

**LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY**

**Parks, Green Space and Countryside Stakeholder Panel Minutes  
12<sup>th</sup> July 2016**

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Parks, Green Space and Countryside Stakeholder Panel Agenda

Date and Time: Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2016 7.00-9pm.

Location: Civic Centre, Committee Room 6

1. Welcome and Apologies
2. Minutes of previous meeting
3. TLG Update:
  - a. Update on Action Plan
4. LBB Update
5. Feedback from Stakeholders
6. AOB
7. Date of future meetings

<u>Attendees 12<sup>th</sup> July</u>	<u>Action</u>
<p><u>Councillors</u></p> <p>Councillor Colin Smith Councillor Huntington-Thresher</p> <p><u>London Borough of Bromley</u></p> <p>John Bosley, Head of Neighbourhood Management (Chairman) Robert Schembri, Contracts Manager Jennifer Davis, Project Officer</p> <p><u>The Landscape Group</u></p> <p>Patrick Phillips, Director of Park Management Strategy Frank Kleinhans, Contract Director Ian Wright, Biodiversity Advisor</p> <p><u>Stakeholders</u></p> <p>Ishpi Blatchley, Countryside Consultative Panel /Bromley Biodiversity Partnership Janet Clayton, Orpington and District Archaeological Society Larry Herbert, Friends Forum Judith John, Countryside Consultative Panel /Bromley Biodiversity Partnership John Penney, Leisure Gardens and Allotments Federation Peter Woodward, Chislehurst Trustees</p> <p><u>Apologies</u></p> <p>Dan Jones, Assistant Director Street Scene &amp; Green Space John Murray, Bowls Federation</p>	
<p><u>Minutes &amp; Actions of the meeting</u></p> <p><u>Minutes of previous meeting</u></p> <p><b>Structure chart –</b></p> <p>TLG confirmed a copy of the structure chart had been circulated, it was highlighted that there have been amendments to the Countryside and Biodiversity Advisor posts; it was also reiterated that Dr Catherine Norris is now Biodiversity Manager.</p> <p><b>Health and Safety Booklet –</b></p> <p>A copy of the Health and Safety booklet was handed out to the Panel and well received with positive feedback. Larry Herbert and the Friends forum are in the process of collecting boxes of the booklet, which Larry Herbert is distributing,</p>	

200+ have already been delivered (Larry also commented that he is happy to post booklets to Friends, within reason, if addresses are provided).

However it was noted that the photograph on the front was not of volunteers, but of a walking group. Councillor Smith stated that this illustrated a key issue moving forward, communication between stakeholders and TLG.

Patrick Phillips confirmed that when the booklet is reviewed, the image will be considered again. John Bosley suggested that in future TLG circulate a PDF copy of the booklet before printing, to which TLG agreed.

### **Scadbury Courses –**

Three out of the five planned courses have now been delivered with Friends including, First Aid, Leading Groups, and Working with Families; Hedge Laying and Tree identification courses have also been scheduled.

Biodiversity courses for TLG staff have also been planned with Dr Catherine Norris to lead; once the course has been signed off the training will start. Dr Judith John asked that she is able to comment on the draft for the course, Frank Kleinhans agreed. Biodiversity Stewardship meetings have also been occurring.

The TLG Action plan is now on the website; Patrick Phillips stated that Quarter 2 of the plan will be published shortly; this will illustrate what TLG have achieved so far, and what is planned for the future, this is an active document and therefore can be updated in ‘real time.’

### **Stewardship –**

Frank Kleinhans is now working with Rob Schembri on this; there are partnership meetings every quarter, the last was in June and the next one is in August; once this has taken place, John Bosley and TLG to meet and discuss.

The Annual Biodiversity Plan is scheduled for 2017.

### **TLG Update**

Patrick Phillips updated the Panel on TLG, 80 out of the 85 targets set out in the Action Plan have been met, with 5 being held up by grant applications being unsuccessful, these targets have now been pushed to Quarter 2.

TLG are looking at capacity building for the Friends Forum, it was decided recently that the existing grant wasn't suitable and needed to be reviewed. TLG are currently investigating options to improve access to Chislehurst Recreation Ground, in conjunction with the FO Chislehurst and Walden Recreation Ground and other key stakeholders as the existing options were deemed too expensive by Interest groups

**TLG**

**Dr Judith  
John/  
TLG**

**RS/JB/TLG**

Scheduled Career Talks to students at Capel Manor have been deferred to next year due to sickness.

**Quarter 2 of the Action Plan –**

TLG looking to provide digital platform for event hire with an online process developing, however due to the nature of this action, this may get pushed to Quarter 3. A programme for hard infrastructure repair is also being developed.

A fundraising course for TLG staff is planned, and training for Community Managers to assist with grants funding applications. Frank Kleinhans commented that there are plans to extend this training to Friends Groups.

A Countryside Plan is being developed, which will be shared with stakeholders, the Scadbury Management plan is also being updated. In regards to Heritage Management, by September TLG hope to have hit the milestones. A Beckenham Bandstand crowd funding platform is planned to be launched.

There is a lot of grant funding activity taking place for allotments; a grant is in place at Brook Lane Allotments. Chislehurst Recreation Ground Pavilion has also received a grant to construct a sports hut and possibly a café. Possibility of High Elms Country Park Sensory Trail being developed. Queens Gardens development of new play area planned. The Cemetery and Closed Churchyards booklet will also be revised and published.

Dr Judith John queried whether in the Action Plan, TLG are looking into funding for Scadbury hay cuts. Patrick Phillips highlighted that this will be part of the Management Plan for Scadbury, but that it could be included as a target for 2017. TLG have met with Natural England and will be carrying on with existing agreements.

**TLG**

Councillor Huntington-Thresher asked TLG, in regards to grants, whether there were closing reports available. Patrick Phillips confirmed that these would be available at the September PDS Members would receive an annual report, there would be elements of grant applications in that report, and they would also be referenced in the TLG Action Plan; grants are monitored pre and post conclusion.

**TLG**

**LBB update**

John Bosley informed that Panel that on the 16th May 2016 the Neighbourhood Management system was implemented. There are now 3 Neighbourhood Managers, Rob Schembri covering the West of the borough, Jim Cowan Central, and Bob Edwards the East. Whilst there are challenges in implementing a new way of working, there is a lot of experience and transferable contract management skills.

Rob Schembri stated that we are concentrating on grass cutting this season, TLG are working hard and have taken on hedge cutting & rural hedge cutting and are now dealing with enquiries about these issue directly. Annual Hay Cuts still sit with a sub-contractor; PROW is the only contract that we are revising.

Peter Woodward requested that personnel contacts and areas were circulated to the Panel. Jennifer Davis to action this, and also send the newsletter. These documents are not to be widely publicised and are only for key stakeholders.

### **Feedback from Stakeholders**

#### **John Penney Allotments –**

Issues with Planning were raised at the last meeting. Patrick Phillips has assisted with these issues, and at the last Allotment Panel meeting a representative from Planning came and was extremely helpful. An application has now been submitted for the Local Green Space. John Penney stated that the Friends of Allotments would also like to be part of the Biodiversity Partnership, Dr Judith John, John Penney and Ishpi Blatchley to meet separately. The renewal of Allotment leases expires in 2020 and hoping to sort this.

Patrick Phillips informed the Panel that he is speaking to Strategic Property about the leases; Councillor Smith requested that a written update was provided by end of next week.

#### **Peter Woodward –**

FMS has produced a few referrals to the Conservative Commons, which they are more than happy to receive. Scadbury Committee - Peter commented that it would be interesting to see how the implementation of the Community Manager at Scadbury would work in the Partnership Diagram that he illustrated to the group, Jennifer Davis to circulate this diagram with the meeting minutes.

#### **Larry Herbert –**

Partnership meetings that occur every 3 months are going really well. The Forum has a £5k annual budget which TLG have paid again this year. The Strategy document highlighted that we need to retain 35,000 volunteer hours per annum. Larry highlighted the need for annual stats; the Friends groups used to be paid £100 to provide their annual hour stats, however this no longer occurs as TLG instead pay for enhanced insurance and event cover for stakeholders. The Forum and TLG are working together to produce pro-forma's around September time. Larry informed the group that he is going to ask the committee if it would be possible for them to pay some of the £100 from the existing grant TLG make to them.

**JD**

**Dr Judith  
John/Ishpi  
Blatchley/John  
Penney**

**TLG**

**JD**

Management Plans – Larry has spoken about this in partnership meetings and will review this again.

Training – The Forum had identified training issues around brush cutters but these are now banned, therefore now looking into training possibilities around other mechanical facilities; which would in turn free up TLG staff members to lead the sessions. IT courses are also planned but are currently delayed. Events, forms are very complex at the moment; we are looking to review this. Ishpi Blatchley also commented that events forms are complicated, and burdensome.

John Bosley commented that the forms may be able to be simplified, however this would need to be looked into, possibly with the assistance of TLG.

Councillor Smith informed the Panel that bureaucracy should not get in the way. And that a report on why burdensome forms are necessary and the £100 issue will be required by the next meeting. Patrick Phillips also commented that it is imperative where TLG are concerned to reduce bureaucracy.

Ian Wright was welcomed to the team, and Larry confirmed that he is developing very good working relationships with people.

Signage in Parks - This is now in the TLG Action Plan but also looking at interim solutions. John Bosley also noted that this had been identified by Bromley, and we have been discussing this with TLG.

Local Green Space designation (an initiative managed by LB B Planning) - The Friends Forum are not happy about this process and felt that there has not been enough consultation; John Bosley and Larry Herbert to discuss this separately.

Dan Jones sent out an email to Friends Groups about potential initiatives in select parks. In regards to High Elms, Dr Judith John highlighted that in this proposal there was no mention of the SSSI / High Level Stewardship of this site and that any potential bidders should be made aware of this.

Councillor Colin Smith stated to the Panel that the letters were sent at his insistence so that Friends Groups were kept informed. Stating that we need to generate revenue to support the Green Space Agenda, and that nothing is going to happen to regards to either Park that would have a detrimental impact; however we cannot move away from potential interest, as this is exactly what we need to consider for the budget.

In regards to High Elms Councillor Smith reiterated that no one is more aware of its uniqueness, and that no one was going to denigrate Bromley's Parks, but that there might be options to consider. The letter was left deliberately vague to attract interest and thoughts; only two letters have gone out as these sites had potential business plans, if Bidders do not meet certain criteria in regards to the status of the Park, they will be rejected. These parks were chosen, as if

**TLG**

**Larry  
Herbert/JB**

we cannot make business ventures work in two of the best parks, then options need to be reconsidered.

Councillor Huntington-Thresher agreed with Councillor Smith stating that if the letters were too detailed it might put off prospective developers.

**Janet Clayton** – In terms of ODAS, happy with the Community Manager in Scadbury, it would also be nice to see progress on the management plan, although conscious of the difficulty with grant funding.

**Dr Judith John** – The Biodiversity Partnership are trying to put together an improvement plan for hedge rows, which is currently out for consultation with the Friends Group, this will have an effect on other projects, such as the Hedgehog Project. Images of damage to hedge rows in that has occurred previously were circulated to the Panel.

Patrick Phillips commented that TLG are keen to improve matters and to do several pilots across the Borough, indicating there was a possibility of working with Dr Judith John in order to identify possible areas to pilot, and then develop joint monitoring. John Bosley commented that this should be tracked and included within a programme of works/Action plan.

**Ishpi Blatchley** – Highlighted to the Panel that she believes there to be an issue with management of the Boroughs countryside sites. She expressed concerns to the Panel that the support that had been previously available to volunteers was no longer evident, with not enough staff available and a loss of continuity. Ishpi indicated that this may be due in part to the relocation of staff for grass cutting; and that this has caused, in particular, High Elms to be left in a bad way, without evidence of a dedicated site manager.

The issue was also raised that TLG do not appreciate the difference between sites across the Borough, with not enough qualified staff. The Panel were informed that written assurances had been received that support would remain the same; however in 2016 there have been 8 occasions of Saturdays were there has been no support and no dedicated site manager present and that the contractor work appears to be unsupervised, with arising's/timber left on paths, which volunteers had to clear.

Ishpi Blatchley expressed further concerns to the Panel that this was having a negative impact on volunteer attendance, already under pressure due to ageing workforce.

It was agreed that Rob Schembri, John Bosley, Frank Kleinhans and Patrick Phillips would meet to discuss the issues raised, and then respond.

Frank Kleinhans also commented that whilst some staff reallocation had occurred to assist with grass cutting, this was seasonal and was not a permanent measure.

**TLG/Dr Judith  
John**

**RS/JB/PP/FK**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>AOB</u></b></p> <p>Ian Wright informed the Panel that talks were underway with Natural England, in regards to Norman Park, and looking to put in stewardship for this area, all of which could lead to funding. He also thanked members of the Panel for being welcoming towards him; this sentiment was returned by the Panel, with thanks to Ian for working hard and bringing his expertise to TLG.</p> <p>It was agreed that the next meeting should take place in 3-4 months, Jennifer Davis to arrange.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>It was agreed that the next meeting should take place early November, Jennifer Davis to action.</p>	<b>Jennifer Davis</b>