



## Forum Partnership Meeting No. 26

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2022, 10am – Video Conferencing

LH (chair)	JH	MB
SG	DH	AH
JC	NM	SL (minutes)
BA	AC	SH
RG	PMC	AZ

### 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. A warm welcome was extended to AC, the new portfolio holder.

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

*idverde*: AR, Forum: KR, VS, KS

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

Minutes accepted as true reflection of previous meeting

Action tracker was reviewed, amended and updated including new due dates for actions outstanding.

With reference to Action 27, RG asked if in addition to the chart requested, if a new East/West responsibilities diagram will be issued to reflect the changes in ward boundaries to Community Managers and Park Monitoring Officer areas.

JH said despite ward boundary changes there is little change in areas covered and that FMS remained the best port of call for reporting issues as this can be assigned to the correct officers or contractors.

#### **4. LBB Update**

JH gave an update which included:

- JH thanked all Friends and volunteers for their hard work and asked for news stories about Friends Group and volunteer activities to be sent to NM and DH.
- Work on implementing the Open Space Strategy is underway and an update will be provided at the autumn PDS. *idverde* will have an opportunity to review and update on the strategy at their annual review in November.
- Parks infrastructure service has moved in house, the contract with AMEY has ended. NM and DH have picked up a lot of the ongoing issues relating to infrastructure.
- Spending on infrastructure has been authorised for:
  - Pond 3 at Keston Common – due October - permits from statutory bodies are currently being acquired.
  - Church House Gardens tennis court fencing.
  - Hollydale Rec. Fencing and drainage works.
- Enforcement now being headed up by Dean Laws. *idverde* and Ward Security are now working closer on security infrastructure matters and issues.
- 0.5 metre buffers around trees are now being left during grass cutting operations to prevent damage to trees and watering bags. A stock response to customers enquiring about the changes in grass cutting as a result has been put together.
- Parks audit assessing the performance framework and monitoring such as how *idverde* are graded has yielded positive results.

PMC added

- The tree-planting programme includes 3 years of aftercare for new trees including watering and asked if the Forum would appreciate a member of the arboriculture team to attend these meetings going forward.
- The tree management strategy is due for review at the autumn PDS, the Forum will be consulted on the strategy.
- A new Assistant Director has been appointed to lead the Sustainability, Green Services & Open Spaces portfolio. Hannah Jackson is an internal appointment and will be in post from August after completion of projects within her current service area. PMC will hand over to Hannah in due course.

RG asked when the tree buffers came into effect. JH confirmed this was at start of the 2022 cutting season.

RG raised what is being done to enhance Tree Friends in line with the tree planting programme. AC informed the meeting that commutations are being prepared by herself and the mayor alongside council officers and will be released shortly.

PMC added that arboriculture officers have been reaching out to resident's associations some of whom have tree monitors. To invite them to a resident's association please contact Hugh Chapman.

AC mentioned the launch of the Platinum Jubilee Parks fund and that the bid form will be released in July. LH enquired if each ward was limited to £40k and there are 22 wards in Bromley what's happening to the remaining £120k of the £1M award. AC confirmed that there is a reserve kept back out of the million pounds as a contingency fund to see projects to fruition or for later release depending on how selected bids progress.

LH also enquired as to the time period of the award, as it was not clear from the document. AC stated that these funds are to be spent within the current council term (4 years) and therefore bids would need to be submitted within 3 years.

## **5. idverde Update**

AZ gave an update on fundraising including:

- Green Space Process Maps: thanks to everyone for their contributions on it - planning to have all documentation ready by the end of summer.
- Hoblingwell Cycle Track officially opened by the Mayor of Bromley on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June
- Bowie Bandstand project is shortly going out for Planning Permissions and Tender
- Coney Hall Multi Use Game Area (MUGA); a longstanding project is awaiting LBB approval
- The new play equipment in Tugmutton Playground has been installed.

SH gave an update on behalf of countryside and education including:

- John Pemberton has been promoted to National Biodiversity development manager and therefore is no longer part of day-to-day operations in Bromley. SH is now fulfilling the role vacated by John.
- Recruitment to fill SH former role is underway.
- Donna Cook Conservation and Community Ranger has left to start a new role closer to home, recruitment for her replacement is underway with the first round of interviews already having taken place.
- Helen Cassidy Education Manager will be leaving in August, recruitment for her replacement will begin shortly.
- Summer species and habitat surveys are underway including:
  - Great Crested newts at Scadbury Park as part of the Moated Manor restoration project.
  - Heathland bird surveys – nil results supporting need for further restoration.
  - Meadow condition assessments.
  - Brilliant Butterflies project monitoring.
  - Orchid surveys have yielded mixed results most having declined in numbers compared to last year due to the drought-like condition experienced this spring but on one site greater butterfly orchid has been recorded after a 9-year absence.
- Volunteer hours were down this month due to extended bank holidays. So far this year a total of 176 supervised sessions have been carried out totalling 5405 hours. 2022 supervised volunteering is likely to have exceeded that achieved in 2021.
- Education 1030 children over 30 sessions and 43 public events have been attended at BEECHE so far this month.

AH gave an update on grounds maintenance and Community including:

- Challenging period for the GM team with the weather proving increasingly more difficult to predict. The grass-cutting teams have been struggling to keep up with the growth rates particularly in late May and early June due to the wet and warm climate. We are mostly back on track with cutting now with the drier weather recently, however, the downpour this morning will have delayed progress again.
- Floral bedding displays and hanging baskets are now virtually all planted and installed. At least they got watered this morning! The displays, in particular, the hanging baskets looked great.
- In the build-up to the platinum jubilee celebrations, our teams were busy processing a large number of events and assisting a lot of volunteers in their event preparations. This kept us all busy, but it was great to see such a strong community engagement all across the borough. We have a full calendar of events this year and the Wireless Festival is currently setting up at Crystal Palace Park.
- We have a new CRM administrator Jess Dalton who has been with us for a month and is settling in well. There has been a change in reporting lines as well as Penny and Angel now report into our Parks Development Manager, Andy Simpson.

AH also gave a short presentation on behalf of the park's development team (appended separately).

AC asked how idverde is coping with sourcing replacement playground equipment. AH said that it is currently challenging with many issues within the supply chain currently.

LH – raised that Forum is still in need of 4 of its 5 Friends training events this year. SH asked if LH could forward the training request to her to get this actioned.

RG asked if the subject lines from FMS could be tailored to relate to your specific enquiry so that customers can track individual enquires more effectively. PMC confirmed that this was raised the recent PDS meeting and that Jonathan Richards has been tasked with reviewing this.

RG raised a request to AC to liaise with Cllr Bennett to see if cycle routes to the new BMX track at Hoblingwell could be created.

## **6. Forum Update**

LH gave an update which included:

- Friends Group's insurance renewal for the coming year has been completed. Plans to streamline the process for Groups not requiring additional cover, has been agreed with Unity and will be implemented in future years.
- Two first aid courses are running in July, fully booked.
- New Group has formed at Cudham Recreation Ground and introductory material exchanged.

BA asked if a discussion could be had regarding green flag awards going forward following issue which occurred during the preparations this year. AH accepted that there was operator error and steps are in place to prevent this in the future.

SG raised ongoing issues with Valley Provincial fixing the Whitehall Rec Pond. JH asked if details could be sent to him to follow this up.

RG raised if coloured sacks could be provided for litter picking by idverde to align with Veolia. JH said he would raise this at the next collaboration meeting between the service providers.

RG raised the issue of scalping of verges. JH said that a few accidental occurrences do happen and the contours of verges make it challenging for operatives. Minimising measures are in place, which AH confirmed and said that inexperienced staff are receiving training on setting the cut height.

BA asked if verges could be assessed to leave more wildlife if there is ample room for people such as on Walden Rd. JH and AH confirmed work on this is underway for trial.

## **7. AOB**

No AOB

## **Next Meeting Date**

Next meeting date arranged for: Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022 at 10am (Online).

[Meeting ended]