**2021 FoFP Co-chairs’ Report**

We are delighted to report positive progress in our park, across the board, over the last 12 months.

First and foremost, for us, the highlight of the year was the Skate-a-thon that we held in order to help raise funds for an enlarged Skate Park.

Last year, The Friends decided to fund-raise for the expansion and improvement of our skate park, when it became apparent during Covid, that the current, modest size, could no longer accommodate the numbers of people of all ages and backgrounds, that wanted to use it.

Many other parts of our park had received funding for improvement, but the skate park was lagging behind. When it became an Olympic sport, we decided to work with Haringey council, who agreed to match-fund what we raised. The success of British competitors at the Summer Olympics, has confirmed the sense of this direction.

We were lucky to get Betong Park to come and survey the site, and to do initial costings and designs. We knew we needed to raise about £100,000, to meet our half. We started a crowd-fund to demonstrate community engagement and desire, and we have raised a **whooping** £45,000 from the community, and from local businesses such as Atom Art Gallery, Deli 80 and Ludlow Thompson, among many other supporters.

That helped us to secure funding from Sport England and from British Cycling. We received other small grants from The Morris Trust, that have now pushed us over the **£55,000 mark.**

We closed the crowd fund with our amazing Skate-a-thon and Skate-Jam event on 11 July, that drew large crowds and lots of contestants and was supported by skate brands: from Clown skateboards to the Southbank Skate Shop.

For the remaining amount needed, we are now finalising a pitch to large brands, like Converse and Xbox for corporate sponsorship deals, and are in talks with Habito who sponsor SkateboardGB for sponsorship of our free lessons, which we aim to start in 2022, and an annual skateJam event which we hope will put Finsbury Park’s skate Plaza, firmly on the skate map!

All being well, the council will start the build towards the end of 2022.

The Co-chairs are grateful to the **sterling** work of our fabulous, fellow Trustee, Bethany.

——

While the Skate Park remains our main focus, we should mention several other points:

The Richard Hope play-space was finally completed by the council; it looks great, despite the enormous cost. The *Changing Places* facility at the opposite end of the Lake side-café was opened; this helps the disabled to more easily effect changes of clothing.

The absence of Wireless this past summer has meant that 100% of the public areas was available to ***all*** of the public.

Following the hammering that our park took in the summer of 2019, a second fallow year has meant that our park has now benefited from two years of actual healing.

The switch of Wireless to Crystal Palace was more luck than judgement; the reaction of south London residents was so cross, that the Crystal Palace Trust was obliged to issue a public apology.

Haringey propose another Wireless next summer, that ***naturally*** we will object to.

Following ours and others’ representations, the misconceived and misguided *Pop-up-pub-in-the-park proposal* was seen off, plus a member of the community organised a petition against it that raised more than **1,000 signatures** in one week.

We believe more **judgement** needs to be exercised over selecting appropriate events. The reliance on event income to fund our parks has been exposed as a misconceived policy and we believe it needs to be reviewed.

We of course, welcome small and family orientated events, and community and multi-cultural events such as the Latin Festival.

We are **pleased** that the council has continued with their **ban on cars** in our park, and hope that this is a permanent feature, while still providing for parking for the disabled, either just inside, or just outside the Hornsey Gate entrance.

On the debit side, while two CCTV poles were erected in mid-year, they have still yet to have cameras attached.

From those whose job it is to work in our park, we *know* that the increased park usage—that we noted last year—has continued this year.

This is also a tribute to the work of the dedicated parks staff under the leadership of park manager Tony Healey. We look forward to this continuing.

--

**What does 2022 hold?**

The Friend’s focus will be on the following:

1. ***lobbying*** for sufficient funds to maintain Finsbury Park as an open, and excellent, public space
2. ***safety improvements,*** reducing crime and Anti-Social Behaviour in the park (e.g. pressing for cameras on top of the CCTV poles)
3. ***Driving specific initiatives*** that improve the feel of the park (e.g. signage, improved entrances)
4. ***To help promote*** the best that Finsbury Park has to offer, and promote the physical and mental events held within it
5. ***Renewed focus*** on engagement with our members and park users, and seek to drive initiatives that respond to that.

And that concludes the co-chairs’ report, back to you Tom, over.