

Chair's Report AGM – 20th November 2006

1. I am delighted to be able to report that FARRG has, once again, played a pivotal role in the affairs of the park and in the delivery of a number of milestones for our local recreation ground and play area; achievements which will mark 2006 as a truly transforming and memorable year for the Albert Rec.
2. 2006 will be remembered as the year when the Albert Rec. secured a Green Flag Award for the first time in its history. A national standard of excellence in park management, this award was preceded, during the year, by Haringey Council's £140,000 worth of improvements to the infrastructure of the park. This was the second largest single amount invested by Haringey Council in any Haringey park or green space, as part of this particular round of financing, and will be supplemented by a further £20,000 of new money, which will be injected during 2007, to deliver further upgrades to the Children's Play Area. On behalf of the Committee and FARRG, I would like to thank Haringey Council for its substantial financial contribution to the strategic development of this popular green and recreational space.
3. 2006 was also the year when FARRG organised the largest number of events ever in the park, since its formation in 2001. Below is a list of the Group's main activities during the year. These illustrate both the sense of continuity which we have been able to create in relation to now established annual events such as the bulb planting and family sports day but, equally importantly, the increasingly diverse nature of our events.
 - Sunday, 19th November – Bulb Planting
 - Sunday, 15th October – Green Flag Raising Ceremony & Family Fun Day
 - Saturday, 7th October – Friends Quiz Night at the Pavilion Café
 - Sunday, 17th September – Family Fun Sports Day
 - Wednesday, 28th June – Green Flag Inspectors' Visit to Albert Rec.
 - Friday, 12th May – Friends' Inaugural Quiz Night at the Pavilion Café
 - Sunday, 30th April – Children's Easter Egg Hunt
 - Sunday, 26 March - Community Spring Clean and Bulb Planting in Rhodes Avenue Spinney organised jointly with Haringey Council and Rhodes Avenue Primary School

All of these events attracted a good number of local people and the outdoor activities were particularly well attended by local families with children.

4. The creation and launch of our new website – www.farrg.org.uk – has been another milestone for the Group during 2006. The website is a mine of useful information and has all the potential to become FARRG's main marketing tool and a very effective interactive communications facility for the Group and local park users. We will take steps to publicise its existence locally through posters, leaflets and word of mouth but also by relying on partner supported internet links and publicity materials such as the Council's 'Haringey People' magazine. Initial marketing will focus on our proposed Website Launch and Christmas Party at the Pavilion on 9th December. I would like to record my special thanks to our Communications Officer, Gianluca Lo Iacono, for the vital contribution he made to the design and creation of the website over a period of many months. The website would not have happened without his dedication and commitment.

5. Other highlights during the years include:

- Discussions involving Rhodes Avenue Primary School and the Council, which will continue, in relation to the use and enhancement of the Spinney.
 - Exploratory discussions with Mike Terry, former Secretary of the Anti Apartheid Movement, now Alexandra Park School teacher and South Africa relations co-ordinator, regarding the possibility of erecting a sculpture of South African anti – apartheid leader, Oliver Tambo, in the park near the school gate, in order to mark the latter’s long association with the local area when he resided in Alexandra Park Road during his many years in exile in London. This initiative was canvassed during a visit to the Albert Rec. by the Leader of Haringey Council, the South African High Commissioner and Oliver Tambo’s daughter earlier in the year and will be further developed in consultation involving the Friends, local people and civic leaders.
 - Provision of a formal letter of support from FARRG to Haringey Tennis in the context of the latter’s proposed application for funding required for the complete modernisation of the tennis and basket ball courts.
 - Talks, which will continue, with the Committee of the Bowling Club in the Albert Rec. intended to support efforts to broaden the appeal of this club to a wider section of the local community.
 - Initiating a dialogue with Cllr Brian Haley, Haringey Council’s Executive Member for Environmental Services, who attended one of our Committee meetings, regarding policing, safety and other issues affecting the use of the Albert Rec.
 - Our application to the ‘*Park It*’ project for funding to enable a heritage related event to be held in the park in conjunction with local schools. Details can be found on our website.
 - Initiatives to encourage the use of online environmental surveys by Albert Rec. users through relevant links on our newly launched website.
 - A medium term initiative to create a heritage site on our website though the collection of old photographs and other historic materials which illustrate the evolution of the Albert Rec. and its surrounding area over the decades.
 - Consultation with local residents’ association in relation to proposed traffic calming solutions affecting roads adjacent to the Albert Rec.
 - Enhanced use of the recreational facilities of the park exemplified by the introduction of ‘Aussie Rules’ football, a lively sport new to the Albert Rec.
 - The maintenance of a dialogue with local schools, the parks constabulary and other local groups and organisations.
6. The Green Flag Award celebrations held in the Albert Rec on 15th October 2006 were spectacularly successful and represented a fitting tribute to our work as a voluntary community group and to the ongoing commitment of our main partners, namely, Haringey Tennis run by Robby Sukhdeo, our Committee Treasurer, and Haringey Council’s Parks Team responsible for the maintenance of the Albert Rec, which is ably led by Tony Healey, also a long serving Committee member. Our achievements would not have been possible without the collective efforts of the FARRG Committee, Haringey Tennis and the Council and I am grateful to all three and, in particular, to the Council’s Don Lawson, Tony Healy, Sarah Jones and Park keeper Neil. I am also thankful to Haringey Council for the award of a small grant which enabled the Green Flag celebratory event to be so successful with the availability of a number of free activities and the participation of several local children’s performers and entertainers.

7. Finally, my thanks, as usual, go to Cath Perry of BTCV for her assistance at our annual bulb planting day and, of course, to Robby Sukhdeo for being generous with provision of the Pavilion and refreshments for our meetings and for sponsorship of a number of our events and of our website.

Peter Droussiotis – 20th November 2006