



Bromley Friends Forum

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 5th October 2016
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
Darren Russell (DR) - Hoblingwell Wood
Kari Silvester (KS) - Bromley Town Parks & Gardens / Forum

Friends Group Representatives

Barbara Arora (BA) - Chislehurst and Walden Rec
David Judd (DJ) - Biggin Hill
Emma Prescott (EP) - Havelock Rec
Iain Tulloch (IT) - Hollydale
Jeff Royce (JR) - Bromley Town Parks & Gardens
John Bruce (JB) - Jubilee Country Park
Judy John (JJ) - Darrick / Keston Common
Peter Woodward (PW) - Chislehurst Commons
Richard Gibbons (RG) - Orpington Priory Gardens
Sandy Goddard (SG) - Whitehall Rec
Susan Folkes (SF) - Jubilee Country Park
Vivienne Tatam (VT) - Hollydale

Apologies:

Alan Filby (AF) - Darrick & Newstead Woods
Brenda Little - Winsford gardens
Keith Rodwell - Winsford Gardens

1. Chairman's Welcome

LH opened the meeting and welcomed everyone in attendance. LH outlined a revised agenda and that our expected guest Pherenice Worsey-Buck was unable to attend. LH and DR had been briefed on what she had planned to say and would cover the topic in her absence.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 16th May were accepted with no alterations. JR proposed and PW seconded. The minutes would now be published on the Forum website.



Matters Arising:

2. - **Planning:** As an aside JR reported that Bromley Town Parks were looking at weekly planning lists and would inform the meeting if they noticed items of interest.

6.2 - **Hedgerows:** Feedback from Groups had been received and circulated to JJ. JJ in turn had discussed with Craig Langford at *idverde* and an agreement on process has been reached. A two year pilot of the scheme would ensue. JJ has produced posters for Groups to display at their parks to inform the general public of new hedgerow management procedures. These posters are available for download from the Forum website or JJ directly. Action complete.

6.3 - **London Loop/Green Chain Walk:** No progress to report. Action continues.

Action: LH to raise with *idverde*

6.4 - **General Meetings:** This has been discussed in Committee and no changes are planned. Action complete.

3. Forum Update

3.1 TLG / *idverde*

LH reported that The Landscape Group has decided to trade under their holding company name and henceforth will be known as *idverde*. As a consequence all contact emails were changing, with immediate effect, to *firstname.surname@idverde.co.uk*. In time all documentation, signage etc. will be changed.

3.2 Bromley Parks Website

A new Bromley Parks website, hosted by *idverde*, has been launched. Its name is bromleyparks.co.uk and members are invited to review and make comment. All comments should be emailed to *pablo.abraham@idverde.co.uk* and Forum copied in, if possible. As well as information on the various services provided by *idverde* the website is intended to be the first port of call for all enquiries.

3.3 Events Handling / Calendar

The new Bromley Parks website also includes a full calendar of events across the borough and as such provides the facility for both booking an event and advertising future ones. Members are asked to check information is up-to-date and current and direct any requests to *pablo.abraham@idverde.co.uk* (advertising) or *andrew.hodgson@idverde.co.uk* (booking).

3.4 Health & Safety Handbook

The new Health and Safety booklet was launched in June at the Forum conference. Most Groups had now received their copies and further supplies were available from Forum. DJ raised concern that some of the statements in the booklet were too prescriptive and as a consequence his Group members would not be signing the back page. It was agreed by the meeting that the booklet was an excellent guideline and should be used as such. If people did want to sign the back page then these should be kept by the secretary of the Group for future reference. There was no mandatory requirement to sign.



3.5 Local Green Space Update

LH presented the meeting with an update of the LGS consultation and that twenty-five sites had been chosen to attain said status. A new phase of consultation, lasting for six weeks, was about to start and these would allow members to comment on the chosen 25 as well as previously nominated sites that had not made the list. Forum would inform members the exact timing when known.

3.6 Training Needs Questionnaire

Forum has produced a revised training needs questionnaire for 2017. This would be issued to all Groups in the very near future and invited members to define their training needs for the coming twelve months. Forum would then work with idverde to provide a programme of training that met these needs. LH stated that Forum planned to offer a third First Aid course later this year.

Action: Forum to issue questionnaire and process needs identified

3.7 Expenses / Costs

LH reminded members that they could claim for travel costs and expenses whilst attending Forum based business. They are also invited to seek part-funding for small Friends Group projects, for consideration by the Forum Committee. A general expense claim form was available for download from the Forum website.

3.8 The Making of a National Park

Over the last 18 months, a movement has been growing, drawing together Londoners who want to make our city greener, healthier, fairer and even more beautiful. PW attended an event held at the Festival Hall called "Reimagine London's Future as a National Park" on 21st September which explored this ideal. A brief summary of that event was presented to Forum members:

The event was attended by over 1000 people and PW went with two colleagues from Chislehurst Commons, (tickets courtesy of the Friends Forum). It was an interesting, entertaining and informative event. The main message of the evening centred on why it was desirable for London to become a national park and how this would help all aspects of London life and make the city an icon for the world. If London does secure this status, this would be the first city to be designated as a National Park City.

Speakers included the National Trust, Tideway, Ordnance Survey, Fire Brigade plus representatives from schools. Josie Long was the host compere - an ex-pupil of Newstead Woods.

Sadiq Khan, the London Mayor, has indicated his support for the proposal so it is a viable possibility. To get a mandate, the organisers need to achieve support from 436 Ward Councillors out of the total of 654. So far only 208 have signed up leaving a further 228 needed.

At the end of the event, the participants were requested to declare their support, declare their organisations support and speak to their Ward Councillors to support it. Further details about this enterprise can be found at nationalparkcity.london.



4. Volunteer Development Plan

LH introduced the topic of a volunteer development plan which had arisen from the last stakeholder panel meeting which identified that some Friends Groups were experiencing difficulties in recruiting and retaining volunteers. In particular it was recognised that the current volunteer workforce was ageing with no younger volunteers being recruited to address the shortfall. With this in mind *idverde* proposes to look at all aspects of volunteering across Bromley and how this could support Friends Groups. Initially it is proposed that a *volunteer task force* is established to oversee the development of this plan. The *task force* will have representatives from *idverde*, the Friends Forum, Friends Groups and Community Links Bromley. If members are interested in joining this group they should contact either the Forum or pherenice.worsey-buck@idverde.co.uk.

5. Annual Statistics Return 2016

LH reported that an annual statistics return for 2016 had been drafted and was to be issued to all Friends Groups. Unlike in previous years neither the Council nor *idverde* was offering to pay the £100 for the collection of this data. A heated discussion followed that concluded that without the payment there was no incentive to complete this extra burden of work. The Council and/or *idverde* needed to consider what the value of this data was to them and pay-up accordingly if they wanted it. LH announced that Forum had received funds from *idverde* to support the Friends Groups and would be prepared to pay £100 this year for fully completed returns but this could not be guaranteed for any future years. JR proposed that this action be taken and SF seconded.

Action: Forum to issue return and manage payment process

Action: LH to raise matter of future years at stakeholder panel

6. Meeting Calendar 2017

LH presented a meetings calendar for 2017, which was also available for viewing from the Forum website. In essence Forum would host a meeting every two months starting in January. As a consequence next year's conference would be brought forward to May with the AGM in November. LH also announced that Open Committee Meetings would be renamed to Members Meetings as concern was raised that the term 'committee' might be precluding certain individuals from attending. All meetings would be held at the Civic Centre and start at 7pm.

7. Forum AGM Planning

LH reminded members that the AGM would be on Wednesday 16th November and as well as formal Forum business *idverde* was expected to present an update of their work. Drinks and nibbles would be available at the end of the meeting to help promote further discussion and networking. As is usual at the AGM the current Committee Members would resign and seek re-election. New members would be welcomed and nominations requested. SG asked if task descriptions for the various roles could be issued along with an estimate of the amount of time these involved.

Action: LH to issue committee roles



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8. AOB

- 8.1** SG & EP expressed concern that the supplies of tables, chairs, gazebo's etc. were going missing or were in a very poor state of repair. The supply of these items was essential for Friends events and it was imperative that this service continued.

Action: LH to raise matter at stakeholder panel

- 8.2** DR raised his concerns about Ward Security and that their dealing of issues was not fit for purpose. In particular there had been a number of known fly-tipping instances where they had taken no action.

Action: LH to raise matter at stakeholder panel

- 8.3** PW informed the meeting that an Open Day for Chislehurst Commons had been arranged for Saturday 15th October, where it was hoped to raise the profile of the work the trustees undertake. Details are available from the Forum website.

- 8.4** SF reported that the free library services offered to Friends Groups (on production of a valid Friends ID badge) was becoming a bit hit and miss with most librarians unaware that such a service existed. LH understood this service was still available and had raised with the chair of the stakeholder panel. To date no definitive response had been received.

Action: LH to raise matter at stakeholder panel

- 8.5** LH reported that the recent distribution of various Forum minutes had not met the standard expected. In general Forum minutes should be distributed to all members within a couple of weeks or so of any meeting. They would not however, appear on the Forum website (i.e. viewable by the general public) until they had been adopted by a subsequent meeting. It was noted that minutes of the partnership meeting with *idverde* had also not been circulated to members and those published on the website would be at least three months out of date. Members felt they wanted to see these minutes in a more timely manner.

Action: LH to seek *idverde* approval to circulate partnership minutes to members

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next Forum meeting will be their AGM on Wednesday 16th November 2016. The date of next Forum Members Meeting is Wednesday 11th January 2017.