



Forum Partnership Meeting No. 10

Minutes of the meeting

Thursday 14th December 2017 – 10am – High Elms Country Park - BEECHE

Larry Herbert (LH)

John Ince (JI)

Frank Kleinhans (FK)

Kari Silvester (KS)

Helen Ashton (notes)

Patrick Phillips (PP)

John Pemberton (JP)

Craig Langford (CL)

Vivien Smith (VS)

Andy Hodgson (AH)

Darren Russell (DR)

John Cutting (JC)

Keith Rodwell (KR)

MINUTES

1 Welcome & introductions

2 Apologies for absence – None

3 Minutes of last meeting – 28th June 2017

Agreed, and the following points arose:

- Training – on agenda to discuss later.
- Tree course – there was no feedback from Julian Fowgies, we will try again next year.
- 4(iv) – Everything has been done from *idverde*'s side to link the website to the LB Bromley website, LBB should have theirs updated next week.
- 4(v) – AH has spoken to the web developers about having Event App open in a new tab from the *idverde* website, they will look into it for the next major update. The developers suggested users can right-click the link to open it in a new tab.
- 5(i) Commemorative bench policy templates – work has started but these have not been completed yet. Action carried forward to next meeting. **AH**
- 6(i) Insurance - A diary note has been made, JC has spoken to the insurance brokers who will speed up the process next year. An updated contact list will be provided earlier next year.
- 6(iii) Signing in sheets – this will be discussed at the Friends meeting in January, action carried forward to next meeting. **LH**
- 7(ii) *idverde* delivered a session at the Friends AGM meeting
- 9(ii) PP has spoken to Julian about fitting tree guards, they will endeavour to do so.
- 9(v) The statistics request has been sent out, this is on the agenda to discuss later.
- Minutes from last meeting were accepted and will be put on the website.

4 idverde update – staffing, web, action plan, events/concessions, contract renewal

- i. Part of the RPSB partnership is about communication, a Biodiversity Buzz blog has been started on the *idverde* website to put out strategic updates. There are a few entries online already and this will be updated monthly.
- ii. The *idverde* schools provision and public activities have been updated for 2018, all activities for 2018 will be uploaded to the website by the end of January.
- iii. Winter woodland works have started, *idverde* are prioritising the work needed at all sites.
- iv. The Countryside team from *idverde* have started a programme of work at sites which don't have active Friends Groups.
- v. *idverde* have had a consultation with the RSPB to get advice on Keston and Hayes which will go in to the management plans for the sites. There are plans for their wetlands advisor to visit, and also a visit about urban biodiversity. A species survey is planned for next year, the most recent records for some sites are from 2002.
- vi. A biomass project is in consultation, we are waiting for LBB to sign it off. There is a new plant in Ashford with ambitious targets for fuel, and they would pay to take wood from sites where previously *idverde* have paid a contractor to do the work. This would mean the available budget can be focussed on other sites where work is needed. This is being done with the involvement of the Forestry Commission and Natural England.
- vii. Once training needs have been reported *idverde* will look at how the RSPB partnership can be used to provide training and stakeholder engagement. Steven Lofting can work with groups to discuss individual sites.
- viii. Many events are rebooking for 2018, there is a homes and gardens show proposed for Norman Park, and a Childrens' Festival at Crystal Palace Park
- ix. *idverde* can suggest to event organisers that they let Friends Groups have a stall where appropriate.
- x. *idverde* received some complaints about people smoking in the playground at Chislehurst, signs were put up as a trial and the site has been monitored, and it seems to be a one-off issue so won't be taken further at this stage.
- xi. Work has started on the herb garden at the Civic Centre, this will be replanted in the new year.
- xii. The structure of the Darwin Bed at Queens Gardens has been removed as it was falling apart, *idverde* have previously tried to repair this in the past and The Glades had said they would contribute, but have not responded since. The bed will be replanted in accordance with the original Darwin plan.
- xiii. Work has started on the entrance to Chislehurst Rec, *idverde* are working with the Friends to put in a formal structure which will be planted by the end of the year.
- xiv. Good Gym have done some shrub reduction work and painted the toilets at Crystal Palace Park, they are looking for new projects for next year.
- xv. There are some young people from Bromley College on work placement at High Elms working on site with *idverde* and also helping with admin.
- xvi. Work has been done with the Princes Trust at Elmfield Wood to clear the area & will also look at putting up signs.

- xvii. Conservation and Construction students have been working with *idverde* doing coppicing work.
- xviii. Procurement has opened for 2019 for the Grounds Maintenance and Parks Management services, expressions of interest are open until January 2018 (stage 1). Stage 2 evaluation to be completed in April, followed by stage 3 feedback and negotiation. Stage 4 final tender due in August with award of contract in October. Business continues as usual for *idverde*, if Friends Groups are approached by anyone asking for information they should be directed to the council or *idverde*. The lots are grouped for efficiency.

5 Forum Constitution

- i. Comments were made at the AGM regarding changes to the constitution, especially by Peter Woodward from Chislehurst Commons. These have been addressed following a Forum committee meeting and a revised version has been sent out for further consultation.
- ii. The charitable donations clause is in memoriam only, this is considered on a case by case basis.
- iii. Changes have been made in section 9 to remove the concept of open/closed meetings and to further clarify the different types of meeting and their respective invitees.
- iv. The Forum committee will call an EGM if requested to do so by one Group (rather than a minimum of 10 as previously) but reserve the right to decline the request if the matter can be resolved by other means.
- v. FK will speak to the council after this meeting as they had comments on the constitution. **FK**
- vi. Once all comments have been received a further version will be issued and an EGM called to vote on the matter. It is hoped to conclude this at the start of the next members' meeting in January **LH**

6 Annual Statistics

- i. The questionnaire has been sent out, £100 will be paid to groups who complete the questionnaire and also the registration form. To date 14 returns have been received. FK questioned if the payments will deplete the Friends funds, LH advised this will be paid from reserves and do not anticipate all 46 groups returning the information. £2.4k was given out last year. The Friends Forum are using this as an opportunity to clean up the data held, and to clarify that all groups have a constitution and a bank account. This will help to get to the bottom of groups that the Friends Forum don't hear from, and to reconcile the list of groups with *idverde*.
- ii. At the Stakeholder Panel Councillor Smith said that the groups should not be paid for returning their statistics. LH advised that the Friends Forum have unspent funds, and that this is the only income some groups receive, and it is a way to support and reward them for the work that they do. Some groups raised at the AGM how they are being supported by the Forum, the grant was linked to the statistics return but the groups are doing a lot of work. Small grants can be paid to assist legitimised groups, but the link to the survey should be removed.

7 Training Needs for 2018

- i. The training questionnaire has been sent out, with returns to be made by mid-January. Some returns have been received.
- ii. The Forum will run first aid courses and are also organising an IT course for February, invites will be sent out once the course outline is known. This will be held at the Civic Centre for people bring their own tablets/laptops to learn more about social media.
- iii. *idverde* have some more volunteer health and safety booklets which can be given out.
- iv. Once the training questionnaires have been returned LH will discuss with JP what can be delivered by *idverde*. *idverde* are committed to delivering 5 courses, more could be paid for. There is a course in January on live hedge laying, JP will check how many places are left and advise the Friends Forum so that these can be booked. **JP**

8 Volunteer Task Force/Champion

- i. Two meetings have been held, and the plan has been finalised. A volunteer-run task force will be created along with a volunteer champion to link with other groups. A role specification will be created, and consider putting them on a volunteer management course. This can be advertised on the community links newsletter, and Jackie Baxter at LBB will help link up with the Street Friends and Snow Friends.
- ii. The Forum has signed up to the NCVO, they offer free training. DR will speak to them in the new year. **DR**
- iii. Volunteer Week will be held next year during the same week as this year.
- iv. DBS checks may be needed if groups are working with teenagers.
- v. The task force will be used to share ideas, but is short on people to push these forward. People with capacity to contribute are needed, we will look at the Volunteer Champion role in the new year once we have NCVO membership.

9 Environment Education

- i. 2018 courses will be available to book online by the end of January, and new brochures should be delivered this week for distribution in the new year. These can be shared at visitor centres and a PDF of the public events programme will be available online.

10 Green Flag

- i. We had 3 successes this year, South Hill Wood, Chislehurst Recreation Ground, and Keston Common. We are aiming to resubmit these next year, and have a provisional list of 3 more – Queens Gardens, Chislehurst Commons, and Biggin Hill Rec. Management plans are being finalised and will be submitted by the end of January.
- ii. We can look at following the recommendations from the Green Flag report for Keston, but will be judged against the management plan.

11 Any Other Business

- i. KR has tried to find out who is responsible for the long distance footpaths, e.g. the Green Chain and London Loop. LBB said it's not their responsibility, the Ramblers Association said to contact the Mayor, who said to contact TFL, who said to contact LBB. The person responsible for rights of way at LBB has said they are not the council's responsibility. The Green Chain formally closes this month and there is no plan for funding/responsibility known.
- ii. Some new Friends Groups have been suggested for Pratts Bottom and Kings Meadow, idverde are discussing with them and will direct them to the Friends Forum if they decide to go ahead in setting up the groups as they can help with templates for the constitution etc.
- iii. Once more is known about what will happen with the old dump site, if it is possible for this to become a park the local residents association may consider setting up a Friends Group.
- iv. The Friends Forum logo will not be changed, but will always be displayed as the full logo including the text.
- v. FK will share the action plan monthly.

12 Date of Next Meeting

- i. Thursday 22nd March at 10am, High Elms meeting room.