

FRIENDS FORUM OF BROMLEY PARKS & GREEN SPACES

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Civic Centre, Bromley, Wednesday, 21st November 2018, 6.30pm-8pm

1. Introduction and welcome of the Committee

Chairman, LH, opened the meeting, welcomed guests and those present and outlined the format for the evening and explained the voting system. LH thanked *idverde* for their help and support in planning the AGM.

2. Present / Apologies

Forum Committee:

See secretary for full details

Members:

See secretary for full details

***idverde*:**

See secretary for full details

Bromley Council:

See secretary for full details

Apologies:

See secretary for full details

3. Minutes of the last AGM held on 15th November 2017

The minutes of the last AGM were accepted without comment or error.

There were no matters arising as such but LH advised that with reference to item 7 the Forum Constitution had been revised and re-issued as version 4 during the year.

BS proposed and JB seconded. LH stated that the minutes would now be made available in the public domain on the Forum website.

4. Presentation of the Committee's Annual Report

VS presented Forum's review of the year. She was accompanied by DR, who gave an update on volunteering activities in the borough. Topics covered included highlights of the year, working partnerships, links with other parties and the year ahead. VS also gave a detailed overview of proposed training opportunities for 2019 and referred to the tickbox questionnaire that had accompanied the registration handout and requested that members complete this at the earliest opportunity. A copy of the slides will be posted onto the Forum website and accompany these minutes. The questionnaire will also be circulated to members who did not attend the AGM.

Questions about the Committee Report:

EB expressed her gratitude that more courses had been identified and that members had the opportunity to participate in a wider range of topics.

LH added that *idverde* ran a number of adult courses at BEECHE and that members who had an interest in attending should seek re-imburement of costs from Forum. This would have the twofold benefit of being free to Friends members and make the course a more likely financial viability for *idverde*.

BA asked about the availability of Library Services. LH apologised that the slide bullet was perhaps slightly misleading but what was meant was that the parks management contractor now provided these services (albeit small quantities of work) and members seeking some photocopying should address their needs to their Community Manager.

5. Presentation and Adoption of the Annual Accounts

JC presented the accounts. Over the year Forum had received a total income of £5,000 with an expenditure of £5,318. The small over-spend was in part due to the cost of £3,000 in supporting Friends Groups. The balance at 30th September was £9,003 though since then some £1,100 has been spent on a first aid course, catering for this evening's AGM and accepting a small grant application from Hoblingwell Wood. The balance (£7,900 approx.) remains quite large because the committee needed to safeguard funds for future administration and training. JC mentioned that no small grants were made during the year and referred Groups to the Small Grant Policy in the 'How do I?' section of the Forum's website.

Questions about the Accounts:

None.

The Accounts were then formally adopted: proposed by JR; seconded by AW.

6. Approval of Independent Examiner

JC outlined the details of our independent examiner, AK, and his qualifications. Approval and re-election for next year was agreed: proposed by VS; seconded by BS.

7. Election of Committee

PP took the Chair to oversee the election/re-election of the new Chairman and committee members: Nominees for the major officer roles were as follows and all were taken en-bloc

Chairman:	LH, Keston Common
Vice Chairman:	Jl, Hoblingwell Woods
Treasurer:	JC, Kelsey Park

Nominees for major officer roles were proposed by EB and seconded by PW. A vote of approval by members was not called by PP but assumed to be in agreement.

Nominees for the general member roles were as follows and all were taken en-bloc:

DR, Hoblingwell Woods
KS, Bromley Town Parks & Gardens
KR, Winsford Gardens (Penge Green Gym)
RG, Priory Gardens
SG, Whitehall Rec
VS, Scadbury Park

Nominees for these general member roles were proposed by JR and seconded by PW. A vote of approval by members was not called by PP but assumed to be in agreement.

All nominees were duly elected and LH retook the Chair.

8. idverde Presentation

JP gave a presentation on 'Biodiversity Highlights from 2018'. A copy of the slides will be posted onto the Forum website and accompany these minutes.

Questions for idverde:

None.

9. Bromley Council Presentation

LH invited Cllr WH-T to say a few words on behalf of the Council. WH-T explained his new role as Portfolio Holder for the Environment and thanked all volunteers for their hard work and commitment over the past year. He invited JH to explain his role as Contracts Manager and give an overview of the contract negotiations that were coming to their conclusion.

Questions for the Council:

Q. BS asked why the Council could not announce the result of the contract tonight?

A. JH replied that the decision would be taken at next week's Council Executive meeting and that a three week appeal process would then be permitted before a final announcement was made. It was therefore expected that this would be concluded on or around 20th December.

Q. VS asked how much of the actual contract specification was available to volunteers/residents in the public domain?

A. JH replied that the street cleaning schedule was on the Council website and that a summary of parks management services (typically grounds maintenance) was also available. It was agreed that more could be done to disseminate information and keep Friends Groups better informed.

Q. TB asked how we will know that the cost/quality ratio has been properly considered and that the correct decision has been arrived at?

A. W-HT explained that the ratio was 60% cost and 40% quality and that there was a threshold of a minimum of 50% on the quality side that had to be proven and achievable by the contractor to be considered in the first place.

Q. AW asked what was happening to the depots considered for closure?

A. It was explained that the potential closures were written into the contract specification and it was up to the contractor to determine within their tender as to which depots they planned to utilise and those that were potentially surplus to requirements. After the contract has been

issued the actual facilities would be reviewed and changes made as necessary. NT-H added that the Council was providing some funds to enhance some of the facilities and contractors were taking this into account within their tenders.

Q. A question was asked about the transition to the new contract and whether there were plans in place to make this as seamless as possible?

A. JH replied that the transition period was in effect from 20th Dec to April and confirmed it would be as seamless as possible. It was an 8 year contract with an automatic extension of 8 years assuming the chosen contractor was performing to spec.

Q. A follow-up question asked what plans were in place if the chosen contractor was not meeting its targets and performing to the required specification?

A. JH explained that initially discussions would take place to understand the issues and put in place actions to correct matters. If this failed an improvement plan would be needed with more detailed actions and more serious decisions undertaken to resolve the situation.

Q. AF asked about the impression given to the public by long out-of-date information displayed on notice boards?

A. WH-T agreed this was a poor show and that more effort was required to address this type of issue. He recommended that AF raises this matter with his Community Manager so that the problem becomes known to the Council and action can be taken. This same policy would apply to other Friends Groups, who have similar out-of-date notices.

Q. JJ asked about the potential closure of High Elms and Den Barn and referred the meeting to idverde's presentation, where a Barn Owl (a protected species under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act) had been recently photographed in the rafters of Den Barn?

A. The message was noted and reference made back to the answer for depot closures above.

Q. RG reminded the Council of the 45,000 hours of effort the Friends had delivered this year and what help the Council could provide in attracting more volunteers in future years?

A. WH-T confirmed his support for the Friends movement and suggested that Groups should work with the Forum to make their needs known and together we could look at new ways of attracting additional volunteering effort.

10. Questions & Answers

No additional questions were raised.

11. Any Other Business

None.

12. Close

LH thanked members for their attendance and referred to the next members' meeting to be held on 23rd January 2019 at the Civic Centre, starting at 7pm.