

Bromley Friends Forum

Minutes of the EGM & Members' Meeting held on 14th March 2018
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
Keith Rodwell (KR) - Winsford Gardens
Vivien Smith (VS) - Scadbury Park

Friends Group Representatives:

Alan Francis (AF) - Willett Rec
Alan Tabraham (AT) - Hayes Common
Barbara Arora (BA) - Chislehurst Rec
David Judd (DJ) - Biggin Hill
Gregor Campbell (GC) - Willett Rec
Gwyneth Hudson (GH) - Pratts Bottom
Iain Tulloch (IT) - Hollydale
John Bruce (JB) - Jubilee Country Park
Judy John (JJ) - Biodiversity Sub-Committee
Jeff Royce (JR) - Bromley Town Parks & Gardens
Kerry Hood (KH) - Havelock Rec
Liz Woodman (LW) - Hayes Common
Michael Hudson (MH) - Pratts Bottom
Mary Stirling (MS) - Jubilee Country Park
Patricia Copelin (PC) - Kelsey Park
Peter Woodward (PW) - Chislehurst Commons
Tiziana Herbert (TH) - Keston Common
Vivienne Tatam (VT) - Hollydale

Apologies:

Kari Silvester - Bromley Town Parks & Gardens
Darren Russell - Hoblingwell Wood
Brian Street - Darrick & Newstead Woods
Richard Gibbons - Orpington Priory Gardens
Susan Folkes - Jubilee Country Park
Brian Willson - Warren Road
Jean Clark - Kelsey Park
Alan Wilmot - Kelsey Park
Sandy Goddard - Whitehall Rec

1. Chairman's Welcome

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

2. EGM - Forum Constitution

LH explained the quorum and voting rules for the item on adopting the revised Forum Constitution version 4. LH continued to outline the recent changes that had been made and the reasons why.

PW recorded his disapproval of clause 5.1.4 as he felt it was un-necessary as the context could easily be covered by clause 4.1.6. Further discussion by members followed.

A vote was taken which resulted in 7 votes for, 4 votes against and 1 abstention. As the Constitution required a two thirds majority vote the adoption of the Constitution was deferred for another meeting.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 13th September July were accepted with no alterations.

JR proposed and DJ seconded the minutes. The version would now be published on the Forum website.

Matters Arising:

2. Strimming at Tree Bases: LH raised the issue at the last stakeholder panel meeting and the outcome of discussions between the Council and idverde is awaited.

Action: LH to report back to members

3.1. Contract: LH raised the issue at the last stakeholder panel meeting but was led to believe Forum would not be offered the opportunity to influence the outcome. Any documents that were in the public domain would be made available. Action complete.

3.5. EGM: Organised for this meeting. Action complete.

3.6. Conference planning: Discussed in committee and an agenda item for later in this meeting. Action complete.

4. Forum News

4.1. Council update

James Hilsden has now joined the Council team and replaces Robert Schrembi in the role of Contracts Manager.

Following recent fly-tipping events LBB agreed to produce a guidance protocol of what to do when fly-tipping is discovered. In particular it was important not to disturb anything, take photos and inform the enforcement team.

4.2. idverde update

idverde have now recruited Angela Wood as a Community Team Leader working for their Countryside neighbourhood. They have also recruited Alison John-Pandya for their fund-raising team. It is understood that Richard Foster has recently left idverde.

There have been six submissions for Green Flag status this year. South Hill Wood, Chislehurst Recreation Ground, and Keston Common on a repeat basis from last year and Queens Gardens, Chislehurst Commons, and Biggin Hill Rec new for 2018. Awards should be announced in June/July time.

4.3. Annual Statistics

LH presented the current information on Friends Groups annual statistics returns. Some 60% of Groups had replied and this showed some 40,000 hours of effort had been expended and £157k in funds raised. It was noted that at a recent fund-raising celebration event it was recorded that some £400k had been raised in grant money, though this did include groups such as ODAS, sports associations and allotments, who were not part of the Friends network. Forum's figures would be distributed to members with these minutes.

4.4. Training

JC reported on the results of the recent training needs analysis completed by Friends Groups. Overall the number of Groups responding to the survey was disappointing but a good spread of requests had been received. These would be discussed with idverde at the next partnership meeting scheduled for 22nd March with the view that both Forum and idverde can provide courses to meet the needs.

4.5. Biodiversity Report

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 14th May 2018. 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. The following posters (and their dates for display) were now available from the Forum website: Toad (from beginning of Feb); Bullfinch (from beginning of March); House Sparrow (from mid-March); Hedgehog (from April); Swift (from end April).

5. Conference Planning

LH reported that two keynote speakers had agreed to present at our conference this year. They are Alice Roberts from the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and Paul de Zylva from the Friends of the Earth (FoE). Alice will talk on the campaign to make London a National Park City in 2019 and Paul will talk on wildlife and biodiversity in London.

Plans for the workshops were yet to be finalised but it is hoped to include one on the National Volunteers Organisation.

6. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

KR introduced the topic of GDPR and gave an overview of a recent Community Links training course that he had attended. He also referred to and distributed a copy of the 12 step plan to GDPR published by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Some discussion amongst members followed and it was agreed further guidance for Friends Groups was required

Action : LH to discuss with LBB and idverde and report back

7. Friends Groups' Issues

7.1. Hoblingwell Wood

Jl reported that Hoblingwell Friends were trying to persuade sports associations to come back to their site. Over recent times a number had stayed away due to lack of maintenance to both the pitches and the changing rooms. It is hoped with idverde support these can be improved and the declining situation can be reversed.

Jl also reported that the up and coming "parkrun" concept was operating well.

7.2. Jubilee Country Park

JB reported that Jubilee were having their AGM on Wednesday 21st at the Scout Hut and that this would include a presentational talk on Hedgehogs. All were welcome.

The wheelchair walk still had a few teething problems but signage was now close to completion and the path would be formally opened soon. Jubilee had received a £1,000 grant to pay for the signage.

JB reported that Marcus Jordan had recently passed away and that Jubilee would dedicate a pond to his memory. Marcus had been involved with the butterfly transects and it was hoped to continue this work with other volunteers.

Jubilee are hoping to organise an event on 7th July as part of Plantlife's Magnificent Meadows scheme.

7.3. Bromley Town Parks

JR reported that they are awaiting the latest planning application for a 14-storey block of flats to be built adjacent to Library Gardens. They believe any new scheme will incorporate the cedar tree as part of its landscaping proposals.

7.4. Kelsey Park

PC reported that Kelsey believed a recent Forum grant application had been turned down because they were 'too rich'. JC explained that this was not the case and that the request was for tools which were specifically excluded from the grant policy.

7.5. Havelock Rec

KH reported that she found it very difficult to find any guidance notes or assistance to undertake certain jobs at Havelock Rec. The meeting recommended that she approaches her idverde Community Manager, who was there to advise and ensure support for all matters relating to the Rec. LH also referred her to the Forum's toolkit.

7.6. Chislehurst & Walden Rec

BA reported that the old pavilion had been demolished a new one was to be built. This would include a Community café and community toilets. The project is being funded by the football foundation.

7.7. Scadbury Park

VS reported that a Spring Walk was being organised for 14th April and a Bird Walk for 28th April.

7.8. Willet Rec

GC reported that Willett had been able to fund a defibrillator from the various sports facilities. The Friends continued to run public toilets on site.

7.9. Pratts Bottom

GH reported that they were now a new formalised Friends Group and had joined the Forum. The Group runs an annual fete on their green but this year they had been advised it would cost £500 to put on. LH stated that this had to be an error as Friends Group events are normally free of any charge, unless there is some specific licensing involved.

Action : LH to clarify with idverde and report back to Pratts Bottom Friends.

8. AOB

- 8.1. PW reported to the meeting that Heritage Lottery Fund money would no longer be made available to parks. He urged members to sign the petition to try to reverse this decision.
- 8.2. KR informed the meeting of the recent publication on 'Good Parks for London'. JB summarised the findings of the report and explained why Bromley was not particularly highly rated. The report referred to the year 2016, when Bromley had no Green Flag awards, which resulted in some of the low scores.
- 8.3. AF referred to Lloyds of London offering a 'death of monarch' insurance at reasonable rates and that Friends organising major events may wish to consider this in the likelihood that their event would be forced to cancel.
- 8.4. JR reminded the meeting that the local May elections were coming soon and that members may wish to lobby their prospective Councillors in terms of their view towards our parks.
- 8.5. JB reported that the state of some of the parks' car-parks were a disgrace and were in desperate need of repair and maintenance. This matter should be reported to idverde, who it was believed were responsibly for their upkeep.
- 8.6. GC wished to thank the Forum committee for all their work on the Forum Constitution and was sorry that a resolution could not be agreed during the EGM discussions.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next Forum Meeting will be the Annual Conference on Thursday 24th May 2018, at the Civic Centre. The next Forum Members' Meeting will be on Wednesday 18th July.