

# Northfield Constituency Environmental Forum



Lickey Hills Country Park, Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> June, 6pm.

Present: Graham Andrews (Chair), Penny Moore (Secretary), Amanda Cadman (Treasurer/Vice-Chair) Jill Harvey (Lickey Hills Society), Adam Noon (Ranger, Lickey Hills Country Park), Sue Amey (District Parks Manager), Chris Blythe (TCV), Lynn Horsnett (Friends of Kings Norton Park), Daniel Bryson-Peart (Friends of Manor Farm Park), Denise Meredith (Friends of Cofton Park), Sarah Royal (BOSF), Steve Hinton (Lickey Hills Country Park Hub Manager), Stefan Lewandowski (TCV)

Apologies: Norma Boyd (FLAG), Roland Kedge (Rea Valley Conservation Group)

## Welcome:

Graham welcomed everyone to the meeting

## Minutes:

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record with one amendment; under those present Amanda Cadman should be named as Treasurer/ Vice-Chair.

## Matters Arising:

### (i) Fly-tipping and Green Bags

The meeting discussed the queues causing problems at Lifford Lane. Sue said one concern was that residents fed up of waiting were dumping at Lifford Reservoir. Graham informed the meeting that he had contacted Darren Share to ask about black bags being supplied to voluntary groups. Sarah and Chris said some ward support officers had access to a small supply. Amanda said their local bin men were very helpful. The rangers also said they had some bags

The green waste bags with yellow stickers left lying around were raised. Chris felt that BCC would eventually have to come and clear areas. Sue said this would not happen as there was no money, it was unfair on those who had paid for the service and lastly if they were cleared it may encourage some people to put out more!

### (ii) Pocket Handkerchief Spaces

Graham informed the meeting that some of these spaces around Northfield town centre had been planted with poppies to commemorate the centenary of WW I. Sarah suggested adoption of some spaces, but Graham believed they were to figure in the Northfield regeneration plans.

### (ii) WatersideCare

Graham and Penny had attended the WatersideCare Volunteer Day. They had both found it interesting, inspiring and informative. Lynn asked if there were any minutes of the event. Amanda asked if it was possible to get more information on the outfalls into the River Rea and its tributaries; which we survey. Graham agreed to find out more.

## Finances

Amanda reported our financial situation remained the same with around £650 in the bank.

## Local Explorer Walks

Amanda and Lynn said their walk in April had been very, very wet! However the part of the walk they did was enjoyable. Lynn said that the Friends of Kings Norton Park had a walk planned for Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> July with botanist Mary Green, starting at 11am.

Denise informed the meeting her group planned to hold a photography walkshop around Cofton Park on 12<sup>th</sup> July, 11am.

## Active Parks

Sarah said the scheme was growing and while they were still looking for some providers, things were moving forward.

“Amanda asked if Active Parks was connected to the Ramblers Association”, Sarah believed there was an opportunity to work together.

Lynn questioned why there seemed to be confusion between Kings Norton Park and Kings Norton Nature Reserve activities. Sarah said that to fit the scheme into just 50 parks some were being clustered. Lynn asked to be ‘unclustered’. Lynn also was concerned Coca-Cola is still using a hashtag that was not just using the Park Lives branding, but Coca-Cola too. Sarah said Emma was discussing this with them.

Amanda asked if mowing regimes could be changed to reflect how an open space is being used for Active Parks. Sarah said she was trying to get some of the sponsorship money to help maintain and improve our parks. Lynn said it was important not to exclude any parks in possible upgrades whether Active Parks or not; Sarah will ask the question. Graham felt the Coca-Cola funding should be ring fenced.

## Development of Friends Groups

No new groups. Sue felt that Friends of Victoria Common could do with some help and encouragement as they were very small in number. A visit from NCEF was suggested. Denise said Cofton Park had a new committee following their AGM.

## Ranger Service Update

Steve gave the following update from the rangers. The trees that were felled because of *Phytophthora ramorum* were still on site, but sadly more trees may come down in future. Deutsche Bank is going to donate some new trees to help with the replanting.

There was a new stumpery and flower bed in front of the visitors centre. The rangers were helping with Active Parks including delivering ‘Woodland Workout’ for the Friends of Balaam’s Wood. They were also about to write a new management plan for the Lickey Hills. Lynn asked if there could be a visit from the Brum Reapers to Kings Norton Park as the rangers had been helping to improve the meadow.

## Future Plans

There were no new plans to discuss at this meeting.

## Group News:

The groups then gave updates of activities, events and news.

Lickey Hills Society: Jill reported the society had made big strides in removing Himalayan balsam by having a yearly Balsam Bash! There was also to be a new information board in the orchard.

Active Parks: Tai Chi, walks and possibly tennis in the summer holidays.

Balaam's Wood LNR: Penny reported that the friends group were now helping with their Active Parks activities, supporting the rangers in delivering a Woodland Workout on Monday mornings.

Active Parks: Woodland Workout, Park Fit Baby

Friends of Kings Norton Nature Reserve: Amanda reported that they had held a 'Welcome to Spring' event in May. The group continued to be involved with WatersideCare and FIN and were awaiting an inspection of their new NIA meadowland. Merecroft Pool was now classed as a reservoir and had swans nesting for the first time. The swans were going walking around the area and a swans crossing sign was suggested. The group has also been on outings to Sutton Park and Alvecote Woods.

Active Parks: beginners running, Tai Chi and a green gym.

Friends of Cofton Park: Denise reported that a kite flying event would be held on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> July.

Active Parks: Tai Chi, Zumba looking into possible Salsa

Friends of Ley Hill Park: Graham reported the group having a training day in their new hay meadow with prof. Ian Trueman. The day will include how to monitor the meadow's progress.

Active Parks: Walks and looking at other ideas

Friends of Kings Norton Park: Lynn reported the group had held a social AGM that had worked really well; there had been music and a talk about bees. The group were looking to fund a wetland area, getting a bike hub and creating a commemorative bed for WWI. They continued to be involved with WatersideCare and FIN. There were also involved with plans for a canal festival next summer.

Friends of Manor Farm Park: Daniel reported that a new cycle path was being laid in the park. The friends group were in contact with BCC engineers discussing issues such as drainage, gradient and positioning. The park may be used for Bikeability in conjunction with EcoCentre. The friends will be holding their AGM on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 3pm.

Active Parks: Tai Chi and possibly buggyfit.

## FLAG

Penny passed on news from FLAG as Norma was unable to make the meeting. The next district flood meeting will hopefully be held in September; however Norma was concerned that the district flood plan was still to be ratified.

Norma had been invited to a new group called the River Rea Partnership; which included the Environment Agency, Birmingham City Council and Severn Trent Water. Sue said she had been present at this meeting; its main aim is to alleviate flood risk by joined up thinking. Penny suggested we invite someone along from the partnership to tell us more.

## Birmingham Open Spaces Forum

Sarah informed the meeting the AGM had been very successful. Everyone congratulated Emma Woolf on her MBE. Some new committee members had stood this year and some stood down, including Lynn who was thanked for her time and effort on behalf of BOSF. There was the possibility of the coffee mornings starting again in August. Lynn commented on how interesting the talk on 'Biophilic Cities' was at the AGM as well as the woodland team.

## The Conservation Volunteers

Chris and Stefan who joined us from TCV reported that the plants in their growing space in Manor Farm Park were doing really well. They also had new sites at QEHB and also Ley Hill (there were 40 youngsters lined up to help here). They were also looking at starting some smaller satellite areas.

## Sue Amey (Constituency Parks Manager):

Sue reported that parks was restructuring due to voluntary redundancies being taken; Sue is now also Constituency Parks Manager for Selly Oak. Discussions were taking place about areas becoming quadrants. A Sports England bid was being put forward for Cofton Park.

## Any Other Business:

### EcoCentre

Unfortunately no one could join us from the Eco Centre.

### Love Parks Week etc;

Sarah encouraged everyone to get involved with Love Parks Week at the end of July and beginning of August. Sarah also informed the meeting that the 'State of Parks' report was to be published. There was also to be a parks petition possibly through [www.change.org](http://www.change.org) which would be looking to gain 100,000 signatures.

Graham thanked everyone for coming along. Meeting closed at 7.55pm.

NEXT MEETING:

30<sup>th</sup> September, 2pm, Woodgate Valley Country Park