

## **Kennington Association Minutes of Annual General Meeting**

**Where: St Anselm's Church in Kennington**

**Date: 26 January 2022**

Trustees present: Gemma Ware (Secretary), Jim Toohill (Treasurer), Kim Tapsell, Anna Tapsell, Marie-Hélène Briens Ware, Louise Whitley

Also present: Peter Leandre, senior playworker at Lollard Street Adventure Playground; Deborah Arnott, Jon Davies, Sara Correra, David Smith and Ekaterina Belcheva.

The AGM was chaired by Marie-Hélène Briens Ware

### **1. Welcome and introductions from those present**

### **2. Activity report for Lollard Street Adventure Playground**

Peter Leandre, senior play worker at Lollard Street Adventure Playground, gave a presentation to the AGM about the activities of the playground during the past year.

2020/2021 was a year dominated by the pandemic. The playground was shut during periods of lockdown in the early part of the year, then re-opened under government guidance stipulating children could attend in small bubbles. By the summer holidays, once these restrictions were lifted, we were getting 65-70 children per day.

In a survey of 30 children conducted in August 2021, 80% said it was "extremely important to them" that the playground stays open. More than 2/3 said they'd lacked physical activity and play during COVID-19 and that they felt sad and stressed. 93% said they missed their friends. A large majority said that since the playground reopened, they'd most enjoyed seeing and making new friends – and having fun!

Adrian Voce, our former director, who sadly left the charity for a new role in September 2021, was a prominent advocate of free play and helped raise the profile of the playground and its situation, including in an ITV news story. The playground is currently recruiting for a new manager.

The playground's new phase 1 building was completed in early 2021. One room is a quiet room for the children to use during play sessions, and another is being set up as a library with book donations. The building is available for organisations to rent and people from the community to use.

During the early 2021 lockdown, the two football pitches on the site and their surrounding fencing were also renovated at a cost of just under £100,000 thanks to a partnership with Play5aSide who manage pitch bookings on the site.

Play5aSide had organised an inter-adventure playground football tournament during the summer of 2022, attended by over 100 children and young people. We continued to work with our other partners in the neighbourhood – Roots and Shoots, Criss Cross Active, South London Kings and Walnut Tree Walk FC.

There was an ensuing open discussion among those present about what the playground would do with more resources. Suggestions included:

- On-site overnighters
- taking children on trips, including overnight trips, during the summer holidays.
- more healthy food provision on site. The playground gets support from Lambeth council for meals during holidays, but we would like to provide more.
- refresh of structures, construction of new structures
- using the site to better facilitate children's exploration of the natural world – the flora and fauna.

### **3. Presentation of 2020-21 accounts and 2022 financial outlook**

Jim Toohill, the treasurer, presented the 2020-21 accounts for the year ending March 2021. The playground's main expenditure was on wages for our team of play workers. This showed a mixture of income from grants and donations, as well as COVID-19 relief from the government and from a previous funder, Power to Change. The playground's earned income from pitch hire was much reduced in the year, due to lockdown closures.

In the current year ending 31 March 2022, the charity's earned income has rebounded. It received another tranche of COVID-19 relief support and grant funding.

However, in projections for the 2022-23 financial year, the KA has a £78k budgetary short-fall, due to difficulty in securing institutional grants for the year. We have some large bids in with funders, including the National Lottery's Reaching Communities fund, that we are waiting for a response on, but the situation for the future, as it is for many adventure playgrounds, is very challenging.

The financial slides are attached at the bottom of the minutes.

### **4. Secret Santa 2021 campaign**

Gemma Ware, the Kennington Association's secretary, updated the assembly on the 2021 December Secret Santa campaign. We raised £6,168.11 in donations, including Gift Aid and spent £5,400 on vouchers for local families in need before Christmas. The money not spent this year is held over for next year's campaign. Donations came from 42 individual donors, and from the generosity of local residents in the Cleaver Square Residents Association and Heart of Kennington Residents Association. Our thanks go to Nichole Hughes at Ethelred Children's Centre and Nursery, who organised the distribution of the vouchers to local schools and children's centres.

### **5. Projects for 2022 at the playground**

Anna Tapsell, a trustee of the charity, presented to the AGM about the history of the playground and its recent development, including the new building which is currently being kitted out. She explained it is phase I of a two-part project, the second part of which is to replace the existing 1950s pre-fab with a new playroom.

Anna explained that development of phase 2 will take a concerted fundraising effort, including match funding from local developers. This follows the model for the construction of changing rooms built on the playground site, which were supported by Pocket Homes and

the London Marathon Trust. She explained the vision for a playground that continues to be grounded on the principles of free play, and could offer children a wider variety of activities, including music, sport and art. The playground currently offers children and young people some nourishment after school, and during whole day sessions during the holidays, but doing so diverts the playworkers from their main role. A dedicated cook would be a real asset to the playground.

She invited those present to help the project with this ambition.

## **6. Trustee election**

One trustees/director retired in 2021: Adelina Tratarou, and the AGM thanked her for her contribution. Under the KA's governing documents, the two longest standing trustees - in this case, Gemma Ware and Kim Tapsell - must retire, but can stand again. Both wish to do so, and both were reappointed by those present.