



## Forum Partnership Meeting No. 15

### Minutes of the meeting

26<sup>th</sup> March 2019 – 10am – High Elms Country Park

#### MINUTES

- 1 **Welcome & introductions**
- 2 **Apologies for absence**
- 3 **Minutes of last meeting** – 17<sup>th</sup> January 2019 – agreed and will be published on the Forum website.

#### Matters arising (see action tracker)

- i. Commemorative bench procedure template – with JH, waiting for feedback. Carried forward.
- ii. Direction for volunteer task force – Action closed, will be taken up at Stakeholder meeting.
- iii. Drinking fountains – raised with LBB. Carried forward.
- iv. *Idverde* staff structure – action closed, FK will send new structure.
- v. Fundraising figures & statistics – discussed later in meeting.
- vi. Training – discussed later in meeting.
- vii. Go Parks London initiative – FK will speak to JH.
- viii. Signage – Clarity needed on who is responsible. FK will speak to JH.

#### 4 **LBB update**

- i. LH would like to raise with LBB that Bromley Town Parks have reported that a pond in Church House Gardens has been filled in without discussion or consultation with the Friends. The Friends would have preferred to restore the pond. AH said that the Friends Group had been consulted, but did not respond. LH said that 2 weeks is not long enough for a consultation. Another example where consultation with a Friends Group and local residents was poor was the plan to upgrade the pathway adjacent to the Keston Windmill. A huge amount of unnecessary work was conducted before strong opposition stopped the plan from proceeding. FK advised that these were one off decisions made by LBB, and will speak to JH. Consultation could be done through *idverde*.
- ii. RG asked how the Neighbourhood Managers work with *idverde*, FK advised that each area has neighbourhood officers and managers, they are overseen by JH, who reports to JB. *idverde* have weekly and monthly meetings with LBB, and joint monitoring is carried out between LBB and *idverde*.

- iii. LH said that VS asked about disability access to parks, e.g. some gates at Scadbury are a hindrance to access. AH advised that VS speak with AHa, we can look at the gates available and this may be something that could be fundraised for.
- iv. RG asked about public rights of way, FK advised that this is now part of *idverde*'s contract.
- v. Forum questioned if JB was still leaving, *idverde* confirmed it's now public knowledge.

## 5 ***idverde* update**

- i. *idverde* are working on mobilisation of the new contract which starts on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. It is business as usual, but there will be new machinery & branding. FK will share the new structure, there are no significant changes but there will be a new Operations Manager who the contract managers will report to. AH has been appointed to this position.
- ii. *idverde* are working on digitisation of the cemetery records as this is still very paper based.
- iii. There are some changes to woodland sites, these will all now be managed by the Countryside team. There will also be some changes to the sites each Community Manager is responsible, *idverde* will contact the groups affected to let them know.
- iv. Management plans are being finished this week. RG asked about Friends Groups involvement, FK advised that basic plans are being written as a starting point, which will then be developed by the Community Managers who will consult with the Friends Groups.
- v. New machinery is being delivered, there is a launch event planned for May. *idverde* have invested in Foam Stream, a hot water weeding solution which does not use glyphosate, so that use of glyphosate can be minimised. *idverde* have also invested in battery powered trimmers, these have City Cut heads which create less arisings and are more efficient.
- vi. Grass cutting has started, and recruitment of seasonal staff is under way. A workforce management system (Acorn) is being introduced to move away from paper systems, each team has a smartphone to do their daily checks and report work being done. The system goes live on Monday. RG asked about coordination with areas such as street cleansing. AH advised this is very difficult as they are carried out on different frequencies, and the grass cutting schedule is much more varied.
- vii. Fundraising – some new proposals have been received, only one from a Friends Group, either not many are being done, or the Fundraising team are not being made aware. New proposals will be assessed and put on the plan. RG asked if the decline in fundraising applications might be to do with the increase in paperwork from *idverde*. AR advised that the fundraising application has not changed or increased.

- viii. The funding application for the bandstand at Croydon Road Rec was unsuccessful, *idverde* are working with the Friends to look at the next steps. There have been 2 big sports grant applications, for Poverest and Goddington. *idverde* have met with LBB to discuss recruitment of a conservation professional who will be appointed by LBB to work on the plan for Scadbury moated manor. The crowdfunding campaign at Kingsmeadow was successful, and a stage 1 application is going ahead.
- ix. JT is now looking after events and advised that paper applications are no longer accepted. LH said that event applications could be made easier, paperwork needed could be made available at the start so that groups know what they need to fill out. AH advised that *idverde* can't advise what is needed until they know what the event is, as the compliance varies depending on the type and scale of the event. EventApp is used by 24 other London boroughs, and *idverde* have had 200 applications in the last 12 months. LH asked about events being added to the website, AH advised they are added once approved, events can't be added to the website until *idverde* are sure they are going ahead, and some compliance can be provided quite last-minute.
- x. LH asked about a report on plans for future grant funding applications, and which grants are being worked on. AR advised that the team is working on a development plan for LBB which can be shared, and advised groups to look at what is needed at their sites, a business case is required and the need has to be demonstrated to the funder. LH said that knowledge of smaller grants and crowdfunding could encourage more groups to apply. AR will look at putting together a fact sheet for small grants, and advised that *idverde* need to be made aware of any applications, as even something small like a new bin would have to be added to *idverde's* asset management plan, and added to the schedule for emptying.

## 6 Forum Business

- i. LH advised that data collection was successful this year, with a better response rate of 41 out of 48 groups returning their information. There are 9.5k members, of which 800 are active. On average each group has put in 1000 hours, some do more work days, others do more events.
- ii. LH advised that adverse feedback has been received relating to the quarterly data collection, an email asked for data earlier than originally requested. Some groups are upset about providing financial information, and asked why it is needed quarterly instead of annually. FK advised that the information is needed for LBB reports, not for *idverde*, although it also allows the fundraising team to pick up on projects they may not otherwise be aware of from a fundraising perspective. This is not a new request and has been quarterly for a number of years. RG asked if information could be collected about what is achieved rather than the number of hours. FK advised that fundraising information is needed quarterly, but other statistics could be gathered annually. FK mentioned the need for data was explained by the Assistant Director for Environment at the previous meeting and was re-iterated at a subsequent meeting where the format of the data questionnaire was also agreed with the Forum committee.

- iii. LH questioned that there is no LBB presence at this meeting, FK advised it is a one-off.
- iv. An outline training schedule of Forum organised courses has been agreed, LH advised that Forum is responsible for taking bookings, not *idverde*, as Forum held the master distribution list and anyway a lot of the courses did not involve *idverde* staff. Some Community Managers are taking bookings which could cause the courses to over sub-scribe and could lead to GDPR infringements with members' contact details. Some courses have been advertised to sports/allotments when they should only be for the Friends. FK advised this was an error.
- v. LH asked about Green Flag, FK advised that all existing Green Flag sites will be resubmitted, and we will look at expanding the applications next year.

## **7 Any other business**

- i. No issues raised.

## **8 Date of next meeting**

- i. 27<sup>th</sup> June, 10am, High Elms.