

MINUTES: FRIENDS OF BECKETT PARK NINTH AGM

25TH MARCH 2025 (AT LOAF CAFE)

Attendees:

Margaret Crowe (Chair/Treasurer), Andrew Pomeroy (Vice Chair), Helen Kirk, Martina Rosenberg, Jemma Pendlebury, Lewis Hemingway, Marcus Evans, Jim Kieran, Lindsay Ballantine, Maia Sule, Cllr Izaak Wilson

Apologies: James Murphy, Sadie Binns

1. WELCOME TO OUR NINTH AGM

Margaret welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave details of the apologies. The minutes from the last AGM were approved.

2. CHAIR'S REPORT

Margaret gave her report, copy below:

Thank you for attending our AGM or indeed reading this report. Thank you to Loaf for opening their doors this evening, especially for us.

We are lucky to have such a great green space, which we as Friends work hard to keep it at its best and it takes efforts from all quarters to achieve this.

So thanks

- To our Councillors for their support in all that we do
- To Parks and Countryside for their maintenance and support, especially as they continue to be so stretched
- To our volunteers (the maintenance team), who meet most weeks and do a significant amount of planting, clearing, building and maintaining...to the litter pickers
- To the Committee...small in numbers but the work that is done is huge and appreciated...
- To all that help with the annual concert and picnic, including the local churches who asked to be involved in 2019 and have offered their help and support since. We have a date for 2025 – 29th June 2025 and we have Matthew Street Beat and Roadblock this year. The Council are not running the Concert Season this year and we have decided to go it alone. Thanks again to our Councillors for supporting us.

Why not get involved?

We want to improve areas for Park users to chat and socialise.....or to enjoy a quiet moment.

We want more benches and trees

We want to improve the skatepark area.....more of that later

We would love to hear from you if you would like to be involved...either to join the Committee or just to be involved in specific projects such as the Saturday work parties or our picnic.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT 2025

Margaret gave her Treasurer's Report:

The income and expenditure account for the year ended 31st March 2024 is attached. We have shown by way of memo the income and expenditure to 31st December 2024. The balance at the bank is currently just above £2500 as there have been further costs to date in 2025. Most of our income is derived from the Annual Picnic and Concert, which is why this is such an important event for us. We do receive some additional funds when we are asked for a memorial tree or bench. These are supplied at cost, plus a suggested donation for funds. We also received some Mice Money in the year under review. Our expenses are modest, mostly comprising of trees and related expenses, insurance and minimal stationery and website costs. It is likely that costs will be higher this year in hiring the band and probably the provision and installation of more benches.

4. APPROVAL OF THE ACCOUNTS

The accounts were approved.

5. PARK MANAGEMENT REPORT

Andrew gave his Park Management Report to the group. Extracts below, full report on our website at www.beckettspark.org.uk/documents

COUNCIL FINANCES

Like other local authorities, the Council's resources are very stretched. In Beckett Park they cut the grass, empty litter bins, fell dangerous trees, and maintain the playground. For almost everything else – tree and bulb planting, bench provision, woodland management, path clearance, graffiti removal, litter picking, etc. – the Friends volunteer to do the work, raising funds as required.

TENNIS COURTS

We are delighted that our tennis courts have been refurbished by the Lawn Tennis Association. There is an online booking system, and the courts are well-used.

PONDS

We've completed the pond in the copse north of the playground. We constructed a 'dead hedge' and fence to limit access, then dug out the pond which we hope will attract amphibians and other wildlife. This year we are starting to develop a pond/wetland area on the western edge of the western copse – we have already constructed a 'dead hedge'.

TREE PLANTING

We continue to replace mature trees lost to disease and old age. In the last year we've planted several more ornamental trees along the main path, one of which was sponsored as a memorial by a local family.

NEW WOODLAND

The new woodland planted two winters near Queenswood Road ago is now getting well established.

ORCHARD

We've added more apple trees to our new orchard in the south-east corner of the meadow. There are now sixteen. When the trees are established the apples will be free to pick.

WATER RUNOFF AND DRAINAGE

Water from springs and saturated ground continues to flow across the main path and onto Queenswood Road, creating a hazard in frosty weather (see Google Earth image). Last year we asked the Council to look into solutions, but we have heard nothing further. Our proposed new pond may reduce this problem slightly.

SPONSORED TREES AND BENCHES

This year we installed one sponsored memorial bench and planted one sponsored memorial tree.

VANDALISM AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

We've been fortunate not to experience serious vandalism. However In the last couple of years fires have been lit almost weekly, usually fuelled by books stolen from the local Little Free Library, and pieces of the playground safety surface are frequently ripped up. Recently several timber tree guards have been destroyed, though fortunately the trees have been largely undamaged. We also experience speeding electric bikes and occasional quad bikes.

SATURDAY VOLUNTEERS Our small group of volunteers meet most Saturday mornings to construct benches, plant trees, and generally keep the park in good order. We need more volunteers, as we have only four or five regulars, most of whom are getting old! We love being out in our beautiful park, and it's rewarding to see our work improve the park year by year. If you'd like to be added to the Saturday mailing list please let us know – there's no obligation to come every week.

6. ACTION PLAN 2024

- **Investigate sources of funding**
- **Skatepark and MUGA** - continue to explore designs and funding opportunities (see item 8 below)
- **Goal Posts** - look into provision of simple fixed goalposts, possibly on the disused cricket pitch
- **Benches** – add benches in poorly-served areas such as top of 'toboggan field'
- **Tree planting** – continue to replace felled trees and add ornamentals to the main avenue
- **Ponds** – develop pond/wetland on western edge of western copse
- **Information boards** – design, and seek funding for, boards to interpret history and wildlife
- **Recycling** – continue to recycle materials from tree protection

7. APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMITTEE

Margaret was re-elected as Chair of FOBP, Andrew as Vice Chair, and Helen, Jemma, Martina and James as committee members.

New members – Marcus and Lewis offered to join the committee - Lewis to advise on grants/fund raising.

Margaret will continue as Treasurer for the time being.

Sadie wishes to stand down from the role of Secretary.

8. MUGA AND/OR SKATEPARK

We are actively looking to redevelop the skatepark area following the improvements to the tennis courts. We have had interest from Residents and Park users to bring this to fruition. We mentioned last year that the project was put on hold following Covid and the price escalations that followed. It has

always been our intention to resurrect this project, and we are now debating what is the best use of this space. Another park in Leeds has recently had a MUGA installed in an area which is greater than what we have available at a price of £54k which is much more achievable than the £302k plus vat that was mentioned in earlier discussions for a dedicated skatepark. We wondered whether we should consider applying for a MUGA utilising half of the space that is available, leaving the other half resurfaced, but with minimal skateboarding features. We would like to open this to the floor for further discussion.

The meeting was supportive of the proposed strategy.

Margaret mentioned that Veolia is likely to be an appropriate funder, (up to a maximum of £75,000).

We would like to have a draft proposal ready for display and consultation at the picnic at the end of June. Jemma and Martina to lead on taking the project forward.

Izaak offered to check with Parks as to which officer could help with developing a design and estimating costs. Jemma asked Izaak to copy her in to the conversation.

9. AOB

The Council's Summer Band programme is not running this year. Councillor Julie Heselwood has kindly offered MICE money to cover the cost of hiring a band and meeting the Council's costs for the picnic this year. The meeting agreed to accept this offer with thanks.

10. DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING-TBA