

Minutes of Manor House Gardens Users' Group meeting 11 October 2011, Pistachio's Café

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Jim Mallory, Baz Golin, Karen and Aysin Djemil (Pistachio's), Sue Byford, Peter Richardson.

Present

Rowan Bosworth-Davies (Chair), Kath Harley (Recruitment/Treasurer), Anne Fisher (Secretary), Angela Joy, Carolyn Bosworth-Davies, Judy Cole, Patricia Richardson, Sheila Peck, Alfene Rhodes (Neighbourhood Community Safety Service, Lewisham), Gemma Marston (Glendale), Crofton St Louis, Elizabeth Caulfield.

2 Minutes of last meeting (AGM)

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the AGM on 25 June 2011.

3 Glendale's Update

Rowan welcomed Gemma Marsden back from maternity leave. The agenda was reorganised to enable Gemma to answer questions about the funding of User Group Events in the Gardens (moved to item 4 on the agenda) before she left.

4 User Group Events/ Feedback on Dog Show/ Future events

Rowan Bosworth-Davies reported that some members had expressed concern about events that were publicised as being sponsored by MHGUG, but which were raising money primarily for outside stallholders and not Manor House Gardens. Examples were the funfair, donkey rides and bouncy castle at the Party in the Park, which are booked by Aysin from Pistachio's. The fees charged by some of these were substantial and thought to be too expensive for many families with young children, though the Punch and Judy Show was free. Aysin has been organising these events with very little help from MHGUG members: it has proved difficult to get volunteers from MHGUG to help run stalls. Carolyn B-D suggested that we would find it easier to get help if the Party in the Park was a shorter, not an all-day event, perhaps on a smaller scale.

R B-D said we need to establish a protocol for events. He had no objection to stallholders making a profit, but we need to have clear guidelines and greater transparency.

Gemma Marsden said that Glendale charge a fee for Venue Hire (3 per cent of their funding comes from these charges). Charges are £50 Venue Hire for a community event plus Glendale's admin charges (£25 for a small event, less than 20 people; £75 + VAT for a large event). It was suggested that if anyone wants to organise an event in the Gardens, he/she should inform the Users' Group before making the arrangements. When an event is arranged in conjunction with MHGUG, it was proposed that an agreement should be made that MHGUG gets some income (such as 10% of the takings). A vote was taken, and the proposal was passed by the meeting.

This year the **Dog Show** was held on the grass area of Manor House Gardens instead of the Tennis Courts. As usual, Angela Joy did a great job in organising this section of the Party in the Park, though there were fewer categories and less money spent by participants. It was decided that we should publicise the Dog Show in other local parks next year. Angela is happy for the event to return to the tennis courts. It was suggested that the Dog Show might be held separately from the Party in the Park, but the members agreed that Angela should decide on this.

Future events Carolyn B-D suggested that we should organise more community events for young families, as in the early days of the Users' Group. Suggestions were a Treasure Hunt; Fancy

Dress; Bulb Planting; Tidying the Gardens.

The next meeting should discuss the next Party in the Park – suggestions would be welcome..

Other suggestions were an Art weekend and a Christmas event.

5 Membership Drive: Kath Harley

Kath reported that she'd sent out 76 letters to update our membership list, and received 17 replies. She also sent 35 emails – only one person replied.

She is distributing leaflets and forms to local playgroups and the library in a drive to encourage more young families to get involved.

6 Trees and Ivy

Lewisham Council reported that the ivy growing up the trees in the Gardens is not necessarily damaging. They had no objections to MHGUG members cutting through the base of the ivy to kill the higher growth. Elizabeth Caulfield said this should be done immediately, not in the birds' breeding season.

- The trees that have fallen into the lake will be removed when the council has the money.
- EC objected to the fact that non-native trees are being planted in the Gardens, such as the five palm trees in the Wildlife Garden next to the play area, which are not attractive to birds. This area is also being mown instead of being left natural to attract birds and other wildlife. Rowan B-D said he's ask Adrian Wickham at Glendale to consult EC on plants and planting concepts for MHG.

7 Any Other Business

Unlocked Gates

It was reported that parkkeepers were leaving at 4pm, leaving the gates unlocked until late in the evening and also that they were not patrolling the whole of the Gardens, in particular the area leading to Taunton Road. Rowan B-D said he'd speak to Adrian at Glendale to see if anything could be done, though funding is an issue. (Update: the gates are now being locked much earlier, at dusk).

MHG board

The board outside the park keepers' office describing the history of the Gardens has been covered over by notices. Can it be moved?

Dog area

There is only one bench in this area. Could we have more?

Pond

The park keepers have not been breaking the ice round the edges of the pond. This is Glendale's responsibility.

Neighbourhood Community Safety Service

Alfene Rhodes, the Neighbourhood Community Safety Officer, Lewisham, informed the meeting that this service took over from the Anti-Social Behaviour and Warden Scheme in April. The team are running surgeries in Pistacchio's Cafe and Sainsbury's (dates were circulated). They are covering Lee & Blackheath, and if you want to contact them, the numbers are: Alfene Rhodes 0208 314 6098 and George Smart 0208 314 6163

Date of next meeting

Tuesday 27 March at 7.30pm, in Pistachio's café in the Gardens. Entrance by Old Road.