

Chair's Report AGM – 1st November 2010

1. This Annual General Meeting marks the 9th year of our existence as a group. Much has been achieved during the last nine years but 2010 is the year of our crowning achievement: the delivery of the completely refurbished tennis and basket ball courts – a strategic objective to which all of us contributed in a variety of ways, over a long period. The event was celebrated in style on 15th June 2010 and I want to repeat here some of the words I used in my short address, as Chair of FARRG, on that special day:

"I want to thank and congratulate all of those people and organisations that have contributed to the many successes that we have seen in this local park in the last few years of which the transformation of the tennis courts, which we celebrate today, is the crowning achievement.

I start with Haringey Council, both the political leadership and the officers of the Council, Sue Mappin and the Tennis Foundation, the LTA, the late Mike Terry at Alexandra Park School, all of whose support has been invaluable to our efforts to improve the recreational facilities in this park.

But, above all, I want to pay tribute to Robby Sukhdeo whose entrepreneurial spirit and passion for tennis have been a source of inspiration to all of us; and I also want to pay tribute to the Committee of FARRG and the other local community volunteers who have worked hard for many years and have supported Robby's efforts, often behind the scenes, to deliver investment and steady improvements to this park.

It is really this combination of Robby's commitment to this place and the community's active involvement through FARRG that has made this day possible, and that is a testament to the way that local communities can make a difference to their local environment; it is also the best guarantee we have that our local park and these wonderful tennis facilities that are being inaugurated today will continue to thrive in the future."

2. The renewal of the park's core recreational facilities was Robby's and FARRG's key goal from the outset and completes the first part of the long journey upon which we embarked at the end of 2001. At the same time, it marks the beginning of a new era for the Albert Road Recreation Ground as an enhanced community asset which now offers first class tennis facilities to local people, young and old. I have no doubt that the venue will boost tennis development in our area and that it will remain a model for inclusive tennis of benefit to all sections of the community. It is worth highlighting in this context that the site was also awarded Beacon status from the Tennis Foundation in recognition of the high quality, affordable community tennis programmes provided through Pavilion Tennis under Robby's inspirational leadership.
3. The second significant event that took place at the Albert Road Recreation Ground during 2010 and which I would like to highlight in my report was Haringey Council's Football Plan launch which we combined with the Haringey World Cup Festival Finals, on the day of the world cup final in South Africa on 11th July 2010. This proved to be a really special day and was a great opportunity to showcase our park, to celebrate the Oliver Tambo memorial in the park and the association that this place has with South Africa and also to enjoy some competitive football from a significant number of local teams. Once again, I want to acknowledge the fact that this festival was really Robby's idea which he championed with his usual determination and enthusiasm. I was pleased that I was invited to preside over proceedings on the day which I thoroughly enjoyed!



Friends of Albert Road Recreational Ground & Play Area

4. Other significant highlights for the year have included the award of a Green Flag for the 5th year in succession and the achievement, for the first time ever, of a Silver Gilt award by "London in Bloom" which was the highest achievement by any park in Haringey in this category. The judges specifically said that the 'the community and partnership work seen [in Haringey] is really first class e.g. Albert Road Rec' and go on to say ' ... and Community initiatives at the Albert Road Recreation Ground continue to provide inclusiveness and tangible benefits for a large sector of the local population.' The Albert Rec was marked 82 out of 100, with community involvement receiving top marks (15 out of 15). This is an excellent result for a park whose main emphasis has been on recreational activity.
5. As with previous years, FARRG has been instrumental in organising a series of events in the park including our annual Jazz Fest which was a great success, quiz nights, a family sports day, an "Easter Egg" hunt etc. The Recreation Ground remains a popular venue for cricket, football and Aussie Rules while local schools often use the pitches for sporting activities including annual sports day events.
6. As usual, I want to end this report by paying tribute to all of the people who have helped make a difference to our park in the last twelve months: all of the voluntary members of our committee; Haringey Council's staff, in particular, Tony Healey and Neil Armstrong; all of the Pavilion staff whether in the Cafe or on the courts; our partners Alexandra Park School and Rhodes Avenue for their co-operation and interest; and, of course, Robby, for his and the Pavilion's support and hospitality.

Peter Droussiotis – 1st November 2010