Bromley Friends Forum

Minutes of the Members' Meeting held on 25th June 2026
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, especially our guests from idverde.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 23rd April 2026 were accepted with no alterations. The minutes would be revised with full names removed prior to publication on the Forum website.

Matters Arising: There were no specific actions in the previous minutes but LH gave an update on some of the items discussed at the last meeting.

Species Identification: from an idverde perspective they were only interested in species observations in the parks and green spaces they manage, so their observation form will not change. The meeting discussed other methods of collection and it was suggested that the irecord App was a suitable alternative that allowed capture of data anywhere within the UK.

Forum Questionnaire: Forum had discussed this in committee and there were no plans to conduct a questionnaire at this time.

Biodiversity Panel: attendance considerations would be reviewed but it was felt there was a good representation from all parties. There was concern that the panel could become too large and therefore be counterproductive.

Quarterly Stats: This has been discussed with the Council and it is hoped a more high-tech solution for collecting the data will be implemented.

Leadership Course: An on-line course is being developed by idverde and it is hoped this will be available for testing in the summer and wider circulation by the autumn.

First Aid Courses: Options for a weekend course are being considered. As it's an all-day course, this cannot be delivered in an evening.

Pesticide Course: Initial view is that idverde's H&S department feel this is too risky to offer to volunteers. Forum disagrees and further discussions remain on-going.

3. Forum News

3.1. Council / *i*dverde Update

LH reported that one of the Parks Engagement Co-ordinators, Katie Berry, that came to our last meeting has now left and that a new recruitment process is underway. It is expected that applications for the role will close shortly and as previously Forum will have an opportunity to be involved in the interview process.

LH also reported that Will Rowlands lost his seat in the May elections and that the council has appointed Josh Coldspring-White as the new portfolio holder. He is councillor for the Hayes & Coney Hall ward.

3.2. Insurance

LH asked members for their views on the recent renewal process of our indemnity insurance. It all seemed very last minute and there was little to no opportunity to discuss any changes to individual policies. Also, as the contact at Unity was new to the system it seemed Groups were being asked to pay premiums rather than sending the invoices to idverde. Following discussion, it appears it only affected those Groups who paid for add-ons and that for all other Groups the process worked fine. Insurance has now been renewed as of 24th June and runs to 23rd June 2027.

3.3. Financial Support

LH reported that he had been in discussion with idverde over the matter of Commercial Events in our parks making voluntary donations to any affected Friends Group. As a consequence, the wording has been revised to 'strongly encourage' event organisers to make such donations as it supports community-led initiatives and helps maintain the park for public enjoyment. Arrangements are being made that any donation received by idverde will be passed to Forum for onward transfer to the Group in question.

Some discussion re events followed and it was agreed that any failings in terms of tidy-up, damage should be reported on FMS, so that it is formally recorded. This is turn may led to financial penalties being imposed, which can further be fed back to the maintenance of parks.

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.

3.4. Training

LH reminded members of future idverde courses as follows:

Bioblitz Survey	13th Aug
Tree Trail	10th Sept
Bat Box Surveying/Transect Walk	24th Sept
Hedge Laying	25th Nov

Forum ran two first aid courses in June and will look to run further courses in the autumn.

3.5. Questions / Answers

Q: DA asked about the culling policy of goose eggs. An unsavoury situation arose at Palace Park which requires explanation

A: It is understood that the policy is to keep one egg active whilst culling all others. LH will raise the matter of Bromley Palace Park at the next Partnership Meeting.

Q: The matter of socially prescribed volunteers and how Groups can manage them was aired.

A: It was recognised that it was not always known what ailment individuals had and how these can be best managed by Groups. Whether or not they would respond to training could also be a concern and consequently it was not seen as a very productive way of recruiting new volunteers.

3.6. Biodiversty Update

CG reported that the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) needs to be updated this year. Currently looking at how this can be achieved in terms of who does what, what needs to be updated, what format the document would take etc. etc. It was accepted that the Council needs to manage the process with volunteers providing input.

CG asked the meeting whether Friends Groups use the BAP to help manage their sites or does it just sit un-opened on the website. The view was that Groups (especially Green Flag sites) use their own management plans and that the BAP has little influence in that respect. It is felt that the BAP is more generally used by the planning department, though more recently less so. It should result in a more streamlined document and the need for a lengthy publication becomes less likely.

3.7. ODAS

MM reported that ODAS is opening the Romano-British Bathhouse to the public on Sunday 19th July. It will be open from 11am - 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 4pm. Entry is free with donations welcome.

ODAS is also opening Scadbury Moated Manor as part of London Open House Weekend to the public on the afternoons of Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th September. Entry is free with donations welcome.

Feasibility study to determine what conservation works are required at Scadbury Moated Manor has gone out to tender. Hopefully these can start in September.

4. Friends Group Reports

4.1. Crofton & Sparrow Woods: JA reported that they have completed the KTR funded project to provide bat and bird boxes, along with interpretation, which is awaiting installation from idverde.

Currently working on sundial project, received funds from Forum and also looking at crowd-funding.

Also looking at doing a circular walk including a children's trail.

4.2. Tugmutton: MT reported problems with grass cutting around the cricket pitch, with quantities off-cuts being left on the field of play. Also, problems with ditches, which have been repeatedly reported on FMS. New plans in place and hopefully resolved by the winter.

Looking at installing a basketball hoop for the children.

4.3. Chislehurst Rec: BA reported that they had been working with DoE students and this had proved quite successful. Also had successful interaction with Redhill primary school, who have an eco-council.

Had London in Bloom judging recently, seemed to go well.

4.4. Bromley Palace Park: DA reported that they have been working with DoE students and the local scout group, who have helped with the volunteering.

Big projects in the pipeline include repair to the listed structures in the park and dredging of the moat. Through section 106 funding we have secured £860k for the structures. Working with council to secure £450k for the moat.

4.5. Chislehurst Commons: PW reported that they had been working on retaining their Green Flag award and also preparing for the London in Bloom judging. More recently they have been having problems with their drains and were grateful to the Council for their assistance in resolving the matter.

4.6. Bromley Green Gym: EB reported problems with lack of support from idverde and not enough volunteers to meet their needs. Have received some help from the Brownies. Have concentrated efforts on the main area of College Green and less so on College Slip. The wild flower meadow is in desperate need of rain.

The Group is small with very diverse abilities, so the skill set is limited in what can be achieved. Tend to let volunteers do what they are capable of rather than defined tasks. Fund raising is an issue for the Group with no one keen to take on the role. The Group defines itself as slow but steady.

4.7. Blake Park: BF reported that about a year ago the Group almost collapsed but things have turned around and looking a lot healthier. There is money in the bank and plans to spend it on new signage and boards.

4.8. Biggin Hill Rec: NH reported that they have had on-going discussions about the pavilion in the rec and whether any party is interested in taking on the upkeep. They have their carnival between 11am and 5pm on Saturday 27th June.

Have spent some £40k on improvements to the playground and now looking to restore the airplane in the playground which is now well passed its best.

There have been some motorbike issues in the sensory garden with damage to the lawn areas. Discussions about anti-social behaviour is on-going with the police.

4.9. Hoblingwell Wood: CP reported that they continue to have their regular work parties on Weds, Thurs and Sat, though the recent hot weather has resulted in some reduction in effort. They also continue to run their family walks and talks on Saturday mornings. These so far have not been greatly attended, so more promotion is needed.

Problem with roundabout in the playground with lots of anti-social behaviour and vandalism. Looking to get things resolved with the council. Planning an open day in October and looking to recruit more volunteers.

4.10. Keston Common: LH reported that Keston has suffered a bit of vandalism to their boards (3 were covered in graffiti). This has proved quite hard to remove partly due to the age of the boards, which have lost their protection over time. There has also been fires in the woods but thankfully no major damage caused.

The Council has managed to secure funding of £363k to implement a phase one of the Keston Ponds project. This will introduce more of a wetland area in the vicinity of pond 4 and also build a raised boardwalk and platform area for visitors. The work is currently out for tender and expected to commence in September.

We are also hopeful of securing some funds from Historic England to restore the area around Caesar's Well, which is a natural spring and source of the River Ravensbourne. Some of the stone work needs restoration and potentially some dredging of the adjacent pond would be welcome.

5. AOB

5.1. LH reported that BEECHE was organising a Countryside Fair at High Elms for Sunday 6th September and Groups were invited to have a stall. It is also expected that Christmas events will be organised over the weekend 12th/13th December.

5.2. The meeting discussed the issue of playground maintenance and inspections with the belief that equipment is being taken out of service rather than repaired. This would be discussed further at the next partnership meeting.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday 24th September starting at 7pm. It will be held at Committee Room 1, and will be both in-person and on-line via Microsoft Teams.