



*Bromley Friends Forum  
Members' Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017 – Minutes*

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## **Bromley Friends Forum**

Minutes of the Members' Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017  
At Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley 7pm - 9pm

### **Attendance:**

#### **Forum Committee:**

Larry Herbert (LH) - Keston Common, Chair  
John Ince - Hoblingwell Wood, Vice-chair  
John Cutting (JC) - Kelsey Park  
Darren Russell (DR) - Hoblingwell Wood  
Keith Rodwell - Winsford Gardens

#### **Friends Group Representatives:**

David Judd (DJ) - Biggin Hill  
Jeff Royce (JR) - Bromley Town Parks & Gardens  
Alan Francis (AFr) - Willett Rec  
Gregor Campbell (GC) - Willett Rec  
Peter Woodward (PW) - Chislehurst Commons  
Richard Gibbons (RG) - Orpington Priory Gardens  
Sandy Goddard (SG) - Whitehall Rec  
Jason Glen (JG) - Whitehall Rec  
Susan Folkes (SF) - Jubilee Country Park  
Judith John (JJ) - Darrick/Keston/Scadbury  
Richard Pearce (RP) - Darrick & Newstead Woods  
Valerie Bryant (VB) - Richmal Crompton Fields  
Teresa Stirk (TS) - Richmal Crompton Fields  
Emma Prescott - Havelock Rec  
Vivienne Tatam (VT) - Hollydale

#### **Apologies:**

Kari Silvester - Bromley Town Parks & Gardens / Forum  
Alan Wilmot - Kelsey Park  
Iain Tulloch - Hollydale

### **1. Chairman's Welcome**

LH opened the meeting and welcomed everyone in attendance. Special welcome to Judith John, who will speak on priority species initiative.



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## 2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 11th January were accepted with the following alterations:

- Section 7 of the previous minutes should have referred to DC Sarah Bailey not Quigley, who will be speaking at the Forum conference.
- Section 8.1 referred to private discussions with *idverde*, it was in fact an informal meeting and these have now been arranged on a regular on-going basis.

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

### **Matters Arising:**

3. - **London Loop/Green Chain Walk:** No progress to report. Action continues.  
**Action: LH to raise with *idverde***

3. - **Ward Security:** No progress to report. Action continues.  
**Action: LH to report back to Forum**

4.2. - **Grant Policy Document:** This has now been produced and is to be issued shortly. See also item 3.3 below for more detail. Action complete.

5. - **Annual Stats Questionnaire :** This has now been produced and is to be issued shortly. See also item 3.1 below for more detail. Action complete.

7. - **Conference Speaker:** DR contacted DC Sarah Bailey and she has agreed to talk at our conference. Action complete.

7 - **Conference Speaker:** LH asked Tony Leach for some ideas but no real candidate has come forward. Action complete.

7 - **Conference Workshops:** Three workshops are planned - Volunteer Development Plan, Trees, Priority Species. Action complete.

8.4 - **Map of Friends Groups:** LH has produced a map indicating the location of Friends Groups. This will now be added to the Forum website. Action Complete.

8.5 - **LBB/*idverde* Actions:** AFr had produced a paper outlining concerns but was not able to present in detail to the meeting. It will be circulated with these minutes. Action complete.

8.6 **Friends Round-table:** Added to the agenda, as requested. See item 5 below. Action complete.

## 3. Forum News

### 3.1. Annual Statistics 2017

LH distributed a final draft of the one-page questionnaire to members and explained that this would be issued to all Friends Groups in the coming days. It would need to be completed towards the end of November 2017 and by issuing now Friends had some 9 months notice of the data they needed to collect. It was expected that no monetary gift would be paid this year though discussions remained on-going.



### **3.2. Training Programme 2017**

LH distributed an outline schedule of training courses that had been discussed with idverde. To date only species surveying courses offered by idverde had an agreed date. It was expected that an IT course would also have a confirmed date in the very near future. Other courses around trees and habitat management would be organised for the autumn. Full details of these courses will be published once flyers had been produced.

Forum has organised a first aid course for 20<sup>th</sup> April and this is now fully subscribed. SG asked if a first aid course can be organised for a Saturday as a lot of volunteers still work. LH agreed to look into this.

**Action: LH to consider options**

### **3.3. Small Grant/Expenses Policy**

LH distributed a final draft of the above policy. With regard small grants LH re-iterated the Forum would offer up to 20% or £300 of a Friends Group project, whichever was the smaller. Clearly, Forum can't offer £300 to all Friends Groups and so careful consideration will be given to any and all applications.

With regard expenses all costs incurred by Friends when on Forum business would be reimbursed. This included travel, refreshments, and any conference or meeting ticket fees.

### **3.4. Publicity Material**

Forum has finally made progress on the long-awaited publicity material and two items were presented to the meeting. The first was a business style plastic card, which included all the key contacts for both site and security issues. The second was a tri-fold flyer, with more detailed information about Forum, its aims and objectives, and the active membership.

It is hoped these will be ready for distribution in the next couple of weeks. Further items including presentation banners were now being drafted.

### **3.5. Conference Planning**

LH asked attendees for their views on Forum's upcoming Conference, scheduled for Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May. It was agreed that the format of previous conferences worked well but this year it would not include a general meeting. Keynote speakers and workshop leaders were still being finalised and further planning with idverde remained outstanding.

## **4. Priority Species Initiative**

JJ presented an overview of species identification in terms of where they can be found and their numbers, many of which have declined in recent years. JJ had produced posters on Toads and Bullfinches and these were available for download from the Forum website.

Guidance notes, written by Bill Whitaker, on using refuges for reptile surveys were discussed. These notes will be posted on the biodiversity page of the Forum website.

JJ continued with an explanation of the new hedgerow management scheme that had been agreed with idverde. There was some concern that raking out below hedges was still happening and if Friends saw this they should report back to JJ. Posters, designed for the general public, explaining the new hedgerow management techniques were available for download from the Forum website.



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DR commented that biodiversity training had been given to all grounds maintenance staff and it is hoped that mistakes made in the past (such as hay cuts at the wrong time) will be less likely to re-occur.

AFr asked if there were any plans to control the grey squirrel. JJ replied there were none and indeed most options were fraught with problems.

JG asked about other endangered species. Information about Hedgehogs and Tawny Owls were both on the Orpington Field Club and Forum websites. JJ agreed to talk privately with Whitehall Friends.

AFr reported that fences along the railway line in Petts Wood area had proven a haven for wildlife.

JJ reminded members to send in their recorded data which preferably would be no earlier than 2016.

### **5. Friends Groups Round-Table**

#### **5.1. Keston Common**

Keston Common has suffered a couple of mishaps recently. Firstly, the dam at Pond 2 failed with catastrophic consequences and secondly, a dead tree was blown over in Storm Doris and completely blocked a pathway and severely damaged the restored Victorian Gate.

The Council have taken responsibility for repairing the dam and it is hoped this work will be completed soon. The dead tree was reported on Fix My Street in October and for various reasons did not receive the attention it should have. The Council have accepted that they did not meet their 28 day fix period and so have agreed to fund the repair work to our gate.

#### **5.2. Hoblingwell Wood**

Hoblingwell Wood continues to suffer from anti-social behaviour and recently a specially funded picnic bench was stolen.

#### **5.3. Darrick & Newstead Woods**

Darrick similarly has anti-social behaviour, fundamentally the use of quad bikes and bicycles.

#### **5.4. Hollydale Open Space**

Hollydale reported that some time ago trees were cut down around the lake to improve conditions but they are still waiting for the trunks to be removed.

#### **5.5. Havelock Rec**

Havelock continues to be a success story - no longer threatened by having a school built on-site. With help from Forum they have now secured a lock-up container for tools and two new benches have been installed.



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**5.6. Whitehall Rec**

Lots of good successes of recent weeks. 16 new mature trees have been planted. Funding for new play equipment has been raised (£20k from Council/£27k from Friends). Another successful Beer Festival event has been run.

The Green Gym aspect (run by TCV) is now coming to a close and it has been decided that the Friends will take over this role.

A new garden is proposed following the sell off of the lodge house.

**5.7. Orpington Priory**

The new owners of the Priory were invited to a meeting and they are keen to work on a HLF funding bid to restore the gardens.

It is planned to re-open the old library building as a studio for artists.

**5.8. Chislehurst Commons**

Chislehurst have been clearing a lot of holly over the winter months and can proudly say they have a very strong work-force. Over 20 volunteers most weeks turn out to help.

**5.9. Jubilee Country Park**

Jubilee are in the planning process of building a wheelchair friendly path. Quotes and applications for grant funding are being pursued to support this.

The nature trail has been updated and new leaflets produced. As a long-term aim it is hoped to make a digital version to help and encourage more visitors to the site. JR reported that a TiCl App was available that could provide users with information about their surrounding area and this could be used as a stepping stone towards this goal.

**5.10. Scadbury Park**

The new team at Scadbury go from strength to strength and a great deal of good work has been achieved. A lot of funding has been secured for new boards and signage etc.

**5.11. Willett Rec**

Willett have been plagued with a lot of litter being caused by Foxes rummaging in bins. As a solution they have built their own lids (using decking off-cuts) and this has proved highly successfully in tackling the problem. It has also been a great hit with the refuse collectors, who are happy to comply with using the lids.

**5.12. Richmal Crompton Fields**

Richmal have been painting their play equipment in bright new colours and this has made a big improvement to the playground. The Friends Group is quite small in number and meet on the first Saturday of each month.



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### 5.13. Bromley Town Parks

With assistance from idverde staff a lot of bramble has been cleared from the Martin's Hill site.

Discussions with the tree team about trees in the Mayoral Gardens have been on-going. It is hoped that a solution around pollarding trees rather than cutting them down can be accommodated.

### 5.14. Penge Green Gym

Penge Green Gym have been selected as part of the Tesco bag scheme and are one of the participants in the March/April period. Please support them if you can. Potentially there is up to £5k of funding on offer. Other Friends Groups are advised to seek a similar funding stream.

## 6. AOB

- 6.1 LH expressed concern over some Fix My Street reports concerning parks and green spaces which were being fixed without consultation with Friends Groups. DR reported that members could receive FMS reports by email notification but this could lead to a significant amount of traffic.

**Action: LH to seek policy change from idverde**

- 6.2 SG and JG reported their concern about the central store. It was felt this was being run-down and that items available were either damaged or not available. Also they wanted to know the latest policy on petrol driven generators.

**Action: LH to discuss with idverde**

- 6.3 GC reported that he had access to a Digimap system that allowed the user to go back in time with regard mapping of a particular area. This had proved very useful and interesting to get a better sense of the history of a park or green space. The system requires membership to gain access to the maps and so was not cost free.

- 6.4 DR reported that work with the Prince's Trust has been highly successful and that new dates were being planned.

DR has made contact with a teacher at Bromley College and is hopeful that they can attract students who could offer help to volunteers. For example they may be able to build a website for a Friends Group and/or provide other social media activities. It is thought this could lead to collaboration with students at Hadlow College.

## 7. Date of Next Meeting

The next Forum meeting will be the Conference on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May, at the Civic Centre. The next Forum Members' Meeting is Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017, also at the Civic Centre.