



Forum Partnership Meeting No. 25

Thursday 24th March 2022, 10am – Video Conferencing

Refer to secretary for details of attendees

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

2. Apologies for Absence

idverde: John Pemberton, Amy Rogers (AR)

3. Matters Arising (Action Tracker Update)

Action No. 18 - Tool provision for Friends Groups

Sarah Foster documented the matter before her departure. JH to pick this up to progress forward.

Action No. 24 - LBB to provide update on park sign upgrades

LH said that from Sarah Foster's notes it says LBB shall fund 50% of the proposed signage and the remaining 50% by Friends Groups. LH stated the Friends would not be willing to fund this.

It was Forum's understanding that it was LBB's responsibility to provide at least one sign in each park / green space and that if Friends wanted additional signs they would be prepared to provide some funds towards the cost. It was noted that at some major sites there was more than one entrance and in this case LBB may fund more than one sign. LBB acknowledged that

Friends would not provide direct funding but it was suggested by Forum that they could bid for grants to contribute towards this cost.

VS highlighted that a template design for the sign's is yet to be agreed. PMC to establish a working group to address this and other elements required in the project in line with the Open Space Strategy.

Action No. 25 - Additional water fountains installations and upgrades for existing fountains

JH stated that Property had begun initial investigations and costings. Early indications suggest this will cost a high amount.

LH said Friends Groups would be willing to contribute to water fountains within their parks.

RG asked why it has been such a difficult a process. PMC informed RG that it is because the property division has recently undergone a re-alignment process but JH and PMC are working with property to tease out issues and will follow up for on the costings/ issues involved for this project.

AH stated that holistically this is a large task with three streams: refurbishment / reinstatement, installing new and evaluating ongoing costings therefore it might be more efficient to undertake this on a case by case basis.

LH agreed to produce a list of proposals / sites where Friends Groups would be willing to support water fountains and pass this to PMC. LH pointed out that the design still needs to be agreed.

BA stated that licensing still needs to be looked into as well as whom will be paying for the water. JH stated that the Legal department are preparing a document on this.

Action No. 27 - Updated NMO Organisation Chart

JH to distribute chart on completion following re-alignment process an recruitment.

JH and PMC explained that Debbie Howard (West) and Nicola Musto (East) have been appointed parks contract monitoring officers and are getting up to speed in these roles. They have been assigned areas East and West to align with idverde's model. Additionally, David Braybrook has been assigned to support Amy Rogers with her work on funding. The overall re-alignment process has not seen an increase in staff but a re-focussing of job roles to enhance the efficiency of the service.

PMC added that he is working with Colin Brand (Director) on where the senior management team can assist as well being in the process of appointing a replacement for Sarah Foster (Assistant Director) to head up the Parks, Trees and Carbon Management aspects of the service. PMC will continue as caretaker in the interim and will inform the Friends once an appointment had been made.

RG asked where the overlap was between the Parks Contract Monitoring officers and street scene. JH said that the officers will oversee all aspects of idverde's contract. FMS should be used for reporting issues in which they can be re-directed to the correct department or contractor.

JH confirmed that the relevant idverde Community Manager should remain the main port of call for Friends Groups.

RG raised that the standard messages on FMS require more detail. JH said that the majority are automated due to the high volume the council receives it is difficult to have tailored response to each enquiry but review of these is ongoing.

Action No. 28 - Twenty Year Maintenance Costs for New Assets

JH said that options were looked into. Sarah Foster began documenting this before her departure JH and PMC are taking this on in the interim.

PMC clarified that applications for projects will not need to include maintenance costs going forward. PMC and JH to look into maintenance costs with idverde.

LH stated that Friends do not want ongoing maintenance commitments.

Action No. 29 - Revised Fundraising Process Map

AH said that he has only just received the flow chart and will pass feedback to AR shortly.

Anita Zambaldo will be full time as of the 4th April to ease the pressure on the funding team.

VS said that not all Community Managers are using the same forms. AH stated this was an oversight and all managers are now using the same form.

JH said he has begun working with AR on the methodology for grading projects and their priority. This will be a scoring system in line with the Open Space Strategy.

Action No. 33 - Forum Grant

JH is meeting with Portfolio holder in week commencing 25th April to discuss.

Action No. 34 - Who does what in each Park? - CLOSED

Details were circulated after previous meeting.

4. LBB Update

JH gave an update which included:

- Appointment of Debbie Howard and Nicola Musto as parks contract monitoring officers.
- idverde showing excellent performance in monthly SOBs and with FMS responses.
- Recent internal auditing showed idverde to be effective and well administrated.
- Effective response was seen from all contractors after the recent storms.

PMC added:

- The new Open Space Strategy is being finalised and will be on the website soon. PMC will share with Forum once it is.
- Press release was issued regarding £1million further funding for parks. No further detail available as yet. Direction from the councillors is awaited.

- Portfolio holder has agreed a small pot of funding for Friends Groups to celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee. The full details are yet to be agreed but PMC welcomed suggestions to be shared with him on how this could best be used.

LH raised that a lot of communications from LBB are being received second hand by the Forum including items such as the £1 million additional funding, the change to the carbon neutrality target and asked why are the Forum not being informed in a timely fashion?

PMC accepted that LBB could do better with communicating and will take this away to address further. – Added to actions log.

5. idverde Update

AH gave an update including:

1) Community Management

- Friends of Belmont Open Space funded for a new piece of playground equipment.
- Friends of Kings Meadow received a new sensory board in the play area.
- Friends of Chislehurst & Walden Rec constructed a natural play area in Whyte's Wood with support from idverde.
- Friends of Whitehall Recreation involved with orchard tree planting.
- Friends of Hoblingwell have had the taster sessions for their Junior Friends of Hoblingwell. Very successful with 16 children turning up.
- Crystal Palace Park: Two community hedge-planting sessions, organised by Trees for Cities and Crystal Palace Park Trust, supported by Friends of Crystal Palace Dinosaurs and Friends of CPP respectively.
- Betts Park Friends: painting railings & play equipment; Clarion project to repair and paint canal balustrade.
- Cator & Alex Friends installed two raised beds and willow arch.
- Green Flag Award Management Plans updated and submitted.

2) Fundraising

Hoblingwell cycle track

Work on the track is nearing completion, with the tarmac going down last week and turf this week. The contractors for the rest of the hard landscaping e.g. containers, seating, and soft landscaping e.g. trees will then take over. Track is going to be open for use once track construction is complete, whilst landscaping continues over coming weeks. Access Sport, Bromley's partner, is also currently working with the local community to raise awareness and interest in the new track, which will ultimately see the establishment of a volunteer-led club to ensure that the facility is well used.

Bandstand restoration in Croydon Road Recreation Ground

Recent report went to Environment and Community Services PDS and will also go to Executive later this month. Once design is finalised the scheme will go out to tender and also we will

apply for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent if required. The current timetable proposes that works will be completed next Spring. There is a news release on LBB's website

Scadbury Park moated manor repair works

Works are complete at the moated manor. There is a news release on LBB's website.

Other projects

Collectively processed a number of smaller projects including the below, with more currently being considered including:

- The River Pool Walkway working in partnership with Thames 21
- Friends of Scadbury Park Nature Reserve pond restoration

3) Events

- Busy summer season envisaged post-pandemic we have a lot of events in the pipeline and the Platinum Jubilee beacon event applications are coming in daily at the minute.

4) Grounds Maintenance

- Recruitment is proving to be very challenging, we are now looking to recruit more permanent workers rather than seasonal to make the roles more attractive.
- Grass cutting has started and progressing nicely.
- We have recently moved back in to the Beaverwood depot which has been refurbished over the winter months. This should help with recruitment and retention of colleagues.
- Winter bedding programme has been a success with the mixed Polys being a personal favourite.

5) Upcoming

- Exploring possibility of new trim trail at Kelsey Park.
- Friends of Hoblingwell community playground painting.
- Great British Spring Clean events at Coney Hall & Chislehurst Recreation Ground.
- Friends of Tugmutton's new play equipment they fundraised for to be installed.
- Possible new Friends group at Cudham Recreation Ground.

6) Countryside and Biodiversity

- Brown Hairstreak Butterfly eggs found at Elmfield Wood, Whitehall Recreation Ground & Richmal Crompton Fields.
- London Wildlife trust attended site visits at the Brilliant Butterflies locations with Angela Wood and Steven Lofting. All sites were performing well, with kidney vetch (food plant of small blue butterfly (*Cupido minimus*) larvae) present at each.
- South East Rivers Trust carrying out surveys on the River Cray for feasibility into future projects.

SH added:

- With spring now here the winter woodland and scrub management operations have been completed.
- Thank you to all the Friend Groups and Bromley Countryside Volunteers whom have helped in the parks over the winter months. Supervised countryside workdays in February reached 834.25 hours.
- Countryside Stewardship targets are on track.
- Recent Froglife webinar was held for allotment plot holders.
- Survey of Bats in Hibernation resumed after a two year gap due to covid.
- 2022 Amphibian and reptile surveys are underway with good results.

7) BEECHE

- There has been difficulty in recruiting staff but three candidates have now been offered or started roles.
- Half term events were curtailed by the storms.

LH asked how many Green Flags have been applied for this year, AH confirmed all previous entries had been reapplied for and Darrick and Newstead Woods was a new entry.

RG raised the issue of litter shredding by mowers during grass cutting operations. AH said that all teams have received training to address this and should pick up litter before and after cuts.

RG asked if Community Groups or Friends could be informed ahead of grass cutting so they could arrange litter picking. AH said there are circa 1400 road verges in Bromley. It is not easily achievable to inform groups as schedules change due to weather, events and operational circumstances but effort will continue to train and refocus the teams to mitigate litter shredding.

RG asked if the replacement of open top bins could be moved forward. AH said that each new bin costs £500, budgets of this are constrained but there is a rolling programme in place to only install lidded bins on life expiry of the open topped bins.

LH asked about the idverde website. AH said he is aware information on the current website requires updating but the current model is onerous to maintain and therefore work is underway to upgrade to a new website which is likely to incur significant cost. Options are currently being evaluated.

6. Forum Update

LH gave a brief update which included:

- The Forum has recently completed the transfer of bank from HSBC to Metro Bank.
- Held a meeting with the projects and funding team to explore improvements to the process and its associated forms.
- Forum are planning to host their AGM in November.
- Planning to host a members meeting on Zoom in May.
- Groups are recovering from covid pandemic but covid is still impacting groups when infections occur.

LH enquired about insurance renewal arrangement for Friends Groups. MB to liaise with LH.

7. AOB

None.

Next Meeting Date

Next meeting date arranged for: Thursday 23rd June 2022.

[Meeting ended]