

FRIENDS FORUM OF BROMLEY PARKS & GREEN SPACES

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Civic Centre, Bromley, Wednesday, 23rd November 2016, 7pm-8.45pm

1. Introduction and welcome of the Committee

Chairman, Larry Herbert (LH), opened the meeting, welcomed guests and those present and outlined the format for the evening and explained the voting system. LH thanked idverde for their help and support in planning the AGM.

2. Present / Apologies

Forum Committee:

Larry Herbert (LH), Chair, Friends of Keston Common
John Ince (JI), Vice-chair, Friends of Hoblingwell Wood
John Cutting (JC), Treasurer, Friends of Kelsey Park
Keith Rodwell (KR), Penge Green Gym (Winsford Gardens)
Darren Russell (DR), Friends of Hoblingwell Wood

Members:

Jean Judd, Biggin Hill Rec	Dave Judd (DJ), Biggin Hill
Peter Woodward, Chislehurst Commons	Jeff Royce (JR), Bromley Town Parks & Gardens
Mary Wheeler, Chislehurst Commons	Tony Banfield (TB), Bromley Town Parks & Gardens
Alison Stammers (AS), Chislehurst Rec	Richard Pearce, Darrick & Newstead Woods
Iain Tulloch, Hollydale Open Space	Vivienne Tatam, Hollydale Open Space
Susan Folkes (SF), Jubilee Country Park	Ian Pannett, Jubilee Country Park
Tiziana Herbert, Keston Common	Tudor Davies (TD), Keston Common
Richard Gibbons (RG), Priory Gardens	Val Bryant, Richmal Crompton
Peter White (PW), South Hill Wood	Brian Wilson, Warren Road
Mike Titheridge (MT), Tugmutton Common	Gordon Snashall, Tugmutton Common
Liz Woodman, Hayes Common	Alan Tabraham, Hayes Common
Alan Francis, Willett Rec	Gregor Campbell (GC), Willett Rec
Viv Smith (VS), Scadbury Park	David Allison, Norman Park

idverde:

Nick Temple-Head (NT-H)	Patrick Phillips (PP)
Sarah Hughes-Clarke	Frank Kleinhans (FK)
Andy Hodgson	Pherenice Worsley-Buck
Penny Read	Alistair Ing
Stephen Tickner	Lee Penny
Sinead Pearsall (SP)	

Apologies:

Councillor Colin Smith	Kari Silvester, Bromley Town Parks & Gardens
Alan Filby, Darrick & Newstead Woods	Brian Street, Darrick & Newstead Woods
Susan Hayes, Darrick & Newstead Woods	Barbara Arora, Chislehurst Rec
Dave Booker, Hoblingwell Wood	Sandy Goddard, Whitehall Rec
Emma Prescott, Havelock Rec	

3. Minutes of the last AGM held on 18th November 2015

The minutes of the last AG were accepted without error. The action regarding a roving microphone had been addressed. Adoption of the minutes was formally proposed by JR and seconded by TD. LH advised that the minutes would now be made available in the public domain.

4. Presentation of the Committee's Annual Report

4.1 JI introduced the Committee's Annual Report & Review, advising that a summarised copy of the PowerPoint presentation was available in delegates' packs. For the benefit of attendees JI proposed to outline the Forum's journey over the past year and show how the partnership with *idverde* had taken shape.

4.2 JI pointed out that the make-up of the committee reflected the diverse nature of the member groups

4.3 *Highlights*: The year included a strong working relationship with *idverde*, participation with the stakeholder panel, contribution to the biodiversity partnership as well as support to its member groups. One of the main activities of the year was the involvement with the planning consultation process over the Local Green Space designation. A number of meetings had been held and Friends views had been sent by letter to the Council. Forum has also been instrumental in progressing a training programme of courses.

4.4 *Relationships*: JI presented the latest relationship diagram showing the stakeholder panel at the heart of things and the interaction with *idverde* (formerly The Landscape Group).

4.5 *Partnerships (1)*: JI described more in-depth detail of the working partnership Forum has had over the past year with *idverde*. In particular, regular quarterly meetings; developing plans and strategies (including the publication of the Health & Safety Handbook, developing a training programme and resolving Friends issues) and collaborating on the volunteer development plan.

4.6 *Partnerships (2)*: JI went on to explain the partnership with the Council and how this was now much more low-profile but remained important. Emphasis this year had been on reporting Friends issues at the stakeholder panel meetings and liaison over the Local Green Space consultation.

4.7 *Links with other parties*: The significance of being part of the bigger regional and national Friends and parks network was pointed out. Also work with local volunteer groups and BEECHE.

4.8 *The Year Ahead*: The importance of keeping abreast of developments and continuing strong links with all relevant parties was stressed. Forum would host six meetings next year to impart information and spread the message of the network of Friends Groups generally.

4.9 *Contacts*: website and email contacts for Forum were provided.

5. Adoption of the Annual Accounts

JC presented the accounts. The balance was quite large because the committee needed to safeguard funds for future administration and training. A forecast of expenditure for the next six months was included to show how the funds would be used to support Friends Groups. LH added that the accounts had been independently checked and signed-off. Adoption of the Accounts proposed by DJ; seconded by MT.

Questions

Q. AS asked if the annual statistics were worth collecting and do they get actively used?

A. LH stated that they helped confirm the level of effort expended and funds raised by the volunteer Friends Groups and should the commitment that they provided to the community. PP added that they are used to support the targets set by *idverde*'s strategy of support for Friends Groups and are discussed with the Council in their contract negotiations.

A. JR reminded Forum to bear in mind that many Groups have developed a spreadsheet for data collection on an on-going basis and this must be considered when proposing changes to the annual stats form.

Q. GC asked if £4k planned expenditure was for annual statistics why did it not appear last year?

A. LH said that in previous years this money had been paid by the Council. However in placing the contract with *idverde* no budget had been provided for this and neither the Council nor *idverde* was in a position to pay this year. After discussion in committee it was decided that Forum would pay this year's award, though this could not be guaranteed for future years. The matter would be discussed further at the next stakeholder panel meeting,

Q. VS asked about payment for tools/safety equipment and whether Forum/*idverde* would pay for this?

A. FK advised that groups should discuss this matter with their Community Managers and come to some accommodation.

A. LH stated that Groups could make a request for payment to Forum, who would consider a claim on a case by case basis. Forum would not fund these items 100% but may offer a contribution towards the costs.

6. Election of Committee

PP took the Chair to oversee the election/re-election of the new Chairman and committee members: The nominees were as follows are all were taken en-bloc

Chairman: Larry Herbert, Keston Common

Vice Chairman: John Ince, Hoblingwell Woods

Treasurer: John Cutting, Kelsey Park

General Members: Darren Russell, Hoblingwell Woods

Keith Rodwell, Penge Green Gym (Winsford Gardens)

Kari Silvester, Bromley Town Parks & Gardens

The nominees were proposed by PWh and seconded by DJ. A unanimous vote followed with no abstentions. The nominees were duly elected and LH retook the Chair.

7. *idverde* Update

7.1 Patrick Phillips – Director of Park Management Strategy

PP opened the *idverde* presentation and outlined the origins of the company, in particular the change from The Landscape Group to *idverde*.

7.2 Frank Kleinmans, Contract Director

FK continued to explain the highlights of 2016. This included the strategy documents, the action plans and of course the publication of the Health & Safety handbook. FK also explained the effort made in producing the new interactive Bromley Parks website and working in partnerships with a variety of community groups.

8. Questions & Answers

Q. TB asked why some of the LGS applications had been refused and why there had been no feedback to the applicants to explain this?

A. Forum was not in a position to answer but would follow-up with the Council.

Action: LH to seek answers

Q. VS asked about corporate volunteering and how this worked?

A. FK suggested that groups should get in touch with their Community Managers who could investigate whether there were company volunteer work days that could help.

A. KR referred to Project Dirt that provided funding opportunities and this was another avenue that Friends could consider. See also <http://www.projectdirt.com>

AS wished to record thanks to *idverde* for their efforts over the past year and that significant improvement had been made from the initial days.

JR agreed that things now 'happened' though there were still some areas of 'patchiness'

DJ added that support had got so much better in the past year.

Q. TB referred to a survey of Bromley Town Parks and what was happening to address some of the issues?

A. SP referred to the Darwin bed signs and that this material was now at High Elms. The plan for these was not known at this time.

PP and his team at *idverde* would work with the Friends to resolve any outstanding matters.

Q. VS stated that the Friends insurance cover does not allow for the use of mechanised tools and how did Groups, who would be prepared to use these types of tools, manage?

A. LH explained that the insurance cover could be extended to cover use of mechanised tools and indeed Keston had done just that. Groups should discuss their requirements with Unity Insurance Services to ensure that the cover fully reflects their needs. It may be that this entails additional premium, which Friends would have to pay, though in most cases it would not. LH also explained that training opportunities would arise where Friends members may be able to attend an *idverde* course alongside their own staff.

Q. RG asked about the aspirations of *idverde* going forward?

A. NT-H explained that co-ordination was the key point and that *idverde* wants to expand but not move away from what they are good at, i.e. they are a 'green' company and that they did not want to expand to street cleaning, for example.

PW-B wished to record her thanks to all Friends Groups for their effort and hard work over the past year.

9. Any Other Business

JR referred to a TV documentary he had seen on the state of parks and the strong movement to try and secure statutory status for the upkeep. No guarantees of course. JR hoped to circulate further details.

10. Close

LH thanked members for their attendance and referred to the next members' meeting to be held on 11th January 2017 at the Civic Centre, starting at 7pm. Next year's Conference is scheduled for 17th May 2017.