

Bromley Friends Forum

Minutes of the Members' Meeting held on 25th September 2025
Civic Centre & Via Teams Video, 7.00pm - 9.00pm

Attendance

Forum Committee:

Please refer to secretary for details

Friends:

Please refer to secretary for details

Apologies:

Please refer to secretary for details

1. Chairman's Welcome

LH opened the meeting and welcomed everyone in attendance.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 24th July 2025 were accepted no alterations. The minutes would be revised with full names removed prior to publication on the Forum website.

Matters Arising: None.

3. Forum News

3.1. Council / idverde Update

LH reported that he had met with the Council to discuss the future of Parks Management. Over the past year or so the Council has been appraising the following six options:

- i) Extension to the existing contract;
- ii) Bringing the management back in-house;
- iii) Creating Local Authority Trading Company (LATC);
- iv) Re-tendering;
- v) A hybrid of in-house and contractor;
- vi) Working in partnership with other London boroughs.

It was agreed that options (iii) and (vi) were not viable and that (ii), (iv) & (v) were very costly. This in affect left only option (i) as the sensible way forward. It is understood that an extension of idverde's contract would more than likely involve some changes of priority, with some existing work taken out and some new work added. The current contract runs to March 2027.

The proposal to extend the contract will be submitted to a scrutiny panel on 8th October and then to the Council Executive for a final decision on 15th October. Assuming acceptance it is hoped final contract negotiations can be concluded by Summer 2026.

3.2. Community Management

It is understood that Winnie Motoko is currently on long-term sick leave and Jade Veronie has left idverde. This means there are currently no Community Managers looking after urban parks and all enquiries are being handled by Angela Wood.

A joint partnership meeting has been scheduled to discuss the situation and determine how best to take this forward. From a Friends perspective it is important to receive timely responses to queries and in affect they need a detailed contact list of who to call in the event of an issue.

3.3. Risk Assessments

LH reported that he had received a set of risk assessment templates from idverde and that these were now available for download from the Forum website. The Forum website now included a top-level menu entitled 'Risk' and this included a summary explanation of risk.

Members were free to use these templates, but would need to customise them to their Group's requirements. See <https://www.bromleyfriendsforum.org/risk-assessments.html> for further details.

3.4. Species Reporting

LH reported that idverde were keen to record sightings of various species across the borough and as a consequence had developed a Microsoft form to capture the data. This would then be uploaded to GIGL. A general species poster, which included a QR code for smart phones, was available for download from the Forum website.

Post Meeting Note: A full set of endangered species posters has now been produced and these too are available for download from the Biodiversity page of the Forum website. See <https://www.bromleyfriendsforum.org/biodiversity.html> for more details.

3.5. Friends Christmas Market

LH reported that plans were being made for a Friends Christmas Market at BEECHE. The date of Sunday 7th December was proposed with setup around 11am and running through to 4pm. It is possible that some 12 Friends Groups could be accommodated and they would have the option to sell Christmas themed goods and/or simply promote themselves. Attendance will be free to any participating Groups. Further details will be circulated in the very near future.

3.6. First Aid Training

LH reported that two first aid courses had been scheduled, one on 31st October and one on 21st November. There were still one or two places available on both courses.

3.7. Financial Matters / Banking

LH reported that Metro Bank was now planning to charge for its Community based account a fee of £3 per month. It is likely most other banks will follow suit, if they haven't already done so.

LH reminded members of Forum's policy on Small Grants and urged members to submit an application to them. Forum's financial year end is 30th Sept so it would be good to receive any pending requests by then.

3.8. Biodiversity

CG gave an update on biodiversity matters, in particular it had been a good year for species sightings. Lots of bats, toads and butterflies and more significantly the return of dormice. Good number of slow worms and reptiles seen early in the year, less so in the summer as the hot weather meant they didn't need to warm themselves under the refuges and kept themselves hidden. White Admiral butterflies seen at Crofton and one or two other places. Brown Hairstreak is spreading across the borough.

CG explained that she had a role in checking planning applications were adhering to good biodiverse practices and was happy to hear from anyone concerned about any application in their area. CG will respond to the Bromley Local Plan.

4. Friends Group Reports

4.1. Crofton & Sparrow Woods: JA reported that the Council/idverde have received a grant from the Water Environment Improvement Fund to look at making improvements to the sewage and flooding issues at Crofton Wood.

JA also reported that they have an application from their stables for six bridleways to run through the woods. Going to Council committee in December for approval. If accepted, is then likely to go for full consultation.

Planning to hold a Christmas wreath making event again this year, which last year made some £800 for the Group.

4.2. Bromley Town Parks: JR reported problems with their lake in Church House Gardens, which is becoming a woodland due to the recent hot weather. Lot of the problems stem from silt but working with the Council for assistance.

Setting up a River Action Group with support from Thames21 for Glassmill Pond. This provides more insurance cover to look at issues and improve matters.

4.3. Bromley Palace Parks: Currently part of Bromley Town Parks but looking to set-up as a separate Group. Basics are now in place and waiting idverde approval for formal recognition.

DA & SP reported that they are looking at ways of improving the water features in their park. It needs to be dredged. They had looked at crowd funding but this has been denied by the Council.

4.4. Whitehall Rec: SS reported that they have time expired culvert that leads to the Ravensbourne and they are looking at potential improvements. Encouraged by the Environment Agency and Thames21 but little progress is being made.

4.5. Tugmutton Rec: MT raised concern about the car-parks at Tugmutton, with the prospect that these will become fee-paying.

MT reported that they were surprised to receive a new waste bin, as they were expecting the existing set of bins to be relocated to meet any new demand.

4.6. Chislehurst Commons: BK reported his general concerns at the level of work programs, risk assessments, volunteer needs etc. Ponds have been a particular problem this year, taking a lot of time and attention during the drought.

4.7. ODAS

MM reported that ODAS opened Scadbury Moated Manor to the public on Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th September. The Deputy Mayor opened the event on Saturday 13th. We had 613 visitors.

Also, V22 (London Art Organisation) opened the Priory in Orpington on Saturday 20th September. ODAS gave guided tours of the building and RG, Friends of Priory Gardens, gave tours of the gardens. We had 84 visitors.

5. AOB

5.1. SP raised the prospect of re-instating the 'Santa Run' event through Bromley Parks. This would involve a run or walk through iconic locations. Some discussion followed and agreed contact needs to be made with the events team to establish the viability.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be our AGM on Thursday 27th November starting at 6.30pm. It will be held at the new Civic Centre in Westmoreland Road, Committee Room 1, and will be both in-person and on-line via Microsoft Teams. It is hoped to offer drinks and nibbles.