



**The Friends of Churchill Gardens
General Meeting of Members and Residents of Churchill Gardens
Tuesday 6th December 2022**

Chair: Jack Maguire

Minutes: Sophie Pope

Apologies:

Zoe (Co-Secretary), Kelly (Vice-Chairperson)

1. Growing membership

Suggestions of growing membership with a poster at Joy, door to door flyering for neighbours who can't use technology. Discussed having a mission statement/logos

2. Grounded Community

Theresa from Grounded shared vision for the future of the Growzone - highlighted the importance of growing food locally for building community resilience. Explained the mission of the charity and that they are really invested in making the project work, while also acknowledging the issues that the Growzone has faced. Key issues include:

- Lack of volunteers
- Hostile behaviour/vandalism
- Concept of responsibility for the Growzone as a whole

Grounded are planning on speaking to local residents to gauge their interest going forward. In terms of hostile behaviour, Theresa suggested that post ASPIRE, the Growzone is regulated with clear expectations of behaviour.

Funding:

- Suggestion of BCP funding being extended, which was agreed was unlikely and will still leave a funding gap.
- Suggestion for FOCG to look at getting funding for the Growzone.
- Suggestion to do nothing and develop as a community garden, which will require a group of people to commit to looking after the space.
- JM referred to ZK's suggestion that FOCG can apply jointly with Grounded for funding.

Theresa explained the merit of offering the space as a community garden with residents paying a nominal amount for the use of a bed for their own use, compared it to Townsend which is running this successfully in a similar social context. Theresa suggested this would give residents vested interest in the space.

Questions raised about the dimensions of the space compared to here, whether it is similar in that there is also a park and cafe - Theresa agreed it was not similar, but categorised as an open green space.

Grounded suggested supporting those using the area with funding, workshops, mentoring etc to assist with using the space successfully.

Some concerns about the area -

- The Growzone was put in place without consulting the community, we need to address whether this is something which is wanted before any further decisions are made
- There has been no indication from ASPIRE as to how the Growzone is to be operated so we cannot make a decision, as we do not know whether it will stay or who will control it
- Ralph explained concerns about how Growzones have been treated in the past and that he cannot see this being treated any better, especially as nobody in the local community seems to be getting involved in it. Theresa suggested attendance is generally low for Aspire activities and that door knocking may be helpful for a consultation procedure.
- Rachel suggested sending a survey to residents to gauge whether people do want the Growzone, and stated that people are tired of the anti-social behaviour it's attracting.
- Sammy stated that issues stem from anger towards ASPIRE because of local residents not being able to use the areas covered under the programme
- Rachel stated that council interference has historically led to issues in Churchill Gardens.
- Dan stated that before everything happened with ASPIRE there was nothing to complain about, however now we have everything and we complain about it and don't support it - will the residents ever be truly happy?
- Question raised on whether the Growzone is more trouble than it's worth, especially with the Secret Garden so close round the corner
- Jonno stated that guidelines would need to come from FOCG and be enforced accordingly
- Ralph suggested consulting with long standing residents to gauge what the needs are of the area and to work collaboratively with them to engage other residents
- Nick stated that this was a great idea, just in the wrong place

- Adam suggested circulating a survey over the month of December to gauge residents opinions on the future of the Growzone.

Two objectives - does the community want the growzone, and does FOCG want to take on responsibility for it?

3. Phil Wright on future of Joy in the Churchill Gardens Hub

Phil explained Joy is an outreach ministry of Coastline Vineyard Church and how it came about - from Becky Playfair addressing what residents wanted and needed in the square. Explained Joy Cafe is a self contained and restricted fund within Coastline and funds are used and managed as such, with any surplus reinvested in the Cafe and the community.

Jack raised questions on how Joy works alongside ASPIRE. Phil explained there is an agreement in place to do a financial reconciliation with the council at the end of the year (late March/early April). Nick suggested information on how much is being invested in the local community would be helpful.

Sammy explained the practical ways Joy gives back to the community e.g free kids parties, special offers etc and has offered to record this for FOCG if needs be.

Nick stated that FOCG would like to come up with strategies for how Joy and FOCG can continue using the new building after the ASPIRE project.

Phil stated that Joy's licence ends on 28th February, Jack stated that FOCG will support Coastline in a bid to keep the space.

Members voted to support Coastline's bid to continue using the Joy building. Nick stated that we need to come up with some strategies, Phil stated Joy need to know what is being offered and what the council's expectations are before any decisions are made.

Suggestions of building a 'portfolio' case of what Joy has meant to the community to assist with any bids to take over the building.

Update from PCSOs

- Stated that urinating/anti social behaviour has decreased through Joy having built relationships with those involved and allowing them to use Joy toilets.
- Discussions of anti social behaviour in The Onion ongoing.
- Asked if the behaviour in general has improved.

Meeting ended at 19:47

Adam gave bank cards to Sophie and Jack.

