**FRIENDS OF BIRDCAGE WALK Committee Meeting Minutes**

**MONDAY 22nd January 2024**

**Present: Paula, Caroline, Kath, Bob, Trevor, James, Norman, Ros, Lesley**

1. **Apologies: None**
2. **MINUTES of previous meeting September 2023 –** were agreed**.**
3. **Gardening Update** from Lesley. The winter work is just coming to an end. Lesley explained the work that has been done across the Fosseway End and up through the hedges. The plan is to finish before the end of January to avoid bird nesting season which it is thought might be earlier this year. From February there will be a switch to the Spring plan – more gardening and ensuring that any bird nesting areas are avoided. As a result of the work that has been carried out, more graves have been exposed. Paula commented that it all looks good and the fact that the path is swept shows how well it is cared for. Caroline and Lesley said they are looking forward to seeing what new plants / bulbs come up as a result of the clearing. Paula also said there was a great sense of a real positive team working including elements of social prescribing. A special thanks to Lesley for keeping it all together and driving it through.
4. **Graffiti** – we can’t tackle it because of the potential damage to the mortar and walls. There is a bit of a spate of it in the area confirmed by Goldeney House. Lesley has reported the graffiti in the first instance to Teija who responded very quickly with appropriate reporting links. It is now in the system to be cleaned by specialists. Lesley also contacted Caroline Grazebrook from HCCA who has had specialist graffiti cleaning training via BCC.
5. **Birdcage Bash** – Kath was taken aback by four negative responses to what she regarded as the most positive email she has sent so far. Kath went through the most recent events. Kath’s email suggested that we cancel on January 15th as advised by Sandra from BCC, to avoid a charge, with the option to re-apply within the month. Kath’s email suggested that we discuss ticketing options in order to increase income. 400 tickets would need to be sold. Supporting this was the fact that Birdcage Walk could be cut off to secure a ticketed event. Paula said she was surprised by budget of £7,500 at AGM and felt the event had grown. Kath said that the bands, staging, children’s activities, stalls and a bar were well documented from February last year. Kath wanted it noted that she had already raised £2,000 and was confident in raising more. Lesley mentioned that the Diocese had granted permission for a free event. A vote on whether Birdcage Bash should be cancelled took place. Kath voted for it to go ahead. There was one abstention. Everyone else voted to cancel Birdcage Bash (7 in total). Ros responded to Kath’s point that only four responses to her email had been received; Ros felt that more negative emails were not needed but thanked Kath for her unending resilience and patience in getting this through the myriad of processes that both BCC and the Diocese insisted upon. This really is quite an achievement. Trevor also felt that the committee should take responsibility for ‘taking their eye off the ball’ and there should have been an earlier conversation to avoid the upset this has caused and apologised.
6. **AOB** – the rough sleeper is still in Birdcage Walk. Paula has also spoken to community policeman. The rough sleeper has been officially reported. There was a general discussion of the problem of homelessness. Paula thought she might go and talk to him. Thanks to Caroline for a whole year of Grave of the Month; they make for a very interesting and varied read.
7. **Date of next meeting** – Monday 25th March at 5pm at Trevor’s.