



*Bromley Friends Forum
Members' Meeting 12th July 2017 – Minutes*

Bromley Friends Forum

Minutes of the Members' Meeting held on 12th July 2017
At Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley 7pm - 9pm

Attendance:

Forum Committee:

Larry Herbert (LH) - Keston Common, Chair
John Ince (JI) - Hoblingwell Wood, Vice-chair
John Cutting (JC) - Kelsey Park
Darren Russell (DR) - Hoblingwell Wood
Kari Silvester (KS) - Bromley Town Parks & Gardens
Keith Rodwell (KR) - Winsford Gardens

Friends Group Representatives:

Alan Wilmot (AW) - Kelsey Park
David Judd (DJ) - Biggin Hill
Jeff Royce (JR) - Bromley Town Parks & Gardens
Tony Banfield (TB) - Bromley Town Parks & Gardens
Peter Woodward (PW) - Chislehurst Commons
Peter White (PWh) - South Hill Wood
Sandy Goddard (SG) - Whitehall Rec
Ian Pannett (IP) - Jubilee Country Park
Liz Woodman (LW) - Hayes Common
Alan Taberham (AT) - Hayes Common
Barbara Arora (BA) - Chislehurst Rec
Tudor Davies (TD) - Keston Common
Vivienne Tatam (VT) - Hollydale
Iain Tulloch (IT) - Hollydale

Apologies:

Alan Francis - Willett Rec
Gregor Campbell - Willett Rec
Brian Street - Darrick & Newstead Woods
Rachel Bailey - South Hill Wood
Alison Stammers - Chislehurst Rec
Richard Gibbons (RG) - Orpington Priory Gardens
Emma Prescott - Havelock Rec

1. Chairman's Welcome

LH opened the meeting and welcomed everyone in attendance. Members introduced themselves and their Friends Group association.



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2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 15th March were accepted with the following alteration:

- Section 5.6 third paragraph not entirely accurate as new containers had not now been installed.

PWh proposed and TD seconded. The minutes would now be amended as above and published on the Forum website.

Matters Arising:

2. - London Loop/Green Chain Walk: This had been discussed with *idverde* but they were unable to offer support. The meeting felt this was a broader issue than just Bromley and should be discussed further with the Council. Action continues.

Action: LH to raise with the Council

2. - Ward Security: This had been discussed with Toby Smith and fundamentally this was an issue of staffing levels, which were inadequate to service the borough. Action continues.

Action: LH to raise with the Council

3.2. - First Aid Course: LH had looked into organising a course for a Saturday and the trainer confirmed that he was able to offer this. A course was held on Saturday 1st July at the BEECHE training room. Further Saturday courses would be arranged on a needs basis. Action complete.

6.1 - FMS Reporting: LH had discussed this with *idverde* and it was accepted that some decisions would be taken without full Friends Groups consultation. This policy would not change as *idverde* had a contractual duty to fulfil FMS issues. It was, however, expected that Community Managers would keep Groups informed where conflict could arise. Action complete.

6.2 Central Store: LH had discussed this with *idverde* and it was confirmed that the provision of items from the central store would continue to be made available free of charge to Friends Groups, on a first come first served basis. Forum was asked to provide a list of items that were available. **Post meeting note:** this has now been added to section 6 of the Toolkit on the Forum website Action complete.

3. Forum News

3.1. *idverde* Staff Changes

LH reported that a number of staff changes had taken place at *idverde* in recent weeks. The following members of staff had left: Pherenice Worsey-Buck, Stephen Tickner, Tomas Vnucak, Ellie Machell and Becky Benome. Sue Holland has been promoted to Senior Community Manager and Ian Wright promoted to Community Manager. The following new appointments have been made:

- John Pemberton - Conservation & Educational Development Manager
- Steven Lofting - Biodiversity Advisor
- Nick Barclay - Event & Operations Supervisor
- Caroll Long - Community Manager (east)
- Thomas Annand - Landscape Projects Assistant

In addition a job offer for the role of BEECHE Manager has been made and formal acceptance is awaited. **Post meeting note:** Sabrina Taseer has now joined *idverde*.



3.2. Feedback on Conference

LH reported that 8 evaluation forms had been received from delegates at the Forum conference, which considering attendance was disappointing. However, feedback in general was good and it would appear the conference and its speakers were well received.

Of the three workshop sessions further on-going effort was continuing. With regard the Volunteer Development Plan this was still awaited and DR hoped to be able to put a small team together to pull all the information gathered together in one publication.

Action: DR

With regard the Endangered Species session, a sub-group of the biodiversity partnership had put together a number of posters and these were published on the Forum website and Facebook pages. Group members could print these off and display them on their notice boards to inform the general public. Further posters of endangered species were planned for future months.

With regard the Trees session DJ reported that this had covered the aspect of TPO's and planning issues and had demonstrated that the Council's tree department is stretched in terms of staffing capacity. A tree survey course was planned for the autumn, with Scadbury Park the likely location.

3.3. Training Programme 2017

Due to *idverde* staffing changes the training programme for 2017 had been impacted and planned courses were yet to become a reality. LH apologised for this delay in meeting members' needs and hoped matters would improve once the BEECHE manager was on-board. To date Forum has run two first aid courses this calendar year and a third was planned for the autumn.

Forum will be circulating a training needs questionnaire later in the year and more pressure would be brought to bear to meet all reasonable requests for training.

3.4. Publicity Material

At the Forum Conference in May Forum presented a variety of publicity material that had been produced to help promote the Friends Group movement in the borough. This included flyers, presentation panels and banners and these were on display for those members who were unable to attend the conference. Members were reminded that these items could be borrowed for their events to help promote volunteering in parks and green spaces.

Forum was now planning to purchase re-usable bags to give to member Groups free of charge. These could be sold or given away at members events, as preferred.

4. London Forum Network

PW presented to the meeting information on the London Forum Network and in particular the make up of various meetings they had held over recent months. A general meeting had been held on 13th March which enabled individual boroughs to report back on matters concerning their parks. Typically this including budgeting and planning issues and the effects of cuts. The general meeting then covered London wide and national issues. One topic was designating London as a National Park City. This required the majority (328) of the 654 London Ward Councillors to declare their support to move the project forward. To date 241 councillors across 31 boroughs had signed up, so a further 87 were required.



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Forum members were asked to lobby their Councillors and see if a) they had declared their support and b) if not, whether they could be persuaded.

An LFGN co-ordination meeting had been held of 24th April. This meeting had agreed to divide the work into a number of different topics each with a leader/champion who would taken the matter forward. PW had agreed to look at the subject of new and existing Forums and how these could work together and support each other with the exchange of ideas and policies.

Some discussion followed and it was proposed that the Forum Committee took another look at its Constitution, its partnership agreement and its relationship with the Council to see if these continued to be fit for purpose. It was felt Forum was in a good place, being independent and well established over a number of years. SG & AT were concerned that communication continued to be an issue and we didn't involve Councillors enough in issues. They are our elected representatives and they need to take more responsibility rather than always passing the blame on to *idverde*. It was also felt that the Committee group could be widened and perhaps certain specific tasks delegated to key Group members, with a specific interest in that particular subject, (e.g. insurance, risk assessment, event management).

Action: Forum to discuss these matters in Committee

5. Issues

5.1. Bromley Town Parks

JR & TB presented details of the proposed development at Library Gardens and the impact and loss of green space. The proposed development involved the building of two 11-storey blocks creating 380 flats. 40 homes in Ethelbert Close would be destroyed and some areas of Library Gardens permanently lost. The Friends of Bromley Town Parks were actively campaigning against this development and sought Forum support on the basis of 'loss of Green Space' and 'impact on Library Gardens'.

Action: Forum to support

5.2. Biggin Hill

DJ raised the issue of strimming at the base of trees. This had resulted in damage to trees and DJ had agreed with *idverde* that strimming in the Biggin Hill area would leave a small distance away from the base of trees. This would result in uncut growth and posters advising the general public of the reasons why this process was being adopted would be needed. Forum would seek to extend this policy across the borough.

Action: LH to discuss with *idverde*

6. AOB

- 6.1. DJ advised the meeting that the renewal in the insurance policy had a clause that required Groups to have a '*written Health and Safety Policy (and a Lone Worker policy for employees or volunteers required to be alone with Service Users either at your premises or elsewhere)*'. This policy could be a simple one pager document that referred to the volunteer handbook for specific details. [A template for such a Policy and Sample Risk assessment could be found at the following website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/write.htm>].

Action: DJ to offer sample document to members



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- 6.2.** DR reported that they (*idverde*) are required to remove all unauthorised posters in parks and green spaces as Cllr Smith considers these as fly-tipping. As a consequence Friends Groups are requested to tell their Community Manager about posters they plan to post up, which would then be considered as authorised, (i.e. as long as *idverde* knows about a poster they will not remove it). Friends Group members were at liberty to remove any unwanted posters, especially those that they considered had no relevance to their park or green space.
- 6.3.** TB reported that the Glades shopping centre offers digital advertising and is always looking for new options. Contact is Craig Higgins (bromley.information@theglades.co.uk).

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next Forum Members' Meeting is Wednesday 13th September 2017, at the Civic Centre.