

Minutes of the Parks Forum meeting held at The Town Hall Woolwich, 1st December, 2016

Present at the meeting:

Terry Powley	Chair
Dave Stevenson	Treasurer
Bee Twidale	Secretary
Nick Day	Plumstead Common
Julia Grollman	Sutcliffe
Bob Thomas	The Tarn
Carole Thomas	The Tarn
Robert Thompson	Horn Park
John Martin	Bostal Woods
Sonja O'Sullivan	Shrewsbury Park
Julia Grollman	Sutcliffe Park.
Gulle Stubbs	Maryon & Maryon Wilson
Carol Howcroft	Fairy Hill.

Apologies for absence:

Laurie Baker	Shootershill W.P.
John Webb	Well Hall/Avery Hill
Janet Thompson	Horn Park
Bob King	Horn Park

Lyndall Newton-Early	Tennis development in parks.
Rob Goring	RBG

Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising:

Maryon Park Community Garden received a Tesco grant of £10K to improve their fencing.
PARKSfest: T.P. has still not received outstanding money from the Council. The Forum will reimburse groups from Forum funds. (DS later distributed these cheques.) The delay was caused by some of the participating Friends of Parks groups not returning their final report/accounts on time. The post-PARKSfest evaluation meeting has not yet been called by Tracey, so we do not have any indication of how much grant we will receive from RBG in 2017. T.P. hopes this meeting will take place before Christmas as participating groups will need to make bookings.

Green Infrastrudy: Most groups found this report session disappointing. It was badly presented and mostly inaudible. The threat to our Metropolitan Open Land was not addressed. Not all the Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation were visited, e.g. Pippenhall Farm. This omission was in spite of the fact that RBG SINC sites had not been reviewed since the 1980s. Forum members present felt this underlined the need to have someone specific in council employ wearing the 'ecology' hat! We are still awaiting their interim report.

Tennis development in Parks: Lyndall Newton Early. (lyndall@twisttennis.com)

Lyndall is working with LBG to make facilities sustainable in our parks. In Greenwich we have 3000 tennis players using 73 courts in clubs and parks around the borough. However, 29% of residents remain inactive. RBG has agreed to community sports involvement connecting our parks up. L.N-E is particularly interested in our deprived communities and community champions.

C.H. enquired whether funding would be available?

L.N-E. Potentially from "Pay & Play" coaching programmes.

N.D. Pay & play does not sit well in deprived communities; Sports England's "Sports Czar" encourages hand ball and volleyball. N.D. has details of a hand ball expert.

J.M. Bostall Heath tennis courts are popular with ethnic minority players of hand ball. They are used all year round by clubs and schools.

J.G. Have you looked at what is happening in neighbouring boroughs?

L.N-E. Tower Hamlets have similar involvement.

Lyndall welcomes our involvement in tennis in our parks; please do use her expertise via e mail (address above)

Council Issues: Rob Goring

P.E. & O Spaces are currently working on improvements in current practice to ensure they are working effectively; trying to establish a current "base-line". They are looking at how other boroughs are dealing with this. An invited meeting to a focus group is being held late Jan/Feb to discuss how the natural environment affects health and well being. We will be looking at where we are now and where we will be going in the next 10 years.

T.P. Enquired whether a draft or framework document would be shared.

R.G. The Open Parks trial in 3 parks had worked successfully in 2 of the parks.

The Viola grants have helped Queens Gdns and PCEG. (Now re-named Friends of Plumstead Common.) Work continues with the Greenwich Society at Blackheath Point.

N.D. Dog poo is becoming a problem again at Plumstead Common. He suggested that the present control orders need amending e.g. dog walkers must be equipped to pick up after their dog. Could park rangers actively promote & distribute bags to dog walkers?

R.G. Paul Martin can now call on wardens to target specific sites.

Travellers: Paul Martin is the lead person in PE&OS and has been liaising with the police for our Section 61 Travellers problems. Protocol with the Travellers has been revised.

Estates. Some of the housing estate land PE & OS inherited had been severely neglected for decades. Ensuring they don't fall into decay is now part of Paul Martin's remit.

C.T. Are there government guide-lines on how we manage green spaces in the future?

R.G: RBG does take part in lobbying, for instance re the recent budget cuts.

J.G. Expressed thanks for the support Sutcliffe received with the graffiti and other acts of vandalism. They wondered if records of anti-social behaviour were made.

R.G. RBG property service records damage to property; P.E. & O Spaces record anti-social behaviour.

S.O'S. Shrewsbury Park litter bins are regularly overflowing. The forest school areas are kept clear by the Friends group.

R.G. Please let Paul Martin know if there are any continuing problems – is there a trend?

S.O'S. People who live near the park tend to use it to dump their rubbish!

C.T. Mottingham station has a big litter problem because of the lack of bags lining their bins. Is it possible for RBG to enforce British Rail to clean up their act at Mottingham station?

J.G. The Friends' groups do understand the pressure caused by staff cuts and long term sickness.

Park Updates:

Very many thanks to all the Friends of Parks groups who contributed. Please find the results of Gulle's survey attached. Gulle observed that not every Friends of Parks groups replied but, of those who did, the membership ranged between 24 & 376. Of these 5 groups mentioned that active members are very few and that it is the same few members volunteering every time, though there was a wider circle of interested if inactive supporters There was a wide ranging discussion on how to balance the activity of a few with the need to be accountable to the many.

S.O'S. Is a member just someone who pays membership or someone who gets involved?

C.T. Our membership is on 2 levels; some volunteering & some just wanting notice of future events.

N.D. commented that the Friends groups' governance needs to be clarified. Can we have a meeting to discuss this issue?

Any Other Business:

T.P. called the meeting to a halt as we had over-run allocated time and Town Hall staff were anxious to lock up.

Date of next meeting; (The Forum A.G.M.)Thursday 20th April 7.30, Old Town Hall, Woolwich