



## Forum Partnership Meeting No. 34

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024, 10am – Video Conferencing

Larry Herbert (LH)  
Ralph Ambrose (RA)  
Keith Rodwell (KR)  
Barbara Arora (BA)

Hugh Chapman (HC)  
Hannah Jackson (HJ)  
David Braybrook (DB)

Mark Garthwaite (MG)  
Sue Holland (SH)  
Jess Dalton (JD) (Minutes)

### AGENDA

1. Welcome & introductions
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of last meeting / Action tracker
4. Council update
5. *idverde* update
6. Forum update
7. Any other business
8. Date of next meeting

#### **1. Welcome & Introductions**

LH welcomed all participants and began introductions.

#### **2. Apologies for Absence**

**Friends Forum:** Vivien Smith (VS), Richard Gibbons (RG)

**LBB:** Cllr Will Rowlands (WR), Jane Askew (JA) Mollie Lyon (ML)

**Idverde:** Martyn Bradley (MB), Angela Wood (AW)

#### **3. Previous Minutes & Matters Arising (Action Tracker Update)**

The minutes were accepted as a true reflection of the previous meeting.

The action tracker was reviewed, amended, and updated including new due dates for actions outstanding, this can be found attached to the minutes. A summary of changes to the action tracker is as follows:

**Action 24:** Park signage updates – **Continued to be reviewed.** LH received spreadsheet from AW, MG to provide update on AW return. HJ added been very honest with budget position, purpose of initial work was what we have and don't have, then work on a design guide. If and when funding becomes available to create uniformity across the sites. One that is driven by Forum. LH added stumbling block of it, 300 sites that were on original list, but Friends only cover 100 or so. HJ confirmed *idverde* are reviewing, working out where gaps are and where they can fill them.

**Action 25:** Water fountains – **Ongoing.** DB has had reports back, meeting with Facilities Management, separately looking at a project for Penge fountain. Now have data as requested. HJ mentioned main issue was costings, as Friends may have contributed. LH commented ongoing costs & maintenance issues that need dealing with, who pays for water that is dispensed. HJ commented a difficult conversation due to budget position, until costs confirmed that's when it can become more viable and guaranteed.

**Action 30:** Website information- **Action Closed.** MG mentioned Bromley Parks website has been updated, categorisation of parks. Links in each park which has a Friends Group and takes to the Friends Forum website. Photos will be uploaded once MG receives training on how to. LH queried whether LBB website will be revised. HJ commented the Friends sign up pages were revised on basis of feedback from KR, additional changes to Parks pages themselves. On a whole scale revision is not something can resource right now. Do have an intern joining us in September, LBB will pick that work up there.

RA raised query on Bromley Parks website - There's a link to Parkrun which just goes to Bromley Parkrun, doesn't show all the events of it. MG asked RA to send links and texts to him.

**Action 37:** Communications processes – **Action Closed.** LH has received document, still to read through properly and give HJ feedback, aware that this is reviewed annually.

**Action 38:** Friends Group donations from events – MG advised idverde stance would remain the same as it was last time, still in commercial dialogue with LBB about extension proposal. No update on this.

**Action 39:** idverde to provide course on events – MG advised idverde have an events department but it is more so facilitating events, they are not put on by idverde. Quote was received from Lollipop but all agreed too expensive. Idverde internally can certainly provide very simplistic training on the process of booking events, which is what idverde do. Don't feel that idverde can provide such training of putting on an event itself. LH confirmed Friends wanted a course that explained how to book an event and what is all involved and what had to be considered in terms of running an event. If idverde have all the information on how to book one and how all the paperwork that's needed, all the licensing that's involved etc. MG advised this is something idverde can provide. BA added moreso what Friends need to know about for food safety licences and having a checklist from idverde. MG understands comments and will provide information.

**Action 40:** Friends insurance arrangements – MG advised MB did review this with idverde's brokers and it was decided to stay with Unity.

LH raised query on behalf of RG about whether Friend's can work at three metre height if doing so involves using a ladder, and he was under the impression that idverde prohibit Friend's from using ladders, whereas Friend's insurance actually allows it. MG commented idverde's internal method statements and risk assessments wouldn't allow us to work above 3 metres and on ladders. Not sure on the history of requesting Friend's not to use ladders, will take away and come back to LH on this.

KR commented haven't received renewal terms yet. MG will chase. LH added received quote but had issues, as refers to dates of 2015 and 2021. Also wanted to put a small add on to cover tools and they were quoted over £220 which is more than the basic policy costs. LH added should be some sort of confirmation from Friend's group on specific aspects before renewal. MG understands, advised AW was in quite extensive communications with the insurers along with MB, will provide feedback to LH.

#### **4. Council Update**

HJ provided an update on LBB which included:

- Budget – currently only spending on essential things
- Platinum Jubilee Parks Fund – JA continuing to work on. Report plus appendix presented at June Committee Cycle can be found here:  
[Report No \(bromley.gov.uk\)](#)  
[Platinum Jubilee Parks Fund Update - Appendix 1 2.pdf](#)
- 52 approved projects
  - 28 fully delivered
  - 7 that are currently in delivering delivery
  - 1 in the process of transferring the funds to them so they can deliver
  - 2 that are continuing to fundraise
  - 2 are in with planning, which includes RG's project
  - 9 continuing to scope that were recently received.
- Tender period for Kelsey Lakes now closed – looking to put together the contract award report for July and then that contract will get awarded over the summer.
- Waterbodies - Environment Agency keen to be involved on a project.
- Infrastructure projects
  - Kelsey Park Bridge tender due to close 12/07
  - Complete restoration of Croydon Rd Rec Bandstand
  - ML working closely with RA on perimeter fence at Hoblingwell.

HC gave an update on the tremendous project:

- Concluded 3<sup>rd</sup> season of tree planting and well into watering season
- Each tree planted receives 50 litres of water per week for a 17-week period through the summer. Currently about a month and 1/2 into that now, so that will be ongoing for a while
- If ever out and you do see trees, young trees that you think are struggling, likely that they are from a previous year, so please do highlight them on FMS as we do have the facility to add them on for additional maintenance on an ad hoc basis should they require it
- Tree surveying moving into Beckenham Town and Copers Cope ward.

HJ continued update on:

- LBB have had annual infrastructure audit – MG & team have been looking at essential works required in parks over the next year
- Reviewing water safety arrangements
- MG & HJ reviewing the way in which we monitor the idverde contracts – made some changes & looking very closely at the scoring mechanisms and we'll be trialling a new scoring mechanism over the next couple of months.

DB added

- Scadbury Park - had correspondence with historic England, discussed options around further funding for the next phase of works to the Moated Manor
- Continuing to work on Nature Friendly Verges & Sustainable Planting.

BA commented Friends don't have an idea of the monitoring & scrutiny of idverde, unsure of what standards need to be met. Promised in past to have redacted form of written document to show this. HJ understands concerns and will pick up with MG, unaware this was promised previously.

KR raised query on Jubilee Parks fund - do we know how we stand with the allocation of the Jubilee Parks funds money. HJ commented there's £880k overall to award, and we've definitely allocated more than £620k. DB added we've got quite a few wards that have been fully allocated and there's some that still have money remaining, JA is working very closely with potential applicants to ensure that all wards have their 40K fully spent.

RA raised concerns at Hoblingwell - orchids being lost and grassland damaged, has been reported 3 times to AW, benches that have been missing for 10 years. MG understands concerns and accepts AW doesn't fall under GM side of business, more his banner. Agrees improvements need to be made in GM. Enquiries aspect of things last year before MG took over was through the roof, has reduced by nearly 50% over recent months. MG advised however, we still do get it wrong, that probably will be some difficult conversations that we have at the meeting in July about how we improve on those things. We have made huge improvements this year compared to last when we have just about rectified the issue with the support of external contractors, but I think there's still a huge amount that we can do.

Cutting of the grass verges as an example is quite a simple process and I'd like to think we've done relatively well on that this year, but there are intricacies of where wild flowers are planted and which banks should not be strimmed. Ideally, I'd like loads more supervisors to be out there on the ground, supervising the guys, but budgetary constraints don't allow that. Appreciate the comments

RA added thank you to HJ, MG & LH for working with us on this, appreciate the apologies that were received.

BA added how grateful I am for your prompt response to my e-mail the other day and hopefully we'll set up a meeting and be able to take things forward.

## **5. idverde Update**

Idverde's presentation was distributed to the partnership prior to the meeting. MG agreed with the meeting that it was not necessary to repeat the content here and was happy to take questions. MG asked that the presentation was circulated to all Friends to broadcast the extent of their work beyond the realms of Friends Groups.

LH raised query on poo bags, are they still being held up or done and dusted, hasn't received any. BA added gets theirs through Penny Read. MG will check with AW.

LH added he had agreed with AW that the basic tool kit for new Friends can go ahead with yellow Hi-Vis. Also, we are still in discussion about what is provided to existing groups so we can move forward. Still got an open question on that because as far as I'm concerned, we should still expect to receive gloves, litter pickers, goggles and things like that. LH added AW mentioned she will discuss with senior management, I have been promised by LBB these things will be provided, Veolia Street Friends receive this. MG understands concerns will discuss with AW on return and update LH & RA.

LH raised query on grass cutting, expected meadows to have paths cut hasn't happened at Keston. MG advised due to happen imminently, may be a little delay.

LH raised query on behalf of RG, shredded litter at Green Street Green and cuttings strewn in road. MG advised have seen quite a bit of it when out and about in recent weeks. Obviously seen the grass has been long, when we cut it, the clippings still remain long. I think next year I'm going to be trying to introduce a different type of cutting deck that will chop the cuttings even finer than they currently are. MG confirmed he had seen instances where the blowing of the grass hasn't quite been on point. Sometimes it's difficult when you've got narrow verges to blow it from the footpath onto the verge without blowing it into the road, and vice versa. I think I've seen really good standards, but sometimes I've seen standards that aren't great. I think if you've seen any specifics in terms of grass clippings in the road, just bear in mind that there might have been cars parked there, that have subsequently moved. But if you can see it's clearly not been done properly or there is shredded litter please report on FMS and we will get it resolved. With regards to the guys physically doing the work, if we send them back to right their wrongs then they won't do the wrongs in the first place hopefully. So please do report that.

LH raised query from feedback received from both Croydon Rd Rec and South Hill Wood, Kingswood Glen, about vehicles creating ruts in their pathways. Either the vehicles are too big or the vehicles are not driving on the pathway, but driving more on the grass and verges and creating these massive ruts. When we had lots of mud and everything, it started looking very unsightly. MG commented seen similar comments earlier on in the year when things were a lot wetter. It was very difficult to work out who the offending culprits were because there were many contractors on site. If people are aware of it, let us know and then we can either address it with the crews or speak to contractors or stakeholders if it's their vehicles.

LH raised query on recording unsupervised volunteer hours. LH was in receipt of a new Microsoft Form from AW that appeared to cover more than just capturing hours, it also asked about risk assessments, health & safety policies and volunteer designations. This seemed to make the process overly complicated and repetitive for elements that did not need to be recorded on a weekly basis. As an authorised and constituted Friends Group, you should have all these risk assessments and procedures in place in the first place. So that's something you agree up front. If you just want to capture the hours, let's just capture the hours. DB added will look at commentary with AW and pick up again. BA commented we use a simple WhatsApp system for all the volunteers and they just tell me how many hours they've done for what, can't say if they've done a risk assessment. But that is the key data and we know exactly at the end of the year when we submit our annual report for our AGM or when we submit our stuff for the Charities Commission how many volunteer hours in total have been put into Chislehurst Rec.

LH raised query on Green Flag, not huge amount of involvement with Friends Groups on this, hasn't also received report form last year which was expected. MG advised will pick up with AW. KR asked how many Green Flag applications were submitted this year, wonders how this fits in with the other work idverde are expected to do. MG advised It does take a huge amount of work from our side to make sure the prep is right and it's a pressure point that idverde take at the time. KR asked did all the existing ones get renewed this year? HJ confirmed we submitted all of the existing ones for renewal and then added an additional one which is Cator Park. LH added think total is 9. RA added wants Hoblingwell to apply for a Green Flag.

LH thanks SH for courses that have been put on for Friends.

## **6. Friends Forum Update**

LH gave an update on the Friends Group which included:

We had a Members' Meeting in May where a number of different Groups provided their feedback on their successes and failures, that's perhaps prompted some of the questions this morning. We've got another meeting scheduled for two weeks' time with our members.

Beyond that Forum has continued to respond to actions and queries it receives through its membership. It has offered advice to the new Poverest Park and Covet Wood Group and will in due course be providing some financial support.

Post Meeting Note: Due to unforeseen circumstances the members' meeting scheduled for July has had to be cancelled and rescheduled for September. This will be followed by Forum's AGM in November.

## **7. AOB**

None.

## **8. Next Meeting**

The next meeting date has been arranged for: Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024 starting at 10am (Online). The subsequent meeting will be Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

[Meeting ended]