

Bromley Friends Forum

Minutes of the Members' Meeting held on 21st May 2019
At Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley 7pm - 9pm

1. Chairman's Welcome

LH opened the meeting and welcomed everyone in attendance. In particular MK from the new Friends Group at Goddington Park was welcomed. Members introduced themselves and their Friends Group association.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 13th March were accepted with no alterations and would now be published on the Forum website.

Matters Arising:

3.2. Quarterly Stats: LH had not had an opportunity to discuss this with *idverde* following its collection at the beginning of April. It would be on the agenda for the June partnership meeting. Action continues. **Action: LH**

3.4. Neighbourhood walkabouts: LH had raised this with *idverde* management and it is understood that better communication about such issues will be forthcoming in the future. Action complete.

5.2 Preferred contractor list: No progress to date. Forum awaiting information from members. Action continues. **Action: Forum/members**

3. Forum News

3.1. Council / *idverde* update

LH told the meeting that the transition period to the new contract had now been completed and that *idverde* were now finalising their staffing requirements. A new staff chart was issued but this just gave job titles rather than personnel names. The meeting felt this was inadequate and asked Forum to seek further clarification at their next meeting with *idverde*. The meeting also asked about contact details and whether a standard poster could be produced for display on park notice boards. LH suggested that the details were currently published on the Forum website and that these could be used and refined as needed. AS offered to look into this further and produce a more standardised notice. JRa agreed to provide an example of what they did at Jubilee.

DR reported that *idverde* had completed their work on management plans and that these were now with the Council for review. He also reported that Patrick Phillips had agreed the format of these documents with the Council which followed a set structure of process and future assessment. Considerable discussion by members followed with some expressing extreme concern that the Friends had not had an opportunity to provide input to the process. DR felt unable to comment further as to why the situation was as it was and decided to leave the meeting. Subsequently members confirmed that criticism was not aimed at DR directly and asked Forum to express this view and apologise to DR. **Action: LH**

Members continued to express their concern about some of *idverde*'s recent work and that some of their casual staff were not completing tasks as they should (e.g. incorrect meadow cuts and/or missed lawn cuts). It was felt that some of these failures were a result of the use of the Acorn electronic scheduling system which was proving harder to use/master than expected.

In light of the above the meeting proposed that *idverde* senior management be invited to the next meeting so they could answer these criticisms directly. **Action: LH**

LH reported that John Bosley, the chair of the stakeholder panel had now left the Council and his role had been taken up by Peter McCready, a long serving member of the Council.

3.2. Quarterly Statistics Data

LH reported that *idverde* had requested the first set of quarterly stats at the beginning of April but had not yet been informed as to how successful (or not) this had been. The view expressed by members was that this was a request too far and it was expected that the response would be low. Forum would seek further clarification as to the need and based on the actual results determine with *idverde*/LBB what happens next.

Action: LH to discuss matter with Council/*idverde*

3.3. Planning Fees

LH informed the meeting that the Friends of Norman Park had been asked to pay a planning application fee of £462 to have a shipping container installed at their site. LH had written to the Council expressing deep concern about this unwarranted fee and expected it to be waived and any monies paid to date to be reimbursed. A decision is awaited.

3.4. Event Fees

The Friends of Chislehurst Rec expressed concern that *idverde* are charging local community groups and charities excessively to run events in our parks. In 2015 the fee was £297.60, now in 2019 it is £1,248: that's an increase of over 300% within five years.

Action: LH to discuss matter with Council/*idverde*

3.5. Forum Grants

LH reminded the meeting that Groups could apply to Forum for a grant of 20% (to a maximum of £300) towards the actual cost of a community project. Forum could also provide expense costs (max £300) of new start-up Groups provided these costs were in line with the aims of their constitution.

3.6. Training update

LH presented to the meeting the schedule of training courses, as agreed with *idverde* and other parties, for the year. In order to keep the administration relatively simple members would be invited to attend courses around 6-8 weeks in advance. To ensure numbers were kept in check applicants should advise Forum direct and not the trainer or course leader.

PW requested that tbd dates are fully defined much longer in advance so that diaries for the year could be prepared. LH replied that Forum would endeavour to finalise dates as soon as possible but it was not always possible for trainers/course leaders to commit effectively a year in advance.

3.7. Biodiversity Report

JR reported to the meeting a quick overview of the recent biodiversity partnership meeting, which he had chaired. Judy John's sub-committee report, with more detailed information accompanies these minutes.

The partnership meets every three months to discuss a variety of pertinent topics. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday 16th September 2019. The partnership can be contacted on bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com.

3.8. Forum Meetings

Item not discussed.

4. Friends Group Issues

- 4.1. Darrick & Newstead Woods - closure of bridleways remains an issue, nobody seems prepared to make a decision.
- 4.2. Bromley Town Parks - looking at hosting an event in Queens Garden to promote Friends Groups and try to attract more volunteers to the cause. JR reported that a member was verbally abused by a dog-walker and became quite upset. The meeting agreed this type of event should be reported to the police and that hopefully a change to the bye-laws can be effected.
- 4.3. Chislehurst Commons - a similar occurrence, where abuse originated from a horse rider, took place in Chislehurst Common. The Group has resolved their differences and it is hoped the episode will not be repeated.
- 4.4. Chislehurst & Walden Rec - The Group is struggling to keep on top of things and feels *idverde* is letting the side down. Playground equipment keeps failing and is not being properly repaired, table tennis provision is not going as expected.
- 4.5. Jubilee Country Park - JRa expressed concern about the use of wire on boardwalks/bridges. The chicken wire was too flimsy and didn't last and she was seeking a solution that used a much stronger wire. LH reported that Keston had been told to remove all wire and that it was no longer to be used. A policy decision as to the use of wire is required from *idverde*. **Action: LH**
- 4.6. Hollydale Open Space - situation on trees has been resolved and thanks go to Glendale for sorting this. Its been a good job completed with no damage. Collection of green waste remains hit and miss.
- 4.7. Whitehall Rec - Beer Festival planned for 15th June. A live electrical connection was discovered in one of the flower beds (possibly a connection to an old telephone box). Fortunately no harm came to anybody but it could have been really serious. Need to have better records in the future, so this type of problem is not repeated.
- 4.8. Pratts Bottom - PH reported that the local community held a successful fête and that they had been well supported recently by *idverde*.

Bromley Friends Forum Members' Meeting 21st May 2019 – Minutes

- 4.9. Priory Gardens - looking forward to the Enchanted Children's Festival event on Saturday 1st June.
- 4.10. Goddington Park - MK reported that they were a newly formed Group and that they had plans to redevelop their pavilion.
- 4.11. Hoblingwell Wood - JI reported that the police had recently conducted an action sweep of the Wood and items such as hammers and machetes had been found.
- 4.12. Willettt Recreation Ground - AF reported problems with the children's playground and hoped these would be resolved shortly.
- 4.13. Warren Road - BW stated that it was getting harder to continue as a volunteer - more work, more issues, more bureaucracy. He also reported that Bromley Council was scheduled to receive a grant of £57K from the Ministry of Housing as part of their high street spring clean initiative. He would be interested to learn how Bromley proposed spending this money and how much would come back to the Friends. **Action: LH to ask LBB**
- 4.14. Keston Common - a Countryside event was planned for Sunday 30th June (2pm-5pm) on the green (Hayes Common) in the centre of the village. Several Friends Groups involved, free entry, all welcome (especially families).

5. AOB

- 5.1. The meeting requested that Forum ascertain if the Council had a animal control policy (control of rats) and who in the Council was responsible for its implementation.

Action: Forum

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next Forum Members' Meeting will be scheduled for Wednesday 17th July 2019 at the Civic Centre, starting at 7pm.