

LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

Parks, Green Space and Countryside Stakeholder Panel Agenda

Date and Time: Monday 8th of January 2024
19:00 - 21:00.

Location: Online Teams Meeting

1. Welcome and Apologies,
2. Previous minutes (10/07/2023) – agreement,
3. Review of actions in ‘Action Update Document’ (10/10/2023),
4. idverde Update,
5. LBB Update,
6. Feedback from Stakeholders,
7. AOB,
8. Date of future meeting – to be rescheduled.

Attendees

London Borough of Bromley (LBB)

- **Hannah Jackson (HJ)** - *Assistant Director, Carbon Management and Greenspace (Chair),*
- **Hugh Chapman (HC)** – *Arboricultural Services Manager,*
- **Helen Stickling (HS)** – *Arboricultural Support Officer,*
- **David Braybrook (DB)** - *Parks & Greenspaces Borough Manager,*
- **Councillor Will Rowlands (Cllr WR)** - *Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services,*
- **Councillor Adam Grant (Cllr AG)** - *Chairman, Environment and Community Services Policy Development (PDS) and Scrutiny Committee,*

idverde

- **Martyn Bradley (MB)** - *Operations Director,*
- **Susan Holland** – *Conservation & Education Manager,*
- **Mark Garthwaite** – *Operations Manager,*

Stakeholders

- **Dr Judith John (JJ)** – *Orpington Field Club (OFC),*
- **Larry Herbert (LH)** - *Friends Forum, Chairman,*
- **Peter Woodward (PW)** - *Chislehurst and St Paul's Cray Commons,*
- **Janet Clayton (JC)** - *Orpington and District Archaeological Society (ODAS),*
- **Carol Gould (CG)** - *Bromley Biodiversity Partnership (BBP) & Orpington Field Club (OFC),*

Apologies

- **Angela Wood (AW)** - *Community Development and Fundraising Manager,*
- **Mike Ruffhead (MR)** - *Bromley Council Bowling Club Association (BCBCA),*

Other Non-Attendance

- **Clive Randell (CR)** - *Chairman of the Leisure Garden and Allotment Federation.*

Agenda Items	Owner	Target Date
<p>Welcome and Apologies AW and MR sent apologies.</p>		
<p>Previous minutes (10/07/2023) Attendees had no suggested amendments to the previous minutes.</p>		
<p>Action Log Review Attendees reviewed the action update document (dated 10/07/2023) which had been circulated prior to the meeting and contained updates for each action. See the updated action log dated 08/01/2024 for action updates.</p> <p>JC said that when idverde have courses at Scadbury, it would be helpful if they could alert ODAS if there will be a course on a particular day so that they can arrange tours at different times.</p> <p>ACTION: In future, SH to inform JC when idverde have courses scheduled at Scadbury, so that tours can be arranged at different times.</p> <p>Action 19 - PSPO Signage: LH raised a concern that some of the signage put up in the parks have been ripped down. LH queried whether the signs will be replaced or why stronger materials were not used. HJ asked if the issue had been reported. LH said not by them, but maybe by other people. LH said that the issue is with the cardboard signs secured with zip-ties and that he was expecting metal-based signage.</p> <p>LH raised another concern that he hasn't seen any of the new signage relating to dog licencing and the maximum dogs that can be walked. LH said that he has seen signs about water bodies and where dogs are not allowed but not the sign stating that walkers should only walk 4 dogs.</p> <p>HJ said that she would check with the enforcement team and that her understanding is that generic signs are placed at the entrances and more specific signs are placed closer to relevant locations e.g., water bodies.</p> <p>ACTION: Park Signs: HJ said she would ask the team to replace the signs at Keston. She said she will find out why the decision was made to use corex and how the decision is made to put what signs where.</p> <p>MB said that if the signs are provided to idverde then they would be happy to help to put them up.</p> <p>Action 22: Friends Group Training: LH said that the Friends groups don't receive reminders about the course and asked whether this can be organised. LH said that it would be helpful if a reminder was sent 1 week in advance of the course. SH said yes and that she will investigate that.</p> <p>ACTION: Friends Group Training: SH to set up reminders for course attendees in advance of the courses.</p> <p>Action 23: Online Course: SH said that they set up an online course to get more people involved. SH said that previous feedback indicated that people can't attend courses at set times and the benefit of the online course is that people can do it at any time. SH said that it's a trial and if it is successful then they will do it that way. SH said that Elaine has got to send her the administrated version to send to LH and HJ to review and comment on.</p>	<p>SH</p> <p>HJ</p> <p>SH</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>08/04/24</p> <p>08/04/24</p>

<p>LH asked how they will capture the people that complete the course. SH said that they will have login details with their associated details and Elaine can generate a report of how many people from each group have attended and passed.</p>		
<p>idverde Update</p> <p><u>Community Development and Fundraising</u></p> <p>MG updated that this was the first stakeholder panel that he had attended. AW sent apologies and MG provided the below updates from AW:</p> <p>Parks Development Update: Parks Development Team have been supporting the Community and LBB in the delivery of the Platinum Jubilee Grants Projects; and also supporting the Council on implementation of other key projects including desilting and Tiny Forests. During the latter half of 2023 the Team supported 7 corporate days, 2 Princes’ Trust sessions and led 9 community activity days targeting projects in parks including infrastructure painting, community garden clearing and planting, several of which supplemented the Platinum Jubilee and Fundraising Projects. After another successful year for Green Flags, with 7 Bromley Parks and Chislehurst Commons Receiving Green Flag status, and Winsford Gardens receiving a Community Green Flag Award; the Team have been busy revising the Green Flag Management Plans and the first tranche park Management Plans.</p> <p>New Community Relationship Manager: Following a competitive recruitment process we are pleased to announce Jade Veronie as the new Community Relationship Manager (CRM). Some of you may already be familiar with Jade, who has been working as a Parks Development Administrator and has been supporting the Community Manager (CM) role during the period of absence. Jade will be gradually transitioning to the role through January, while we recruit for her replacement. <i>Note – Idverde have changed the title of the position to better reflect the role and all the CMs will shortly be known as CRMs.</i></p> <p>Fundraising Update</p> <p>Croydon Road Rec Bandstand: Restoration of the Croydon Road Rec Bandstand launched in July following delays with the contract. Works had been progressing slowly to start with, however have now picked up pace. The wooden roof has been restored, retaining as much of the original timber as possible; the old paint has been blasted and is being restored to the original colour scheme; and the works to the corona and brickwork have begun. Completion is now anticipated to be April 2024 and work will shortly be beginning on plans for the launch event.</p> <p>Amber: Amber CPC charity ran a successful crowdfunding appeal, which coincided with National Baby Loss Awareness Week. They raised over £3K towards their project. They have been making grant applications throughout the latter half of the year to secure the remaining funds for the project. The group are currently liaising with a Trust that supports smaller Charities with grants for projects.</p> <p>Queensmead Recreation Ground: The Queensmead Play Committee successfully held a Fun Run and Crowdfunding Campaign in July, which raised £847 for their project to revitalise the playground. The local Harris Primary School raised a further £500 for the project in December. A corporate day with Forresters Financial saw the equipment not being replaced, painted to give it an uplift. The Committee have approved a design and are now looking to proceed</p>		

<p>to delivery stage having raised £47K. It is likely that this will be installed in Spring 2024.</p> <p>Coney Hall Play for All project: We have split the Coney Hall Play for All project into two phases so that we are able to proceed with the delivery of the first phase while the Friends seek to secure the remaining funds for the second. We're currently obtaining quotes for the first phase, involving resurfacing of the disused tennis court, which will enable this to be turned into a learn-to-ride area.</p> <p><u>Countryside and Education</u></p> <p>SH provided the below updates:</p> <p>Staff structure: Since we last met in July, we have had the following staff changed within the Countryside and Education teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Conservation Ranger- Irena Bennett, was our Grounds Maintenance Operator (GMO) who has been upskilling while performing this role. • We have changed the vacant GMO role to Assistant Conservation Ranger and recruited Alanna Earing to this role in September. • We are still recruiting for the Senior Biodiversity Ranger (Steven Lofting's role) who left last September. We have had difficulty in finding a suitable replacement yet. • Our RSPB Ranger left in December for a job closer to home, so we are assisting the RSPB in recruitment for his replacement. • We have successfully recruited for both a full time and part time Environmental Education Instructor- Ellie Denniss being full time and Beverley Nash part time. <p>Biodiversity surveys: In partnership with the Friends groups, Bromley Countryside Volunteers, Orpington Field club, London and Kent Wildlife trusts, London and Kent bat groups, KRAG, Butterfly Conservation independent volunteer surveyors and our allotment biodiversity champions we have achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 130 species surveys including- bat, amphibian & reptile, butterflies, plants, birds, small mammal, and aquatic creatures/woodland and meadow insects (mainly from school and public event sessions). • We have also completed 32 meadow condition surveys to help with the future meadow management. <p>Idverde Bromley Biodiversity Action Plan: We have completed all our targets for 2023, highlights being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing with the Urban bat and bird box survey programme by the installation of bird and bat boxes in 2 new urban sites- Betts Park and Alexandra recreation ground. • Annual site management works to ensure all management prescriptions are met on all Bromley habitats. • Biodiversity improvements to amenity spaces by installation of two further butterfly banks in Cator Park and Hoblingwell. • Change of grass cutting regime in regard to the 11 verges including in the Nature Friendly Verge Trials- online species surveys organised and offer to local schools for wildflower activity sessions. • Supporting over the targeted 100hrs of volunteer time delivering biodiversity enhancements to their local green spaces. <p>Volunteer Hours:</p>		
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<p>Countryside Friends groups Bromley Countryside Volunteers have completed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2023 volunteers have completed a staggering 9,416.5 hrs of volunteer time completing habitat management, litter/fly tip clearance, species surveys and guided walks on Countryside parks and woodlands., and assisted in water and scrub and INNS clearance, hay cuts and species monitoring in urban parks. • That's 345 work sessions throughout the year. <p>Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With new staff came a new look in our visitor centre; we now have an invertebrate display housing 38 different species and over 800 individual insects. This has helped us deliver 10 insect-related children's events, 7 bug clubs and 5 school sessions since October. It has also helped increase the visitor numbers reaching 1208 extra visitors since August. • Overall, in 2023 the education team has delivered 342 nature based educational sessions connecting a staggering 5,001 children and adults with nature. • High Elms Country Park (footprint of Lubbock Estate and Ice well) was accepted as a site for the 2023 Open House Festival. BEECHE staff offered free history tours of site. • Delivered 2 Outreach school sessions, one at Whitehall Recreation ground with 60 children doing bug and meadow insect hunts from Raglan Primary and 60 children at Green Street Green school "Introduction to invertebrates". • Delivered 6 Friends Forum courses throughout the year. <p>Targets for 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring species surveys. • Increase the number of allotment biodiversity champions by providing more courses and support with site surveys. • Complete 2024 IBBAP, Countryside Stewardship grant works and annual site management. • Survey Nature Friendly Verges and Butterfly banks. • Build on the Outreach, school Partnership and BEECHE events achievements. • Increase the promotion of National wildlife awareness weeks throughout the year. • Increase the survey training for both Rangers, BEECHE staff and volunteers. 		
<p>LBB update</p> <p>HJ presented her 24.01.08 stakeholder panel presentation in which she provided updates on the below items. The presentation was circulated with the minutes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff Changes at Bromley. 2. Sustainable Planting Trial. 3. Nature Friendly Verges. 4. Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) – Dog Controls. 5. Park User Satisfaction Survey. 6. Platinum Jubilee Parks Fund. 7. Parks Infrastructure Projects. 8. Water body management. 9. Sports in Parks. 10. Parks Buildings Lease Process. 		

<p>11. Crystal Palace Park.</p> <p><u>Arboricultural Services Update</u></p> <p>Tremendous Planting Project: HC reported that the third year of the planting project was currently underway. HC said that so far, roughly 800 trees had been planted that winter (2023-24) which was just over half of that year's planting target. HC reported that QR codes are being installed on the tree stakes of newly planted trees and are operational on IOS and will be launched on Android later in the winter. HC said that in the watering season, leaflets will be fixed to the tree stakes to encourage residents to assist in watering and taking care of the trees. HC noted that for the previous year's planted trees, the Service Provider has reported a low mortality rate which is promising.</p> <p>Woodland Establishment: HC updated that the Forestry Commission approved consultants Maydencroft have been appointed and are working on initial designs for woodlands at Edgebury Grazing Lands, Kemnal Road and Worlds End Lane, with public consultation planned for February 2024.</p> <p>Orchards: HC updated that two new community orchards are being planted, one in Jubilee Country Park and the other in Richmal Crompton Fields in initiatives proposed by the community and funded by the Platinum Jubilee Parks Fund.</p> <p>Tiny Forest: HC reported that the Friends of Cator Park and Alexandra Recreation Ground have fund raised over £35k to plant a Tiny Forest in Cator Park. They will plant a mix of native trees in a small area to replicate the natural processes of forest regeneration. HC discussed the biodiversity benefits of the Miyawaki tiny forest method.</p>		
<p><u>Bromley Biodiversity Partnership Species (Carol Gould)</u></p> <p>Planning Applications: CG and JJ have responded to nearly 50 planning applications over 2023, and around 30 since July. They range from PREAPPs to Conditions, and many are close to the borough's green spaces.</p> <p>CG asked HC to confirm whether the consultation on the woodland establishment would be available to respond to on the Borough's consultation part of the website. HC confirmed that when the consultation was open, he would ensure that the stakeholders were made aware of how to respond to the consultation.</p> <p>Species reports for 2023: CG advised that reptiles were being surveyed at Hayes and Keston Common, and St Paul's Cray Common and part of the adjoining NT Estate. Surveying has started at Down House, where a grass snake was seen. No lizards have been seen since 2021 on the NT Hawkwood Estate. but more refuges are being added, which combined with more reptile-friendly heather management avoiding the summer, should be beneficial to the reptile population.</p> <p>CG advised that Brown Hairstreaks continue to be spreading across the Borough with eggs being found at a number of sites. Improved habitat management appears to save many more eggs allowing the species population to grow and spread. Similarly, it is important that willow management at Keston Ponds takes into account the breeding Willow Emerald damselflies.</p>		

<p>CG outlined that dormouse numbers were down in 2023 with none being found at Downe Bank or Blacklands Wood, whilst only three males were seen at Cuckoo Woods, and no evidence of breeding was found.</p>		
<p><u>Bromley Biodiversity Partnership Species & Habitats sub-group & Orpington Field Club (Dr Judith John)</u></p> <p>Planning Issues BBP sub-group members are concerned that there appears as yet to be no replacement for Paul Mellor (PM) the Principal Planner who left LBB in mid-October. BBP had been asked by PM to comment on GiGL Habitat maps for Darwin & Chislehurst Wards. JJ asked if there was any feedback regarding the excel documents and email sent to PM on 16th October and forwarded to Ben Johnson on 26th October. There were a lot of questions posed in these documents.</p> <p>A letter regarding the great need for an Ecologist on the staff of LBB was sent in October 2023 to all Cllrs & the Planning Department. This letter was very similar to the one sent to the Planning Department in February 2022 at which time they were informed that LBB had insufficient resources to fund an Ecologist post. As there are now even more pressing reasons why an Ecologist is required (including to advise on delivery of BNG, to work towards the London Nature Recovery Strategy and Nature Recovery Networks, including delivery etc.) this matter is becoming very urgent. To continue employing consultant ecologists when biodiversity issues arise seems likely to be far more expensive than employing a full-time ecologist as well as very much less efficient. The letter can be sent out to anyone who would like a copy.</p> <p>ACTION: HJ to request that a representative from the LBB Planning department attend the stakeholder meetings. HJ said that she will ask the Planning department to provide an update on the biodiversity net gain issues.</p> <p>Update of Ancient Woodland Inventory JJ Frankie Moorman, <i>Ancient Woodland Inventory Officer</i> has received additional funding to extend the project till March 2024 when final decisions will be made & she will be able to send us information regarding which sites have been accepted onto the inventory. There are so many little ancient woods in LBB it is highly likely that some of them will have been omitted from the new inventory due to the impossibility of surveying them all in the time available. Additional woods can be submitted in future providing there is sufficient evidence that they are ancient and these will be looked at on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Species Reports for 2023</p> <p>Toad Report: Toads appear to be doing quite well in LBB. Toads were recorded from 38 locations in 2023. A total of about 96 locations including 36 breeding ponds have now been recorded in the London Borough of Bromley since the survey began in 2017.</p> <p>Hedgehogs: Only 8 records of IUCN Red Listed Hedgehogs were received by Bromley Biodiversity Partnership in 2023. This is the worst result since hedgehog recording began in the Borough. Numbers of hedgehog records received had been steadily increasing until 2021 starting with 10 (2017) and steadily rising from 21(2018), 33 (2019), 36 (2020) to 51 (2021). Lower numbers were recorded in 2022 (29). A regular recorder from Petts Wood sent the comment, '<i>For the first time since wildlife camera installed in 2014 no hedgehogs or hedgehog droppings were seen.</i>' Elsewhere in the UK the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester & North Merseyside reported hedgehog</p>	<p>HJ</p>	<p>08/04/24</p>

<p>numbers in 2023 were down 33% and Help4Hedgehogs (a hedgehog rehabilitation group in Sussex) reported that it cared for more than twice as many animals in 2023 as it did in 2022 with more than 200 hedgehogs being admitted in 2023 compared to 98 in 2022. Local Hedgehog expert Mavis Righini reported a reduction in number of hedgehogs requiring rescue in LBB in 2022 which worsened in 2023, presumed to be due to lower numbers of hedgehogs being seen by the public. General UK data for 2023 hedgehog numbers is not yet available. We await publication of 'The State of British Hedgehogs 2023' report in late spring 2024 to see the wider UK picture. This may help us to see whether the low numbers recorded in the London Borough of Bromley 2023 are a local phenomenon, possibly due to less vigorous survey promotion, or whether there have been similar declines elsewhere in urban areas. Ever declining invertebrate numbers and erratic weather patterns in 2022 and 2023 may have contributed to low numbers but we also need to redouble our efforts to publicise the survey and encourage wildlife friendly practises in gardens, parks, and other green spaces.</p> <p>Help with publicity for this survey would be very much appreciated, including publicising the need for water and supplementary feeding during hot dry weather.</p> <p>All records received are sent to relevant amphibian and hedgehog charities (Kent Reptile and Amphibian Group (KRAG) & Hedgehog Street and to the local records centre, Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL). Toad & Hedgehog Factsheets and reports for 2023 will be available on the biodiversity page of Bromley Friends Forum website https://www.bromleyfriendsforum.org under, 'Useful documents' together with mapped records from 2017-2021. The results for 2022 and 2023 have not been mapped. LBB Species Action Plans for toad, hedgehog, swift, white admiral butterfly, bats and dormouse are on the LBB website Biodiversity Page.</p>		
<p><u>Chislehurst and St Paul's Cray Commons – (Peter Woodward)</u></p> <p>PW said that the reports provided had been very helpful. PW mentioned being interested about better management and that in 2024, the Trustees will be working on a new 10-year plans. PW said that they had submitted their Green Flag Award management plan which is much more comprehensive than it has been in the past. PW said that the Trustees are very grateful that they have been able, as a group, to apply for the Green Flag Award as it has given them a powerful management tool to self-evaluate. PW discussed the level of volunteering that happens at the Commons, noting that everybody is an unpaid volunteer except the 2 keepers who are employees. Finally, PW said that they really appreciate the courses being laid on by idverde. HJ thanked PW for his positive feedback.</p>		
<p><u>Orpington and District Archaeological Society (ODAS) – (Janet Clayton)</u></p> <p>Open Weekend: JC said that they are hoping to have the open weekend in September 2024, and they will approach idverde to obtain the necessary approval. JC said that they hope LBB will be advertising through Open House.</p> <p>Security: JC said that there is still a low level of vandalism at Scadbury which is why they are interested in the fencing. JC said that despite all the fending around the scheduled monument sections, vandals took the sign and threw it in the mote which Andrew Harby is now trying to repair. JC said that in the meantime, they are putting up some temporary signage. JC said that hopefully the board can be dried out and re-installed.</p>		

<p>JC said to LH that they find it helpful to be on the Friends Forum mailing list.</p> <p>Planning: JC said that she is assuming that this spring is when the Local Plan will come out for consultation as part of the normal planning cycle. JC said that if it does come out then they will be interested to see it as it offers an opportunity to comment on the revised archaeological priority areas introduced by Historic England a couple of years ago. JC noted that the priority areas have an implication for anyone with a park with heritage features. JC said that for Scadbury, they wonder if there is a need to upgrade the archaeological designation for the WW2 site. JC said that she suspects that the WW2 site has a low grade as some of the features were identified after it was graded. JC said that they will be looking to comment on the designation.</p> <p>JC advised that the Commons might want to check that status of their features. JC said that in the past some areas were not designated at all and now the whole borough is designated a 1, 2 or 3 (with 3 being the lowest grade). JC advised that it is important that land managers know how the designation system works and review the designations allocated to their features.</p> <p>Open Space Strategy (OSS) & Master Plan: JC asked whether there has been any progress on the Open Space Strategy (OSS) and the action point to develop the master plan for the Scadbury moated manor. JC asked if there were any updates or a timetable. HJ said that they have had some positive conversation with Historic England potentially about funding to help with that master plan. DB said that he emailed JC regarding the topic and is happy to discuss this further with JC. DB said that currently they are looking at the process to see how to take it forward. JC said that they understand why dates may be delayed but it would be useful to know when the expected dates will be as it's a big workload for them to review and provide comment. JC said that if their input is required then it is helpful for them to know when it will be required. JC and DB agreed to talk outside of the meeting.</p>		
<p><u>Friends Forum - (Larry Herbert)</u></p> <p>LH said that it had been a difficult 6 months for the Forum due to staff changes. LH noted that they previously had monthly meeting with James Hilsden who has now left the Council and Andy Hodgson has left idverde (replaced by MW), so they are adjusting to the new staff. LH mentioned that there was an upcoming partnership meeting that week with LBB and idverde. LH said that there are quite a few outstanding actions which he hopes they can start to conclude. LH said that he has a meeting with AW and SH on Monday to further the tool provision conversation and clarify what tools are available.</p> <p>LH noted that the Friends Forum had their AGM last November where he was re-elected as the Chair. LH noted that there had been slight changes to the committee with the departure of Kerry and Walter. LH noted that there is now a new Friends group at Harvington who they are supporting. LH discussed first aid courses noting that they had the 3rd session in October and that this year, they are planning on running 4 first aid courses. LH discussed an open action related to the LBB, Friends Forum, and idverde website and the desire to ensure that the websites are not duplicating one another. LH said that they will aim to have the member meeting at a bi-monthly arrangement and are hoping to have the next one in March.</p>		
<p>AOB Attendees had no other business.</p>		
<p><u>Next Meeting</u></p>		

<p>HS said that the next meeting was currently scheduled for 08/07/2024 however LH said he would be unable to attend. HS to circulate some date options in July 2024 to the attendees.</p>		
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