

Minutes of the 39th Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Montclair

-held on Sunday 1 August 2021 at the home of Liz Davies: 45 Dollis Road, Finchley, N3

The meeting commenced at 1.25 pm with 23 members present and the Mayor of Barnet in the Chair

Previous minutes: The Mayor of Barnet, Cllr Alison Cornelius, opened proceedings and the previous AGM minutes were taken as read.

Apologies for absence were received from the following: Ray Telfer, John Wilson, Kathryn and Rob Ross, Joanne Williams and Deborah Antoniou

Chairman's Report

Kate greeted everyone present and emphasised what a great pleasure it was to see some of the Friends of Montclair gathered together in person for the first time since February 2020, 19 long months ago. So many things had happened since then, both in England and America and, indeed, in Barnet and Montclair. For her, the most notable event in that time had been the ousting of President Trump in November. What had terrified her had been that the election which had been won by Joe Biden had seen so many US citizens voting for Mr Trump, when even the Republicans known to her, and her husband had voted against their party's chosen candidate. She added that she knew that town twinning associations were not supposed to be political, but, as nobody whom she had spoken to or emailed in Montclair had supported the "Blonde Bombshell", she felt that a little comment might not be too indiscreet.

Kate continued by saying that in Barnet and England people's lives had been dominated since March 2020 by Covid 19 – the Kent variant, the delta variant and however many others there might be in the future. We had become excellent at recognising people from their masks, as Matt, the "Telegraph" cartoonist, had noted. As far as she knew, she was the only Covid sufferer from the Friends of Montclair. As she had mentioned at the 2020 AGM held on Zoom, Carla Horowitz in Montclair had sadly passed away from the virus. Everyone who had known Carla mourned her.

Kate added that she suspected that everyone at the meeting had received two jabs. She was looking forward to being called for her booster as soon as Sajid Javid decided that they would be available for the vulnerable and ancient.

Kate moved on to a run-down of the FoM's activities since the last AGM. This was not quite a pause for silence as, thanks to the technical wizardry of Mark Leach, FoM had been able to hold two meetings on Zoom. Instead of the usual turkey feast for Thanksgiving 2020, Mark had led members through a talk about paintings by US artists, some of which had depicted Thanksgiving. He had been a most erudite speaker. On Saturday 20 March 2021, she had led an evening about Spring, in which various members had shared music, poetry and reminiscences that meant something to them about Spring.

"Spring has sprung

The grass has riz

I wonder where

The boidies iz."

"They say the bird is on the wing

But that's absurd

The wing is on the bird.”

Not Ogden Nash, but American.

Kate added that she had thoroughly enjoyed that evening and that, once again, it had been through Mark that FoM had been able to hold the event. Mark had also enabled the Committee to meet a few times. Their devotion to duty in these horrid times had been excellent. In particular, Gill Struthers, although not a Covid patient, had suffered a very debilitating illness which had occasioned a 7-hour operation and was still in recovery but was in attendance at the AGM.

Kate continued that the AGM could not have happened without Liz Davies, who had offered at short notice to host it. She thanked Liz on behalf of FoM and, to warm applause, presented her with a gift for Gethin, Liz’s King Charles spaniel puppy.

She went on to say that although her Long Covid had improved recently it had not totally gone. In the expectation that she might be re-elected Chairman at the AGM, she had decided to explore the possibility that other members might be able to host the Chairman’s Tea. Two members had obliged and on Sunday 12 September members were invited to the home of Stephen Payne and Nick Payne-Smith in Cuffley for the Chairman’s Tea.

Kate added that, thanks to Peter Cragg, for the third or fourth year running the South Herts Golf Club had been booked for the FoM Thanksgiving Dinner on Saturday 27 November. The best news was that the Club’s best-ever chef had returned.

She apologised to the mayor that the FoM gift to her was somewhere in the tidied Salinger home and that, were the mayor to attend either the Chairman’s Tea or the Thanksgiving Dinner, she was reasonably certain that it would be found in time to be presented to the mayor then.

Kate laid her report on the table and concluded that her family and she wished everyone present and all the Friends of Montclair a happy and healthy year.

Hon Treasurer’s Report

Les Burdett stated that copies of the Annual Financial Statement to 31 March 2021 had been made available for all to see. Anyone who had paid a subscription for the previous year was having it rolled over to the current year. There was a surplus of just under £6,000.

Election of Officers and Committee

Lori Burdett confirmed that all the officers were willing to stand for 2021/22 and, on the proposal of the mayor, they were re-elected en bloc. Les confirmed that he would be standing down as Treasurer at the end of the current year.

Lori confirmed that all the Committee members were willing to stand for 2021/22. There were no further nominations or volunteers to join the Committee, and, on the proposal of the Mayor, the Committee members were re-elected en bloc.

Address by the Mayor of Barnet, Cllr Alison Cornelius

The mayor said that it was lovely for her to come to celebrate the continued existence of the Friends of Montclair. It was important to keep up the association. Town twinning in Barnet was very lively and the borough had recently acquired a new partner in Nepal. The Friends of Montclair were one of the most vibrant of Barnet’s town twinning organisations. She closed by thanking the FoM for all that they were doing.

Resolutions

None

Notices

None. It was noted that Kate had given the dates and venues for the Chairman's Tea and the Thanksgiving Dinner.

Open Discussion

None

The mayor declared the meeting closed at 1.45pm