



# FRIENDS OF CHaT PARKS.

(Reg. Charity no: 1166255 )

## Minutes of the 12th Annual General Meeting

**27th May 2021 at 7.00 pm. By Zoom.**

### **1) Present** 22 members

Ian welcomed everyone and thanked them for joining in this unusual way, by Zoom.

Ian advised that we had lost two of our members since the last meeting, Jo Brown and Allen Robinson had both been very active volunteers and will be greatly missed. We will remember them.

**2) Apologies:** Received from Margaret Dodd, Margaret Morgan, Janet Deighton, Merewyn Sayers, John O'Hara, Mary Roche, Joe Brandi, Keith Hant, Anne Grimshaw, Geoffrey Wood, Christine Sharman

**3) Minutes of the 11th AGM** of February 2020 were circulated and accepted as a correct record. There were no matters arising

### **4) Chairman's Report:**

Ian said that this last year had been a very difficult one, with many things having to be cancelled, but we had managed to keep some things going.

The number of people using the Park has significantly increased as people have realised the value of green and open spaces.

We have had many complimentary comments about the work of volunteers, particularly in the Secret Garden and the Aviary. It is gratifying to see that their hard work is being recognised.

The Council has allocated nearly a million pounds to carry out improvements to the Park. The three areas selected under the project are:

The Lake

The Amphitheatre

The Children's Play Area

A working group has been established to draw up suitable schemes and it is hoped that work will start on the sites next year.

Looking forward, Ian was pleased to see that summer may have come at last. We intend to open the golf and putting this weekend for the Bank Holiday and school half-term. We still need volunteers to manage the ticket office.

It is likely that most events will be cancelled for this year as well, but the Fireworks are planned to go ahead in November and the Music Collective hope to stage the Clarence Music Festival.

Ian reiterated to all members the need for volunteers to plan and carry out projects in the Park and for members to join the Committee of Trustees to manage the work of the Group.

### **5) Finance Report**

Copies of the financial report for the year had been circulated to members. Brian Else, our Treasurer, highlighted some of the key facts, especially the lack of income this year because of cancellation of virtually all our money-raising events.

Brian's report was agreed unanimously and Ian thanked Brian for his work keeping our finances in order.

Mrs Crowther, who examines our accounts, was thanked for her work and Brian recommended that we ask Mrs Crowther to do the same for the current year's accounts. This was agreed and it was agreed to make a donation of £50 to Mrs Crowther.

Brian informed the meeting that our bank, along with many others, is going to reduce the level of “counter service” available to customers and is working towards all transactions being on-line or by machine (ATMs)

## **6) Retirement and election of Trustees:**

In order to comply with our Constitution one third of the Trustees are required to stand down each year. They may then stand for re-election.

Margaret Morgan, Jean Reeve and Peter Stokes had accordingly agreed to stand down, and all three were subsequently re-elected unanimously.

The other Trustees are;

Ian Deighton  
Brian Else  
Miriam Hawkins  
Margaret Dodd  
Merewyn Sayers  
Chris Welch

Ian pointed out that we can have more than the current nine member trustees and he asked members to consider volunteering to be Committee members and Trustees.

## **6) Any Other Business**

Brenda Ashurst raised the issue of rats in several places round the Park. It was agreed that we ask StreetScene to investigate further action to reduce their numbers. She also asked if more litter bins can be provided, especially near the lake. Ian referred to the proposed work around the lake and said that litter bins and seats were part of the project. He stressed that it is important to spend some time designing the project to make sure we get the best scheme. This was supported by Hilary Mitchell. This will be the only chance to improve things so we must get it right. Water quality and suitability for wildlife will be key aspects of the work.

Ruth McCallum asked about the time-scale for the children’s play area. Ian confirmed that a consultation exercise will start shortly and it is hoped that the improved area will be available next spring. Once again, it is important to get the design right. The scheme must ensure that it is accessible for a wide range of abilities.

On a question of anti-social behaviour in the Park, Hilary Mitchell said that, at a recent PACT meeting the police had asked people to make sure they reported all incidents to them.

Kate Honeyman advised that the Clarence Music Festival is planned for 14th and 15th August this year.

Jean Reeve, manager of the Group’s website and facebook account said that there is a great deal of interest shown on both platforms. At the last count we had over 2,000 followers on facebook. Most of the messages and posts are complimentary about the Park and the work of volunteers in various areas. She feels that the social media make a valuable contribution to the work of keeping people informed about what is happening in the Park. Ian thanked Jean for all her work in making sure our social media profile is valid and up-to-date.

Mention was made of the recent news that we should be getting a Park Ranger. Ian said that little detail is known as yet about the proposal to take on several Rangers across the District.

Chris Welch reminded the meeting of the tremendous time and effort which our Chairman puts in to support the Group and the Park. We all owe him a debt of gratitude. This was supported unanimously.