the environment and biodiversity. In December we cleared an overgrown area in Whytes Wood and in January, led by woodland experts from idVerde, created a natural play area around a fallen tree trunk. This was so successful that a new Environment and Biodiversity Group was launched in February, aiming to meet on the 1st Sunday of each month. To date we have cleared cherry laurel and other invasive species from the Agnes Whyte Bird Sanctuary, started digging out the ditch along the edge of Whyte's Wood and achieved a massive clear up of spray paint cans and other litter from Walden Woods behind the electricity substation.

Funding

We continue to attempt to raise funds for park improvement through grants, donations, and holding events.

We were fortunate enough to be successful with a few grants starting with a grant from the City Bridge Trust for £11,900 to support the work of Gardening Club over the next five years starting in May 2022; £1,450 was received in this financial year. We also received the first portion of a Co-op Community grant toward Gardening Club costs of £271. We received a grant of £2,546 from Groundwork UK toward our Queen's Living Willow Crown project in the playground. Finally, we received two grants from the Chislehurst Society totaling £1,088 supporting ecology work and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebration in the Recreation Grounds.

Small donations continue to be received from supporters, for use of the table tennis equipment and small sums are received when supporters make purchases through Amazon Smile and Easy Fund Raising. The Gardening Club made £239 selling secondhand books donated by Rec users to raised funds for plants and equipment.

Our gingerbread event contributed £1,140 in income, which contributed £339 in profit toward park improvements.

Additional benefits for the Recreation Grounds have been received "in kind" by donations of building and landscaping materials from supporters.

Membership

Membership of FOCRG currently stands at 604 households, 890 members. People regularly thank us for making the Recreation Grounds a safe and pleasant environment, but the number of actual volunteers remains low. We have a committee of 9 plus a further 10-12 regular volunteers who can be called upon for projects.

FOCRG volunteers, including the Gardening Club and the new Environment & Biodiversity Group, contributed an amazing total of 2641 hours to protect, promote and improve our Recreation Grounds.

For the future

Ongoing projects include work on our no mow wild flower areas, hedge and tree planting and further maintenance of the Bird Sanctuary. Joanna Friel, the Chislehurst Society's local history expert, has researched the life of Agnes Whyte for us and we will develop her findings into an interpretation board about this inspirational woman who gave the woods and bird sanctuary to the people of Chislehurst.

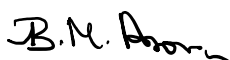
Our happy Jubilee year sadly ended with the death of Her Majesty, which FOCRG marked with a Union flag at half mast in the playground. We now look forward to planning some fitting events to celebrate the coronation of HM King Charles. To do this and keep FOCRG the dynamic force it is, more volunteers are needed, for all types of jobs. We hope you will join us.

Financial Review

During the year ended 2 September 2022, FOCRG received income of £7,027. Total resources expended were £25,033. Net Incoming/(outgoing) Resources were -£18,006.

The financial statements are set out on pages 1-14 and the independent examiners report on page 15. The independent examiner is Mattison & Co.

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above,



Barbara Arora
Chair FOCRG 14th November 2022

Appendix. Volunteer Hours

Work parties: 1640 hours

- Regular weekly Gardening Club plus extra individual work
- Environmental & Biodiversity group
- Chislehurst 5th Cubs Saturday work mornings
- Remembrance Poppies for wreath and gate.

Events hours 463 hours

- **Gingerbread Houses**
- **Jubilee Beacon Picnic**

- **Chislehurst Rocks**
- **London in Bloom Awards**

Other activities: 538 hours

Committee meetings, site meetings with idVerde, LBB, interaction with other organisations including Friends Forum, Chislehurst Society, Invicta Scout Group, Chislehurst 5th Cubs, Emails, telephone calls, administrative tasks including grant applications, book keeping, Charity commission documentation, policy writing, social media and website maintenance, research and design for campaigns,, posters etc.

Regular, ongoing activities, Maintenance of drinking fountain, Litter picking, provision of dog poo bags

Total volunteer hours 2641 hours