



## Forum Partnership Meeting No. 31

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2023, 10am – Video Conferencing

Larry Herbert (LH)  
Keith Rodwell (KR)  
Barbara Arora (BA)

Hannah Jackson (HJ)  
Hugh Chapman (HC)  
Jane Askew (JA)

Mark Garthwaite (MG)  
Sue Holland (SH)  
Angela Wood (AW)  
Jess Dalton (JD) (Minutes)

### AGENDA

1. Welcome & introductions
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of last meeting / Action tracker
4. Council update
5. *idverde* update
6. Forum update
7. Any other business
8. Date of next meeting

#### **1. Welcome & Introductions**

LH welcomed all participants and began introductions.

#### **2. Apologies for Absence**

**Friend's Forum:** Tony Allen (TA) Walter Leonard (WL) Vivien Smith (VS) Kari Silvester (KS)  
Richard Gibbons (RG)

***idverde*:** Richard Burton (RB) Martyn Bradley (MB)

**LBB:** Cllr Aisha Cuthbert (AC) David Braybrook (DB)

#### **3. Previous Minutes & Matters Arising (Action Tracker Update)**

The minutes were accepted as a true reflection of the previous meeting

The action tracker was reviewed, amended and updated including new due dates for actions outstanding, this can be found attached to the minutes. A summary of changes to the action tracker is as follows:

**Action 24:** Park signage updates – **Continued to be reviewed.** A meeting of the working party had taken place and it was agreed only the main signs in parks will be audited at this time. *Idverde* had produced a JotForm to survey the signs and it was hoped this could be used by Friends to collect the data. HJ sent email to LH confirming that the process of revising the Dog Control Protection Order signage has begun and will continue over the next few weeks

LH raised concern on behalf of RG, whether there is commitment from the Council for signage in the parks, and whether this should be continued. HJ advised when she first got involved, LBB didn't have the highest value of expenditure to use, wanted to understand where the issues were and what needed replacing to happen over a period of time.

LH added discussed in committee whether logging on FMS could be a way to report the signage, location isn't exactly accurate. HC asked whether it needs to be filled in on site and suggested a what 3 words could be listed for location. MG added understands issue with exact GPS location, good aspect of JotForm is it collates the data easier and all in one place, FMS will be more difficult to collate all the information. Suggests to carry on the trials. AW added should pick up the GPS data and when signal is available will download the data, happy to arrange a site visit with LH.

LH asked if there is commitment from idverde to do this at sites where there are no Friends. AW added Community Management Team will assist in winter. KR added would it not be better if idverde did it themselves and not Friends. HJ commented this was a particular priority for Friends and was why we were working together to move this forward. If it isn't a priority, then it can be taken offline and done internally. KR commented disappointing seeing some sites still have old signage, comes down to council having expenditure for the Friends to do it. BA added this issue was raised as most of the signage is outdated, and something that the Council should take more seriously. Suggests should be included in budgeting plans in future. MG added if idverde were to complete all surveys, they will be using JotForm.

**Action 25:** Water fountains – **Ongoing.** HJ sharing information LH provided with property colleagues, ongoing appraisal of options to continue.

**Action 30:** Website information- **Continued to be reviewed.** HJ tried to pick up with Andrew Rogers, he still has a lot to do, HJ has asked him to prioritise this, but has a team who is willing to support. MG can't provide any updates as of yet, been in contact with web hosting company. Asked to push to next quarterly meeting.

LH asked if manual tweaks are posted on website, which AH was doing before he left. MG advised colleague's at idverde have access and can do it, he has access but hasn't done any as of yet, not area of expertise.

**Action 37:** Communications processes - HJ has started this, not progressed as much but is working on it. KR asked for explanation on what this is and supposed to do. HJ advised Forum raised concerns on who to go to in LBB to have issues resolved, it is a directory of who can help you with types of queries and the kind of help that can be provided.

**Action 38:** Friends Group donations from events - MG is aware there has been discussions of this, push to next quarterly meeting with update.

#### **4. Council Update**

HJ showed presentation which gave an update on the current park projects: Platinum Jubilee Parks Fund, Waterbody Management, Infrastructure, Biodiversity, Crystal Palace Park & Arboriculture

Jubilee Parks Fund Project: JA added projects which have been fully delivered are Chislehurst Common with bins, Cator Park, Alexandra Rec, Petts Wood Rec & Pratts Bottom. 3 projects which have been

partly delivered are Scadbury Park, Hayes Common & Betts Park. Some projects are on hold due to different factors, some including planning. 8 projects should be delivered before Christmas.

Waterbody Management: HJ - going to recruit a Project Manager to give Parks Project team more capacity.

Infrastructure: HJ - more expenditure has been spent on park infrastructure this year than in most recent years, some projects including pathway repairs, fencing repairs, potholes etc. AW and team are thinking of a way to celebrate the restoration of the bandstand.

Biodiversity: Paul Meek at idverde working on the Sustainable Planting Trial.

Arboriculture: HJ – looking to add a mini forest in Cator Park. JA has been looking at fundraising. HC added working with Earthwatch which will help build together with the Friends of Cator Park. HC added at the end of the process for tree watering for the year. Tree planting can start earlier dependent on the weather. Have recruited 1 new tree officer to replace a former colleague, currently a total of 4 tree officers. HJ added has been significant challenges for the team, but now have authority to go out to tender to bring in more suppliers which should reduce the pressure.

LH raised query on watering app, tried to insist that he water it himself when not prepared to do so, couldn't get much further in the app unless he watered it. HC commented there are options, when you scan the tree it tells you information about it, then it should give you the option to look at the watering log as well as log any incidents of watering. HJ added big part of the app is to record community watering. HC agrees with HJ comments, happy to pick up with LH outside of meeting.

LH raised queries on RG behalf:

- There are a number of trees that pre-date treemendous that have watering bags. Wondered if they are being watered as well. HC advised not automatically, trees which are regarded as in their establishment phase (first 3 years) are being managed by exception. So when trees are identified that require additional watering, subject to budget provision, they are endeavouring to water them as well. Automatically every tree is watered for the 1<sup>st</sup> year, but afterwards will be by exception.
- QR codes on trees which were put in before, will they be backdated or left without them. HC advised old QR codes are in process of being removed, if tree is brought in by exception to watering programme, it will be given an updated QR code, but this will not be for all. Moving forward the QR codes will remain on trees, so this year's trees which will not be automatically watered next year, they will still have the QR code on them.

LH raised query on JPF, had a Forum open members meeting and was a mixed view on how is progressing. Those who were discontent relates to gardening type projects. Wasn't a clear understanding of how it is moving forward. HJ added if one of the discontented projects is regarding Kelsey, JA is aware of the concerns and addressing them with the Friends. JA always happy to discuss concerns with Friends.

LH raised query on dog control order signage, LBB promised new signage to be displayed across parks. HJ advised will need to chase up Enforcement team with an update on installing them and removal of old outdated signage.

## 5. idverde Update

SH started presentation by giving an update on behalf of the Countryside and Education Team including:

- New organisation structure with new recruits
- Ranger training for when they are delivering courses
- Friends & Bromley Countryside Volunteers – infrastructure work, survey work including on dragonflies, butterflies & glow worms. 19 volunteers involved so could survey a larger area.
- Schools & Summer BEECHE Events – 27 events took place
- Butterfly Banks & Nature Friendly Verges – verges showing a good sign of chalk land plants
- Countryside Supervised Volunteers & Training – reaching target

LH commented disappointing only very few Friends Groups get involved with the training courses, also need to discuss what to do next year, whether some courses will be changed or repeated.

BA commented that it is difficult to get to BEECHE via public transport. SH advised leaflet has been produced, Rangers will be delivering sessions at school's local parks. BA asked if Ranger's are able to get out on site for sessions. SH advised can look into it happening.

AW gave an update on behalf of the parks Development Team including:

- Cooperate volunteering sessions – Kelsey Park Community garden and playground painting. Rained on the day so not as much painting was done as had hoped for. Queens Mead playground due to be re-attended to in next fortnight.
- Desilting Betts Canal – LBB funded the project, idverde supported with investigations & ensuring contract well managed on site
- Supporting Friends Activities
- Community Impact Days
- Green Flag Awards – Biggin Hill Rec, Chislehurst Rec, Darrick & Newstead Woods, Hayes Common, Keston Common, Queens Gardens

Fundraising projects:

- Croydon Rd Rec Bandstand Restoration
- Queensmead Fun Run – support playground regeneration project
- Glassmill Pond Restoration – in partnership with Thames 21, works started, will be brought back to a more natural form

LH raised query on behalf of RG:

- Strimming around trees, he feels the policy is starting to slip. MG advised prior to RB attending last meeting, it was decided to re-commence the strimming around some trees. MG understands there have been challenges, but we have been trying to educate our operatives on this. If there are any areas you have noticed, please make me aware outside of the meeting. Hoping to see an improvement on this.

LH asked for confirmation on what the policy is. HJ added there were a large number of complaints regarding the appearance of grass on narrow verges around highways, which resulted in agreeing to re-commence strimming around tree bases, but only around trees in highway verges, where the width of

the verge was under 1m. Outside of the narrow verges, idverde leave a 1m ring. The other exception is if it is a newly planted tree they will not be strimmed around.

LH raised query on litter within parks & green spaces, concerned that litter is left to volunteers. MG added it is 100% idverde's commitment and part of contractual obligations to collect litter. Advised doesn't have statistics to hand, but the number of litter which is collected by operatives is huge and is continuing to increase. Can share information with LH outside of meeting. Thanks Friends who assist with the litter. It is a moment of time in the day and can increase when operatives are not present, which can give an impression that idverde are not clearing litter but it is being done every day.

LH raised query on make space for girls, has concerns teenage girl's do not get a look in parks. Some that have BMX tracks tend to attract boys more than girls and feel left out. Would like to see more seating. AW understands concerns, several sessions have occurred which are focused on women and have been well attended. KR added the report highlighted all facilities which are being provided in parks seem to be targeted at boys and young males. Suggests needs some thought from the Council on how proceed with future development. HJ understands concerns and added as LBB review management plans for parks, can be mindful for results of that specific report. There are other ways in which we can manage the park and agrees with KR comments on future developments.

## **6. Friends Forum Update**

LH gave an update on the Friends Group which included:

FF continues to have monthly meetings, meeting in July occurred which AC attended, helped answer our queries. Next meeting in November will be the AGM and will start looking to organising that, will look to have a social event to encourage discussion and networking between the various attendees. LH and KR have been involved to try to resurrect Friends of Harvington, has formalised a new committee. On the last account there were 56 Friends Groups and asked them to provide some contact information to ensure details were correct and with doing so we offered them a support payment of £150. Have reached out to 36 Groups and has cost over £5,000 to pay out the donations. Looking towards offering small grants, open to invitations from Friends to do that. On 30/09/23 is year end, looking to get accounts up to date.

## **7. AOB**

BA raised concern on paperwork to manage an event, suggests would be useful to have workshop and use Lily Scoble from Events Team & Community Managers to put together useful outlines on paperwork and templates which is needed and provide training etc to help Friends to organise events. AW understands concerns, will need to liaise with Lily. LH added that Forum could look to fund such a course as it was outside the training schedule provided by idverde.

## **8. Next Meeting**

The next meeting date has been arranged for: Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 starting at 10am (Online). The subsequent meeting will be Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2024

[Meeting ended]