



Bromley Park Friends Toolkit

Written by Friends for Friends



Preface

Welcome Friends

We would like to welcome you to Bromley Park Friends Toolkit. This document is here to provide guidance and information to help you find the appropriate place or person to solve problems in or associated with your green space, whether rural or urban. It does not attempt to prescribe how or what every Friends Group should do, the intention is to provide a starting point for “how do I?” questions.

We have tried to create a style and format that allows you to use the document as a point of reference as well as containing much other useful information. It is to encourage us all to use these guidelines so that we can be as effective in our parks as we can be, given current circumstances.

The complete document is quite large and so we have chosen to divide it into its individual sections and appendices for you to read or download just the parts you are interested in. The intention is that you use the reference material like a dictionary and refer to a subject when needed. *Please note that individual sections are under constant review and may as a consequence be presented as a more advanced version than others.*

Bromley Borough Council's commitment to its parks and their Friends

Fifty years ago the Council had full resources to run its parks. They were beautifully kept and maintained but lacked the community involvement that is so prevalent in parks today.

In recent times the culture of parks has changed considerably. Thanks to Park Friends' efforts, sites are now vibrant and individual, providing places of tranquillity and beauty for both users and the natural environment.

Bromley really welcomes local people who want to make a difference. Their recommendations help shape their local environment. We are all Friends of parks, so, by working together we ensure that our park is not only fit for purpose for today's users, but also for future generations.

In these constrained times resources have to be targeted at the activities Bromley is required by law to provide. Bromley Council tries to commit significant environment resources to their parks and green spaces. There is never enough to deliver what is required. During 2015, the Council, as part of a wider policy, commissioned its Parks and Greenspace service to the private sector company – *idverde*, formally known as The Landscape Group. As a result *idverde* has significantly redesigned this service to better provide at source, improved liaison between stakeholders, the broader community and its direct workforce – in an effort to reduce bureaucracy and enable more localised decision making.

idverde, with considerable councillor support, invests in its Friends by providing managers to work with them, and by also organising training and the provision of tools and equipment. They can also assist with external funding which is becoming more and more important as a delivery mechanism to provide more for our environment.

We all want the best for our parks and green spaces. The Council's and *idverde*'s commitment to its community is to see that its efforts are spread across all parks and green spaces and not just concentrated on a few favoured spots. That way all users benefit.

It is hoped that whilst Friends support their park, they do all they can to support other local parks and their Friends. Each group's aims and aspirations are similar in their nature so by supporting each other, more can be achieved to make Bromley's green spaces inviting and welcoming places to visit.

Rights and responsibilities

This is a bullet point list of what the Friends can expect from *idverde* and what *idverde* on behalf of the Council can expect of the Friends. This is not about restricting activities or events, more of a process of agreement and notification, what both sides will endeavour to do.

idverde will :

- provide the Friends with advice and expertise to undertake a desired task
- provide the Friends with a reasonable range and amount of tools and/or equipment to undertake a desired task
- support the Friends Forum
- provide the above in a timely manner.

The Friends will :

- advise *idverde* of the desire to organise a work session or public event
- report issues and problems associated with their site
- provide information in a timely manner / on request.

CONTENTS

1. Bromley's Partnership with its Friends
2. Friends Groups
3. Starting a Friends Group
4. Talking to *idverde*
5. Health and Safety for Volunteers
6. Data Protection
7. Support, Advice and Best Practice
8. Useful Contacts
9. Product and Service Providers
10. Practical Conservation Volunteering FAQs

Appendix A - *idverde* Team Structure Chart

Appendix B - Sample Friends Group Constitution

Appendix C - Health & Safety Matters

Appendix D - Sharps & Needles Policy

Appendix E - Sample Privacy Notice

Appendix F - Sample Data Protection Policy

Appendix G - Insurance Matters

Appendix H - Protecting Special Sites

Appendix I - Safeguarding

Appendix J - Roles for Volunteers

Appendix K - Safe Use of Hand Tools

Appendix L - Raising Money

Appendix M - Sample Forms

- Emergency Contact
- Risk Assessment of Volunteer Role
- Site Specific Risk Assessment
- Sharps & Needles Register
- Photography Consent