

LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY
Parks, Green Space and Countryside Stakeholder Panel Meeting
Thursday 7th of February 2019 7.00-9pm.
Committee Room 3, Civic Centre, Bromley

Minutes & Actions of the meeting

Minutes of previous meeting

The previous minutes were agreed with no recommended alterations.

Planning & Biodiversity - JB updated that he had not yet liaised with Planning but will ask JH to assist with this action.

Fly Tipping Guidance Protocol – FK updated that he has not yet received a Fly-Tipping Guidance Protocol or abandoned vehicles protocol from the LBB enforcement team. FK to chase.

Grass strimming causing tree damage – JB updated that this action is ongoing. JH updated that potential resolutions were costly however they have undertaken some testers in Whitehall Recreation in which a metre strip had been left around the base of the tree and filled with wood chip. LM raised that this issue is also related to fence posts and the same solution could not be used for them. FK said that grass-strimming had already commenced in some areas however it will officially begin in March-April. Idverde to hold tool box talk regarding the enhanced local importance of strimming around objects from a maintenance and biodiversity perspective.

BCBCA and LBB Communications (action in progress) – JB updated that the issue with the trees had been addressed with Arboriculture services. CC identified that majority of tree issues remain outstanding. JB said that CC should pass the information to JH and it can be discussed at the SMT meeting if need be. JB said that the other property issues will need to be resolved on a case by case basis. JB updated CC that JH is the point of contact in regards to property. CC said that he had decreased the number of action points for the BCBCA.

idverde Update

idverde contact list – FK updated that the contact list no longer includes officer names to comply with GDPR.

Fundraising Projects - FK discussed various projects such as play improvement schemes (one at Kings Meadow), a Toddler and Play project in Farnborough and the Croydon Rec Road band stand application.

Biomass Project - JPEM updated that the Biomass Project is still ongoing. JPEM updated that most of the access roots in High Elms have been made safe and cleared but there is a slight issue with power lines.

Biodiversity Species Service Plan (2019) - JPEM updated that this is currently being drafted with the purpose to monitor the impact of idverde's management and inform future management.

Friends Group Training – JPEM updated that the annual training is 90% completed.

Amphibian Friendly Allotments – JPEM updated that allotments supported a project in which Froglife offer free workshops to advise on how to make allotments more amphibian friendly.

RSPB Partnership – ST provided an update regarding the LBB and RSPB Partnership pilot which ends in March. ST updated that both partners are looking to renew the partnership. ST said that having SL imbedded in the idverde team had proved to be a really good model of working. FK informed JB that due to the successful partnership in Bromley, idverde and the RSPB have replicated the model in other areas such as Northampton. JB suggested that at the end of the pilot, the successful partnership should be communicated. JB suggested that an open day at High Elms could be organised to inform the community.

IB said that she considered the partnership exceedingly successful and said that she was pleased that idverde were awarded the Parks Management and Grounds Maintenance (Lot 4) contract commencing in April 2019.

Parks Management and Grounds Maintenance 2019 (Lot 4) – FK updated that idverde have begun mobilisation for the contract commencement. FK updated that idverde aim to deliver the objectives that they have committed to while delivering business as usual. FK said to inform him if there is a slip in service so that it can be rectified.

LBB update

Environmental Services Contracts 2019 – JB said that it was a great pleasure to finally announce the successful tender of idverde for the Parks Management and Grounds Maintenance 2019 (Lot 4). JB explained that despite idverde being the incumbent service provider, they will still be following the process of exiting the old contract to create a clear line between the old and new contract. JB explained that weekly transition meetings are held to prepare for the new contract commencement. JB explained that the Parks Management and Grounds Maintenance contract is different to the other Neighbourhood Management contracts as idverde manage the contract and JH performance monitors their management.

Parks Management and Grounds Maintenance Manager – JB introduced JH who discussed the work he has been undertaking since his appointment as the Parks Management and Grounds Maintenance Manager in March 2018. JH said that a small pot of money is going to be used for planting schemes in prominent areas such as Perry Street and Orpington War memorial.

JH also said that there is a small budget for tarmac repairs in parks. JJ discussed a problem of a possible pathway in Keston which would damage the population of rare meadow saxifrage. JJ asked that the idverde site managers and/or the stakeholders are informed when new paths are proposed on Bromley owned countryside sites and adjacent road verges particularly if within a SSSI, LNR or SINC. LM also asked whether the Friends groups could be notified. JB explained that they need to avoid a quagmire where there are so many checks that work does not get completed however the information should disseminate to the groups during the process.

JB discussed the inspections that LBB Neighbourhood Officers conduct on assets to performance monitor idverde's work. JB discussed that JH creates a monthly performance report. JB explained that idverde will have 48 KSO (Key Service Objectives) that they will need to report on with the new contract. JB said that LBB will then scrutinise the accuracy of the idverde's performance reports.

Satisfaction Surveys – JB said that in future, members of the public outside of parks will be asked to rate their satisfaction of Bromley parks rather than members of the public inside the parks to avoid the potential for participation bias.

Feedback from Stakeholders

Bromley Biodiversity Partnership (BBP)

Dr Judith John informed the attendees that Ishpi Blatchley and herself have continued working with Paul Mellor (LBB) regarding updating planning conditions for biodiversity.

Citizen Science Surveys - JJ discussed the successfully completed Citizen Science Surveys. JJ said that the swift survey results were sent to Paul Mellor to inform planning where the swifts nested in 2018 which were mainly in Beckenham, Derrick Road with other clusters in Anerley Park/Crystal Palace and Orpington. JJ said that the final findings will be presented at a free talk on March the 6th at Bromley United Reformed Church and all are welcome. JJ said that the swift survey will be redone this year.

JJ said that 11 hedgehogs reports were received from the West Wickham area in 2018 therefore this year leaflets will be targeted in that area. JJ said that the 2017 and 2018 survey into bullfinches indicate that though they are not present in large numbers they are widely distributed within the borough so this survey will be discontinued for 2019. JJ said there were 55 House Sparrow records and the survey will be continued in 2019. JJ said that three reports of Purple Emperor Butterflies were reported which is exciting news as they were thought extinct in Kent in the late 1980's. JJ said that this survey will be continued. JJ said that some targeting of damp woods with willows and large oaks and ash would be useful. JJ said that 24 records were received in 2018 for toads and that they are continuing to try and map the breeding pond sites. JJ said that the survey posters are available on the Bromley Friends Forum website under Biodiversity > Useful Documents > Posters.

Native Plant Species – JJ reported that an additional poster has been produced for 2019 encouraging people to plant at least one native shrub or small tree in their gardens. JJ said that idverde staff in the sub-group will also be talking to LBB tree team and advertising the initiative in BEECHE. JJ said that the aim of the project is to improve declining invertebrate numbers since native invertebrates are adapted to eat native plants. JJ said that the invertebrates are food for other declining species including birds, bats and other animals and the native plants also provide food such as berries. JJ said that the shrubs and trees will also provide increased habitat for nesting and roosting.

JJ reported that an excel file of native hedge plants to help people choose native shrubs or small trees suitable for their gardens or other areas is available on the Friends Forum website under Biodiversity > Useful Documents > Hedge Plants for Improving Biodiversity. JJ said that the file will be extended later this year to include trees. JJ said that tips for how and when to plant native shrubs or small trees are available under, 'Planting a Hedgerow for Wildlife' also on the Friends Forum website as above under 'Looking after Wildlife.'

Decommissioning of Depots – JJ raised a query regarding the decommissioning of High Elms & Den Barn depots and whether there are any Committee meetings or Councillors that viewpoints can be sent to. JB said that he doesn't know what the decision will be yet but he is aware of JJ's concerns. JB said that he has raised his concerns that it's not logical to dispose of both depots in question. JB explained that Veolia have been awarded Lots 1-3 so the company want to be centralised and that the best solutions are currently being investigated. JB said that he doesn't expect that this issue will be resolved by April. LBB to inform JJ when this issue is going to Committee.

Crofton Woods – JJ updated that a section of Crofton Woods was sold on the 29th of October however the public didn't realise that the site didn't belong to Bromley. JJ said that as it is adjacent to a SSSI and part of a SINC there is concern regarding any future development here. JJ said that allotments holders were using what turns out to be a private footpath across the site and are now trying to get a public footpath. Cllr HT asked JJ to send him an email regarding this.

Bat Initiatives - IB reported that the London Bat Group have conducted Woodland Bat Surveys across

Bromley. IB reported that eight sites were surveyed in the summer using static monitoring devices (SM4 recorders). IB reported that the surveys have produced a large amount of data which have not yet been analysed apart from Lilly's Wood. IB reported that the Lilly's Wood results indicate that 7 species use the wood for foraging. IB reported that there is more work planned for this year in Biggin Hill, Cudham, Downe area (as well as sites in Croydon).

Bats and Lighting – IB reported that new guidelines have been issued by the Bat Conservation Trust which have been forwarded to Paul Mellor and the LBB Planners. IB updated that she was consulted regarding lighting and a proposed cycle lane through Cator Park which was to follow the river. IB reported that the cycle lane has been re-routed so it is no longer an issue.

Breathable Roofing Membranes – IB updated that research has shown that these membranes can be harmful for bats. IB said that with continued use, the fine filaments become detached and caught up in bats' claw which can lead to them becoming trapped and starving to death. IB reported that the new TLX batsafe membrane has not yet been proved safe for bats so the mitigation procedures for known or potential bat roosts is to use bitumen based felt.

Chislehurst Trustees

Peter Woodward said that he was also pleased regarding the award of the contract. PW provided some background regarding the Chislehurst Trustees; he said that the 16 Chislehurst Trustees are all unpaid and operating under a statute from parliament from 1888. PW explained that the people of Chislehurst pay for two keepers.

Prickend Pond Restoration – PW updated that idverde had assisted with some fund-raising. PW said that their volunteer capacity had increased and there is now a project team. JB asked whether the success has been publicised and PW explained that they want to wait until the project scope has been finalised. PW said that they have recruited some new volunteers with professional skills such as a zoologist. PW mentioned that they were awarded the Green Flag last year.

Oak Processionary moth nests - PW discussed the investment Chislehurst Trustees have made in removing non-native Oak Processionary moth nests due to a state order from the Forestry Commission. PW reported that the Trustees have put forward a case that they cannot be expected to fund the entirety of the removals due to financial reasons. PW informed ST that the recommended methodology for nest removal is to physically remove the nest and burn it off site. ST said that the alternative is spraying the nests which can harm other species.

Bromley Council Bowling Club Association (BCBCA)

CC enquired regarding the Amey contract. JB said that he was unsure when the contract ends but thought that there is an option for extending the contract.

CC discussed the Greens Maintenance contract that is due to end at the end of July. CC said that the contract and specification is very limited however it works very well. CC said that he spoke to the Community Manager regarding this. JB recommended CC obtain legal advice regarding procurement. CC said that they couldn't resource managing a contract.

CC reported that one bowls club said that they will cease to run at Bromley Common due to membership. CC said that he was approached by the Hayes, Bromley and Keston croquet club who are keen to take over the use of Bromley Common. JB said that LBB likes to see their infrastructure in use. Attendees discussed this being a positive outcome. JB said that CC can email the croquet club to let them know that the prospect looks positive. CC said the croquet club's season begins in April and they require slightly lower maintenance than bowls which he has discussed with the Greens Maintenance contractor. JB said that

croquet could be a good opportunity to engage with younger members of the community.

Friends Forum

LH reiterated that the Friends Forum are pleased regarding the appointment of the contract.

Signage – LH said that it needs to be ascertained what signage is owned by LBB and what is additional. LH said that there has been a rise in damaged or vandalised signs and the Friends Forum need clarification regarding what signs should be paid for by LBB. JB mentioned that having an asset survey completed was discussed at the last Friends Forum meeting which he attended.

LH said that the Friends Forum would like to see more drinking fountains and recycling bins in parks. LH said that he had emailed JH regarding the water fountain at Keston. LH said that Chislehurst Recreation Ground have designed their own reusable bottle which raises money for their park.

Volunteer Development Plan – LH said that the plan has identified the need for a volunteer champion whose job is it to attract more volunteers however the Friends Forum cannot resource one. LH queried whether this position could be resourced through LBB or idverde. LBB and idverde to consider whether the position could be resourced from them.

Websites – LH raised a concern regarding the various affiliated websites (LBB website, idverde website and the Friends Forum website) and confusion regarding which website should be used for what. Attendees agreed that LBB is considered the principle website as it is most likely where residents will go to first. JB suggested that it could be a project that the panel investigate their digital presence as a whole. JB said that to begin, it would be helpful to map it out. JB gave an action to all attendees to evaluate what website information they have publicised and where it is (providing hyperlinks). Once done attendees to perform a SWOT analysis to identify any Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities or Threats. JB said to use JH and FK as a pivotal base.

Next Meeting

JB suggested that the group take a visit somewhere. Cllr HT discussed that the Countryside Consultative Panel normally do a visit in July which the group could attend. Cllr HT discussed that it may be advantageous to review where the stakeholder panel sits with in regard to the Countryside Consultative Panel as there is crossover between the two. JB suggested that at the next meeting the terms of reference could be reviewed.

HS to arrange the next meeting during the prior weeks of September.