

Bromley Friends Forum

Minutes of the Members' Meeting held on 23rd January 2019
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
Darren Russell (DR) - Hoblingwell Wood
Richard Gibbons (RG) - Orpington Priory Gardens
Sandy Goddard (SG) - Whitehall Rec

Friends Group Representatives:

Alan Francis (AF) - Willett Rec
Allan Tabraham (AT) - Hayes Common
Barbara Arora (BA) - Chislehurst & Walden Rec
Brian Street (BS) - Darrick & Newstead Woods
Brian Willson (BW) - Warren Road
David Judd (DJ) - Biggin Hill
Iain Tulloch (IT) - Hollydale
Jason Glen (JG) - Whitehall Rec
John Bruce (JB) - Jubilee Country Park
Judy John (JJ) - Biodiversity Sub-Committee
Jeff Royce (JR) - Bromley Town Parks & Gardens
Louis Goddard-Glen - Whitehall Rec
Mai Bunce (MB) - Chislehurst & Walden Rec
Mike Titheridge (MT) - Tugmutton
Peter Hudson (PH) - Pratts Bottom
Peter Woodward (PW) - Chislehurst Commons
Peter White (PWh) - South Hill Wood / Kingswood Glen
Susan Folkes (SF) - Jubilee Country Park
Tiziana Herbert (TH) - Keston Common
Tudor Davies (TD) - Keston Common
Vivienne Tatam (VT) - Hollydale

Apologies:

Kari Silvester - Bromley Town Parks & Gardens
Sue Hayes - Darrick Wood
Emma Prescott - Havelock Rec
Gregor Campbell - Willett Rec

1. Chairman's Welcome

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

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18th September were accepted with the acknowledgement of a minor typo, which would be corrected.

JR proposed and JG seconded the minutes. A revised version would now be published on the Forum website.

Matters Arising:

2. Conference proposals: To be discussed later in the meeting. Action complete.

3.1 Unauthorised activity in our parks: LH to discuss with the Council at the next stakeholder meeting in February. **Action: Forum**

3.4. Depot closures: Forum had written to and discussed this with the Council. Decisions are yet to be taken and are dependent on *idverde*'s contractual needs. Action complete.

3.5. Food hygiene course: This could be obtained by completing an on-line course for around £20. Forum would re-imburse the cost. Action complete.

4.2. Mis-communication: This had been discussed with *idverde* and they agreed to act on the matter. Action complete.

3. Forum News

3.1. Council update

LH reported that the contract had been awarded to *idverde*. This is initially for eight years but will automatically renew for a further eight years assuming targets are met and the business remains a success.

LH has seen sight of the contract specification, which runs to over 200 pages, and has over 300 KPIs (key performance indicators). The Council confirmed that once the contract transition period was over a redacted copy would be made available to Friends.

The Council has not as yet made the announcement of the contract award public but has written to Friends Groups outlining the above.

3.2. *idverde* update

LH reported that *idverde* were very pleased to be awarded the new contract and looked forward to the opportunity to strengthen ties with the Friends.

They are currently in a transitional period between now and 1st April where they will be finalising their processes in line with the new contract requirements.

A revised *idverde* staff chart has been issued with a number of key changes. Jack Thompson has joined as General Manager, replacing Craig Langford and Edward Burgin has joined in place of Angela Woods, who is currently on maternity leave. Edward will be shadowed for a while whilst he learns the sites prior to him being able to operate solo.

3.3. Forum Meetings

LH reported that the Forum Committee had decided not to run a Conference this year but instead run a series of evening seminars and 'walks and talks' events in member parks. It is hoped to finalise these in the coming months in time for the summer period.

3.4. Park Procedures

Discussions have taken place with *idverde* and it is hoped we can finalise a better approach to a number of common items across our parks. In particular signage is a major problem and we will be looking for a new uniform approach (a Bromley brand) across all our parks, especially now with the new potentially sixteen year contract. Other areas where a common approach is needed includes all types of benches (e.g. memorial, picnic), all types of bins (e.g. litter, dog, recycling), water fountains, finger posts etc. It is expected that procedures for each of these can be agreed and hence save all the unnecessary research Friends do and all the unnecessary quotations of items Friends gather. There should be one approach, a pick-list of goods and a methodology for implementation. Utilising *idverde*'s discount ability is a key factor in making this a workable proposition.

3.5. Data Collection

Following concern from some Groups, members of the Forum Committee met with the Council and *idverde* on 22nd January to discuss the collection of statistical data. The following steps and arrangements were agreed.

1. The Forum will send out an annual data collection questionnaire for the calendar year 2018 this week. This questionnaire will only request information on member numbers and hours spent, no financial information will be requested. A deadline for response will be set to Friday 15th February and if this is met Forum will pay £100. Payment to latecomers will be considered but not guaranteed.
2. *idverde* will produce a new questionnaire as soon as possible to include requests for financial information. This will be sent to Groups (again at the earliest opportunity) to inform them what data they need to collect.
3. Around 1st April *idverde* Community Managers will contact their Friends Groups to request the data for the period 1st Jan 2019 to 31st March 2019. Forum will be informed of the data collected but will have no involvement in the chasing or data gathering itself. No payments will be made for this data collection.
4. The *idverde* Community Managers will repeat the detail of step 3 quarterly thereafter and expect Groups to respond in kind.
5. There will be no more annual data collection requests.

The revised annual data collection questionnaire was distributed to the meeting and would be sent to all Groups by 24th January. The results of the data collection would be shared with members and *idverde* management, who in turn would inform the Council.

3.6. Town Planning Procedures

LH noted that the Churchill Quarter planning application was back out for consultation and members were reminded to send in their comments at the earliest opportunity. Little had changed to the original application other than one floor reduction to one of the proposed blocks.

There were over 500 comments of objection and Forum has added its voice to this objection.

Jl announced that the local plan had reached approval and had passed all scrutiny.

3.7. Training update

VS reported to the meeting details of the training programme planned for 2019. In essence *idverde* will offer up to ten courses, which represent the five missed for 2018 and the five scheduled for 2019, which meets their contract agreement with Forum.

The hedge-laying courses scheduled for late January and early February are fully subscribed and will proceed as planned. As soon as dates are agreed for other courses invitations will be sent to members.

Forum will also look to offer first aid and IT courses this year but as yet no actual dates have been finalised. The next first aid course is expected to be in April.

3.8. Youth volunteering

DR reported on his work encouraging youth volunteering. He had had the opportunity to give talks on the importance of volunteering to Capel Manor students and these had been well received.

DR also described his work with the Prince's Trust and the projects they have been able to complete, in particular redecorating the info centre at Crystal Palace Park. DR reminded the meeting that if any Group had a project where they would like some youth assistance let him know and he will see if arrangements can be made. Please note the project needs to be achievable within a relatively short period and not too long winded where students could easily become disillusioned.

DR also reminded members that if there was a problem with any of the students work to discuss this with *idverde* senior management (Community Managers).

AF reported on the work of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and that students were always looking to achieve bronze, silver or gold awards.

3.9. Biodiversity Report

JJ reported to the meeting her work within the biodiversity partnership. This centred around endangered species and new poster campaigns would be launched again this year. In particular any sightings of the following should be reported to her; bullfinch, hedgehog, purple emperor butterfly, house sparrow, toad and swift. Posters for these will be available for download from the Forum website on the biodiversity page.

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The biodiversity partnership had produced a Priority Species Report 2017/2018 which accompanies these minutes and is also available for download from the Forum website. Their next meeting is scheduled for Monday 13th May 2019. The partnership can be contacted on bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com.

4. Friends Group issues

- 4.1. PH reported on their work at Pratts Bottom and in particular his concern about the recreation ground, which appeared to be overlooked by the Council. He is worried that it may become the subject of a planning application and lost to the Community. LH suggested he raise the matter with his Community Manager and find out more details of its exact status.
- 4.2. BA asked if Amy Rogers could be persuaded to write an annual report that detailed the exact nature of her grant strategy for the year ahead. This would help Groups understand the direction she was taking and whether their own plans for their Communities were broadly along the same lines. This in turn would help the decision making process and whether it was worth applying for grants.

Action: LH to discuss with idverde

- 4.3. SG reported to the meeting her concern that 'Bromley in Bloom' was by and large being ignored. Members, either as a Friend or a private individual, could apply to be involved by contacting Coolings.

5. AOB

- 5.1. BS reported that the collections from litter bins over the Christmas period was very infrequent and not to the level expected. LH agreed to discuss this with idverde.

Action: LH

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next Forum Members' Meeting will be scheduled for 13th March 2019 at the Civic Centre, starting at 7pm.