

Bromley Friends Forum

Minutes of the Members' Meeting held on 13th September 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, Treasurer
Darren Russell (DR) - Hoblingwell Wood
Keith Rodwell (KR) - Winsford Gardens

Friends Group Representatives:

Alan Francis (AF) - Willett Rec
Gregor Campbell (GC) - Willett Rec
David Judd (DJ) - Biggin Hill
Jeff Royce (JR) - Bromley Town Parks & Gardens
Liz Woodman (LW) - Hayes Common
Alan Taberham (AT) - Hayes Common
Brian Willson (BW) - Warren Road
Susan Folkes (SF) - Jubilee Country Park
Jo Hone (JH) - Norman Park
Judy John (JJ) - Biodiversity Sub-Committee
Vivienne Tatam (VT) - Hollydale
Iain Tulloch (IT) - Hollydale

Apologies:

Kari Silvester - Bromley Town Parks & Gardens
Peter Woodward - Chislehurst Commons
Brian Street - Darrick & Newstead Woods
Tony Banfield - Bromley Town Parks & Gardens
Peter White - South Hill Wood
Alison Stammers - Chislehurst Rec
Sandy Goddard - Whitehall Rec
Jason Glen - Whitehall Rec
John Bruce - Jubilee Country Park
Richard Gibbons (RG) - Orpington Priory Gardens

1. Chairman's Welcome

LH opened the meeting and welcomed everyone in attendance. Members introduced themselves and their Friends Group association. LH asked the meeting to record the passing of Alan Filby, chairman of Darrick & Newstead Woods and an ex chairman of the Friends Forum.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 12th July were accepted with no alterations. JR proposed and DJ seconded. The minutes would now be published on the Forum website.

Matters Arising:

2. - London Loop/Green Chain Walk: Further discussions had taken place between various parties and it appeared funding had been exhausted and that effort covering this work had by and large disbanded. *idverde* had agreed to continue to monitor the situation and had added it to its action plan (project S9). Action complete.

2. - Ward Security: This had been further discussed with the Council at the recent stakeholder panel meeting and it was recognised that Ward Security could work smarter. The Council offered to set up a working group to understand issues and see how improvements can be made. Action continues.

Action: Forum to monitor the situation

3.2. - Volunteer Development Plan: *idverde* have produced a draft plan which has been issued to all members of the working party. A meeting has been arranged for 12th October to review the document and agree the next steps in the process. Action complete.

4. - Forum document review: Due to annual leave and timing there was no progress to report. A committee meeting has been organised for 21st September and these items will be on the agenda. Action continues.

Action: Forum to discuss these matters in Committee

5.1. Bromley Town Planning Application: JR presented to the meeting an update on the plans for Library Gardens and it would appear the purchase of some of its land for building purposes had been withdrawn. However, the development with some changes was still proceeding and a new application was expected March 2018. The Friends Group would continue to monitor the situation and respond to any threats that any new plan posed. Action complete.

5.2. Strimming at Tree Bases: LH had discussed this with *idverde* and had received a lukewarm response. The change would require Council approval and a change to the service contract. DJ reported that Julian Fowgies from the Council Tree Team supported the change as the damage caused was becoming significant and costly to repair. LH would raise the issue again at the next partnership meeting.

Action: LH to raise with *idverde*

6.1. Health & Safety Policy: DJ presented a template document to the meeting and explained the need for each Friends Group having a similar document to meet the conditions of their insurance policy. LH will circulate the template with these minutes and upload to the Forum website.

3. Forum News

3.1. Council update

LH reported that Robert Schembri, contracts manager, had left the Council and that recruitment for his job was now on-going. In the meantime contact could be made through John Bosley at the Council or through *idverde*.

3.2. *idverde* update

Staffing changes reported at the last meeting were now in place and the new staff were now up to steam with their roles. LH distributed the latest staff hierarchy chart and contact list. Both these documents were available for download from the Forum website.

LH gave a quick update on the *idverde* Bromley website, which had gone through a number of changes recently. Firstly, the Action Plan, which is available from the 'about' page, was updated on a monthly basis and members were advised to look through it now and again to see the plans for their site. Secondly, the events app was now fully operational and Groups wishing to host events should book them through this on-line process. It was noted that events of under 25 people did not need to be recorded. And thirdly, there was now a new 'booking' page which listed all the events being hosted at BEECHE and allowed applicants to book (and pay for) their places on-line.

LH reported that Forum has received *idverde*'s revised memorial bench procedure and they were reviewing its content. Once this was finalised and agreed it would be made available to members.

3.3. Biodiversity feedback

JJ reported to the meeting her work within the biodiversity partnership. The partnership meets every three months to discuss a variety of pertinent topics. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday 25th September. The partnership can be contacted on bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com.

A sub-committee of the partnership has produced a number of posters of rare and declining species, asking members of the public to report any sightings. This process will be repeated next year though the actual species covered may vary depending on outcomes.

JJ has produced a number of articles for member Groups to use and happy to develop further items. If members have specific topics they would like information on they should contact JJ direct.

JJ reported that Plantlife (plantlife.org.uk) is working in collaboration with Magnificent Meadows (magnificentmeadows.org.uk) to raise awareness and information. The next National Meadows Day is planned for Saturday 7th July and any Group wishing to promote their meadow is advised to make contact.

JJ also reported that there have been instances of people dumping fish in ponds. This is quite a serious matter as it can introduce disease and ultimately kill all pond-life. Members should stay vigilant to this problem and report any curious behaviour.

3.4. Insurance

LH explained that the insurance renewal process had been delayed this year as a consequence of staff changes at Unity and actual receipt of monies from *idverde*. Irrespective of these delays Forum can confirm that all groups were insured throughout the period. The process of renewal will be discussed at the next partnership meeting and changes to ensure a more streamlined approach for next year will be implemented.

Action: LH to discuss with *idverde*

3.5. Training

LH reported that idverde had complete two training courses at BEECHE. A further two were planned, Dead hedge Laying (9th Nov) & Living Hedge Laying (Jan 16th). Members wishing to attend either or both of these should contact beeche@idverde.co.uk.

In addition Forum had organised a First Aid course for Saturday 1st July. The meeting agreed another weekday course should be run in the autumn.

Action: LH to organise

3.6. Green Flag

LH reported that 3 of Bromley's parks had been accredited with a Green Flag. These were South Hill Wood, Chislehurst & Walden Rec and Keston Common. Thanks go to idverde for sponsoring these awards and organising the relevant management plans to meet the standard. They are happy to increase the number of Green Flag parks and any Group wishing to be included next year should contact their Community Manager.

4. Friends Groups' Issues

4.1. Hobblingwell Wood

Jl reported that they had had an issue with travellers and gave an overview of how to deal with it. If they break in then call the police. If they just arrive call Ward Security and if necessary the police. Make sure that height barriers are closed at all times and immediately after any authorised entrance.

4.2. Jubilee Country Park

SF reported that Jubilee had wanted a wheelchair friendly route and this had been costed at £5k by idverde. They agreed to provide the surface but said Jubilee would have to find the money for the signage. The surface was not ideal and the route was not circular as planned. Meetings with Alastair Ing and his manager Andrew Hodgson of idverde are to be held to hopefully resolve matters.

4.3. Hollydale Open Space

IT reported that idverde/Council promised to look at problem trees but as yet this had not happened. Also there were problems with the paths around the ponds and this needed funding to resolve. Tiffany Gregor at idverde was looking into securing this funding.

4.4. Willet Rec

GC reported that a memorial bench had been installed and that it looked good and all were content. Alastair Ing had assisted/organised with a playground repair and this too was good. A defibrillator will be installed at the clubhouse. A planning application for a shed had been submitted to the Council and it was noted that the process doesn't ask if the landowner has given permission - as its Council land its assumed. This is questionable practice and maybe needs addressing.

AF reported that a water repair is required and this has been reported to the Council. AF also reported that due to lack of progress to repair the footbridge over the railway line the 10K run scheduled for October will be taking a different route from previous years.

4.5. Hayes Common

AT wished to record Hayes Common's thanks to *idverde* for replacing a wooden turnstile.

4.6. Bromley Town Parks

JR reported that consultation over a memorial bench installation was on-going. Also some while ago concerns had been raised with Stephen Tickner about a dangerous and unsafe fence along the waterways but following his departure from *idverde* little progress has been made. It is understood the work is now out to tender and hopefully will move forward in the not too distant future.

5. AOB

5.1. Due to lack of meeting time the agenda item on Forum's AGM was not discussed. This will now remain with the committee.

5.2. LH informed the meeting that Forum had now purchased re-usable bags and that members would be supplied with a small quantity for their Groups use. Members present at the meeting would be able to take their Groups quota.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next Forum Members' Meeting is our AGM on Wednesday 15th November 2017, at the Civic Centre.