



Forum Partnership Meeting No. 22

Thursday 17th June 2021, 10am – Video Conferencing

Refer to secretary for attendees

AGENDA

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

Welcome & Introductions

LH welcomed all participants.

Apologies for Absence

KS, CL and AH

Minutes of last meeting

Minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

LH Statement

LH made the following statement – I would like to just make a small statement. In the minutes of the meeting last time I raised the issue of the action tracker, and the fact that some sort of arbitrary due dates for are added to these individual items. We agreed in the meeting that we would put a timestamp to it or a time and date when that action should be completed. And then we would have a clearer view as to when we should receive

information about these actions. We did that and we agreed that and there are a number of actions which we raised for completion in April, I'm sorry to say that some of these have not been done, certainly not by that time frame. The Forum considers these actions as important, as a key element of the meeting. We are quite upset that the actions have not been completed in the timeframe agreed upon. There is a feeling a bit of disrespect that you're not actually meeting the agreement's that we've come to in these meetings.

JH responded that historically we have been in the habit of giving verbal updates during the meeting and we did agree that we would try to provide written updates between meetings according to the due dates, that hasn't necessarily happened. From the Council perspective we need to improve upon this and provide updates on actions as they occur rather than wait for these meetings.

LH said that this would be better than waiting three months between updates, the Forum asks to be kept updated by the Council on actions in between meetings. The primary issue is the partnership statement, it is now two years since the first draft, and we are no nearer to reaching an agreement. JH advised that we are close to agreeing the statement and we can discuss further in the body of the meeting.

Matters Arising (Action Tracker Update)

Action 16 - Partnership statement

LH asked where we stand and said it has been two years so far to get this agreed and it shouldn't take that long. JH advised that feedback had been received from Forum and idverde, JH is to meet PMC to make any final adjustments very soon and then they will send the statement to members & Portfolio Holder for final sign-off and then they will return it to the Forum. KR said that JH's answer is unacceptable and that there had been no feedback from the Council on this point and that the FF were getting upset on the lack of action from LBB generally. JH advised he will look to see what can be done to improve these concerns. JH said feedback would be sent to the FF by the end of the week. BA added that she would like to second KR's concerns and that although they have a good relationship with idverde on a practical level there is a lack of feedback/support/action from the Council. JH said that it must be remembered that colleagues have been unavailable during the pandemic, and this has delayed some actions but the comments have been taken on board and improvements will be sought going forwards.

Action 18 – Tool provision for Friends Groups.

JH advised that the list provided by LH was acceptable but there may be some minor adjustment to be made to finalise it. JH confirmed that LBB are happy to provide the PPE and some manual hand tools to the groups. The need now is to ascertain what is required by each FoG to move forwards. FK advised that he felt the best way forward is to create a template which can be collated by idverde on behalf of LBB. Action for idverde is to design an inventory template for agreement by the FF and LBB. The form could be put on the FF website for groups to access easily by FF members. BA asked wouldn't it make more sense for the budget to be managed by the FF as it would be a quicker process. LH feels that idverde have a better spending power and can achieve economy of scale. FK confirmed that idverde probably have slightly better rates, but ordering is not ad-hoc. FK clarified that JH is agreeing to supplying new groups with bulk PPE and to supply any PPE on an ad-hoc basis, this does not affect the central depot store levels such as tables and tents which are still to be provided on request. It was agreed that the first draft template will be provided by 25th June.

Action 19 – Dog licence.

JH advised that the licences are working well so far and that they have managed to have PSPO put in at Crystal Palace Park. It was queried previously if the process was clear for the public the link on the website needs updating but the process seems to be working well, enquiries are logged on FMS and assigned to enforcement. When reports are logged it would be useful for the time of the issue to be included in the report to help enforcement catch and fine people, a couple of fines have been issued already. LH commented that the notice that went up was not sufficient JH agreed and advised that the Comms team are working on updating the notices. BA advised that the FoCRG are getting more issues with aggressive dogs as more and more people have got dogs during the pandemic. There was an incident where a member of public was bitten, are the Council looking to review their rules around dog control? Can this be consulted upon, and a policy devised? JH said that this is something for him to consider and take up with the enforcement team. JP suggested that it may be beneficial to educate the new dog owners to the rules around dog walking in parks. JH asked Cllr WHT for comment Cllr WHT suggested that parks signage and the website could be updated to clarify the requirement of dog owners to keep their dogs under control. Updating by-laws can be very difficult and can require Secretary of State sign-off. LH concluded that this action be closed, and a new action (31) be opened regarding dog owning etiquette.

Action 24 - LBB to provide update on park sign upgrades.

JH advised that following the parks surveys the priority for signage for the public was relatively low, that said LBB still want to progress with the project, it is LBB intention to address this project through the Parks Strategy once it has been approved. At that stage the brief will be reviewed as to what content will be included on signage such as by-laws etc.

Action 25 - Additional water fountains installations and upgrades for existing fountains.

JH advised that this is ongoing as it is time consuming for the property department and carbon efficiency team, no costs have been received yet. JH advised that Amey property are finishing their contract at the end of September this year which is also delaying matters. It will be picked up with the in-sourced property team in due course and we should mark the project as ongoing.

Action 27 – Updated NMO Organisation Chart

JH to send updated org chart to LH as soon as possible. FK to send updated idverde org chart as well.

Action 28 – Twenty Year Maintenance Costs for New Assets

JH advised that he has begun drafting a response to this issue and will send it over to LH as soon as possible. Certainly, by the next meeting.

Action 29 – Revised Fundraising Process Map

AR advised that the next steps to move the revised fundraising process forward (action 29) is to arrange a workshop with VS and the community management team. We will aim to do this by the next meeting.

Action 30 – Bromley Website Inconsistent Information

KR has been working with Andrew Rogers to highlight inconsistencies on the Bromley website. JH believes the specific link was fixed on the day. LH commented that there was a wider issue with LBB, idverde and Bromley website showing a lot of out-of-date information. JH advised this is ongoing and should be marked as ongoing for regular updates. KR did communicate with Andrew Rogers and advised of ten park sites that need ed updating but nothing has been forthcoming from him. KR has also sent suggestions to idverde and heard nothing back either. JH advised that the Communications team were incredibly busy and that explains the delay or lack of response. AH advised that we did acknowledge KR's comments at the time and did advise that the website was being reviewed as a larger piece which is scheduled to be done this year. LH expressed the view that the FF website should be the master website for the FoG's and should not necessarily be repeated on the LBB and idverde websites. JH said it was important that the various websites complement each other. JP asked that if there is any feedback for the idverde website send it over as the idverde review is going to take place in August. RG added that there are inconsistencies on the list of sites held on the various websites and it is not always clear what idverde are

responsible for. JH acknowledge this fact and did say that LBB are looking in to this ready for the redraft of the Parks Strategy.

LBB Update

JH – LBB are now beginning to return to phased working where 50% of staff back into the office. The Open Space Strategy is being reviewed with a view of the redraft being approved in the autumn of this year. That is currently in discussion with the Leader and Portfolio Holder on how we move this forward, part of this will be the engagement session which we will update you on, not just the Friends Forum but around thirty other stakeholder groups across the borough. In relation to the Neighbourhood Management Officers and Managers they are continuing to operate as they have done since last year completing monitoring on suppliers across the board as they have done since the beginning of the new contracts that were awarded in 2019.

KR – asked who the NMO officers and Community Managers are and feels the groups are left in the dark as to who does what and feels he never sees anyone in his park. JH explained that NMO's are predominately monitoring the performance of contractors and not necessarily front-line as the Community Managers are. FK added that the Community Managers are on this call and the org chart is shared regularly with the Forum and it is on their website. We can recirculate the latest version. JH advised that at the end of last year he did circulate a LBB structure chart. A lot of the groups are familiar with their Community Managers and NMO's. LH asked for updated org charts. FK & JH agreed to send over new charts.

LH asked Cllr WHT for his view on the grant issued to the Friends Forum. LH explained that the FF received a 5k grant to help it to achieve its aims and this has been the figure more a number of years, the issue is that the number of groups has increased significantly meaning that the 5k has become insufficient and asked for a review of the funding the FF gets and if an increase would be possible. Cllr WHT advised that this is something that could be looked into. LH advised that LBB used to pay groups £100 but that doesn't happen anymore, so the FF has stepped in, the issue being that with 52 groups that is over 5k alone. The FF needs to spend money on training courses such as first aid, with many more groups this requirement has increased. For the Forum to be able to support their groups effectively they will require further funding. Cllr WHT said that he will support this if possible and asked LH to send more detail to JH for further discussions.

BA commented that the Friends ability to communicate with the public is often underestimated, people do not always interact directly with the Council but the groups get a lot of interaction through their social media channels and websites and some financial support to keep this going and to develop it further would aid communication across the borough. Cllr WHT commented that there are limits to spend but if something could be

achieved at a reasonable level then it could be considered, if suggestions can be put through Larry and then through to James then it will be considered.

Idverde Update

FK – at the last meeting we had a discussion on the customer satisfaction survey. FK shared the survey on screen.

FK explained that the methodology was different from previous year as there was no opportunity for face-to-face surveying so the postal survey number was increase. There was an incentive to return the survey (£100 M&S Voucher) and the survey was sent to three-thousand home which were randomly generated.

FK explained that the question set had been slightly tweaked to make it clearer, which would increase returns. Some questions were included to recognise the impact C-19 had made on visitation frequencies. FK explained that the responses were mostly positive across the board, the feature that rated the lowest was facilities, but it was unclear whether this was quantity or quality of the features. This is something we will look to clarify in future surveys. FK went through the conclusions of the report

LH asked if the document could be shared FK confirmed that it could be.

AR updated the group on fundraising projects.

AR advised that her team were working on a range of grant applications and securing them, the larger ones they are working on currently are the BMX project bandstand project and Scadbury. These projects are all at tender stage and this is where our focus is currently. The Scadbury Moated Manor project, we are due to be making a circa 100k grant application in the next few weeks to Historic England, the fence has been completed at this site now. The bandstand is going out to tender for a Conservation Architect in the next couple of months and finally the BMX has gone out to a second tender for the landscaping works.

AR advised that the next steps to move the revised fundraising process forward (action 29) is to arrange a workshop with VS and the community management team. We will aim to do this by the next meeting. We are going to do a full review of processes later this year when hopefully things will be quieter.

KR asked for a project list relating to Friends Groups. AR advised it would be easier to send a list over to KR directly.

VS asked if the funding had been secured for the BMX track AR advised a large portion had been secured but it will become clearer once the tenders are returned. There is around

250k secured. VS asked how the fundraising team is split up. AR advised that AR usually does the larger projects with the support of the team. Anita and Allison usually focus on the medium to small projects depending on complexity.

PR gave an update – PR has helped the Winsford Gardens group with their map unveiling event, Cllr WHT will be attending the event. PR has been inspecting sports pitches and pavilions working with the DSM's to ensure everything is on order. PR advised that she has supported the Friends of Betts Park with a railing project and supporting their Community Day event. PR also supported the Friends of Cator Park with their Keep Britain Tidy project.

JP gave an update. JP advised that the biodiverse allotments programme launched earlier in the year is turning in to a key project with twenty-two biodiversity champions for allotments across the borough and is gathering momentum. Brilliant butterflies is moving on mostly to plan with some delays due to planning permissions for the banks being delayed. Scrapes and plug planting has been installed and seeded. Partners are leading the volunteer engagement up until the end of the summer, then it will pass on to idverde. There has been some theft of plants at Biggin Hill which is disappointing. The team are currently surveying, it is proving to be a good year for orchids but more challenging for amphibians. The team spent a day with the RSPB at Broadwater Warren to share best practice. Some storage ponds have been installed at Elmstead Wood, these will be managed as wildlife ponds.

JP advised that he current figures for supervised volunteering are 1828 hours which is from March 29th. Only 109 self-led hours so far. It is likely this is more, but we do not necessarily capture all the data, this is something we may be able to improve upon with the help of the Friends Forum.

JP update on environmental education. Helen Cassidy is returning from maternity leave in two weeks and will resume her role as Beeche Manager. We are mostly offering a full service as restrictions are ending. The shop and visitor centre will reopen next week. There has been a slight increase in enquires for outreach sessions as schools appear to be reluctant to travel.

RG asked for a list of butterfly banks to be shared and with their current state. JP advised of the current state of play of the banks and advised he will send the project brief over to RG.

BA asked that if the ponds in Elmstead Woods were successful could they be installed elsewhere. JP advised this would be something for LBB to consider. JH advised that flood risks are being reviewed and this could be considered if appropriate.

SG advised that Whitehall Rec was flooded over winter and was wondering if a swale could be considered as a resolution as this would link water management and biodiversity. SG asked how more support could be received from the biodiversity team. JP advised that if

requested the team will always offer guidance, go through your Community Manager in the first instance or come to the team directly if necessary.

SG asked around the maintenance and surveying of the bat and bird boxes throughout the parks, previously this was done by the park Rangers JP advised that if they are aware of the bat boxes then they are surveyed, there have not been any physical bat surveys since 2019 due to concerns around biosecurity. We do not inspect bird boxes as there is no great need to clean or install them. JP said he would ask about the bat boxes at Whitehall Rec to see if they are on a survey schedule and advise.

BA groups are often advised to go through their Community Manager but can groups come to the biodiversity team directly? JP asked that groups continue to go through the Community Team in the first instance to avoid a scattergun approach so all are clear on the process.

KR asked how many people are on JP's team. JP advised that the org chart is current and reflects the current state of play.

SG asked for a list of how urban parks can improve biodiversity from JP to allow them to go for funding for projects. JP said that he will consider how best to broach this, possibly by running an online session for groups.

LH asked for an update on Management Plans, FK advised that all sites have management plans and they are regularly updated, FK suggested that groups contact their Community Manager if they would like to review their managements plans.

LH asked what the process was for newly planted trees and who is responsible for watering the trees. FK advised that this was not within idverde's remit, and that James Hilsden was no longer on the call to respond.

Forum Update

LH said that the AGM took place since the last meeting. It was disappointing at the lack of Council members present, only JH attended. Hopefully the next one in November can be held face to face. John Cutting has been looking into the insurance renewals for the groups to make sure this goes through smoothly. KR has been investigating the parks content across the three websites (LBB, idverde & Forum) with a view to rationalising the content and ensure it is all up to date. As a consequence some changes have been made to the Forum website. LH commented on the Parks strategy and said that it is very important that the Forum is consulted on the strategy and this will be raised at the stakeholder panel next month

AOB

LH asked for it to be recorded that JH promised to supply a written report for the AGM and that LH is still expecting to received this.

KR asked what the grass cutting schedule is AH advised that it always our intention to cut all sites every two to three weeks but unfortunately the weather has made this impossible and currently schedules are closer to four to five weeks due to the rain. The team are working hard to catch up and hopefully normal service can be resumed shortly.

BA asked why Bromley Council are reluctant to bring in “no mow” zones AH advised that there is a trial scheduled to take place next year, the methodology is currently being agreed.

Next Meeting Date

Next meeting date arranged for 10am Thursday 23rd September 2021.

[Meeting ended]