

Northfield Constituency Environmental Forum

9 May 2011 Oddingley Hall

Present

Maggie Sweet; Penny Moore; Amanda Cadman; Geoff Ray; Roland Kedge;
Sue Amey (Constituency Parks Manager); Emma Woolley (Parks Rangers) ;
Graham Andrews

Apologies

Luke Olley; Sue Barton; Norma Boyd; Councillor Ian Cruise, Lynn Horsnett

Minutes

Minutes of the previous meeting were formally approved.

Matters arising

Sue Amey explained that based on the NCEF revision of the Longbridge open spaces plan format, she is reviewing her plan for the Edgbaston and Northfield Constituencies and converting them into the new format. Sue will be sharing it with her colleagues shortly. Sue will e-mail a draft out to the Secretary so that we can have a heads up before the NCEF next meeting. **Action Sue**

Finance

There is little change in the current financial position of the forum. £15 has been paid to Holloway Hall and £12.50 to Oddingley Hall for the previous two meetings.

Local Explorer walks

A small team has met with Ed Cook to develop and design the walks within Northfield. A map is being developed along with walk descriptions. St Modwen asked to meet and talk with Geoff and Penny about the walks leaflet and have subsequently offered to fund 10,000 copies. A draft of the maps has been sent to Prof David Cox of the Primary Care Trust and he replied that it was very unlikely that they would be able to help as they were being abolished in 2013 and are currently being reorganized. Another meeting of the Explorer team will take place on 10 May.

Database of equipment and skills.

Two member groups have replied to the request for equipment listing and more are requested to reply. Please submit your equipment list and skills to Amanda. **Action All**

Reports from friends groups

Forest Dale (Holly Hill Road)

A group has been set up and is now meeting they are looking to develop the overgrown and neglected area into a park. Funding is required.

Rea Valley Group

The Rea Valley group had a litter pick in Daffodil Park and recovered nearly half a ton of rubbish. It was very successful. They had previously leaflet-dropped 200 local households and had put adverts on local lampposts.

Coleys lane: The Housing Department would not Finance tree cutting, however involving councillors has resulted in a change of policy and the tree cutting will now be done.

Friends of Balaams Wood

The Friends have met with BPN and put in 4 benches and an island nest. There was to be a bat walk on 21 May at 8 pm.

Fields Millennium Green

The Friends were planning to hold a Magical Nature event on the Millennium Green on 22 October, and asked for involvement from other groups.

Friends of Kings Norton Park

The Friends had planted up shrub beds on the Park. The group now appears to be doing quite well.

The Rea Valley FLAG

They have held a “ waterworks” event with the Environment Agency to test their readiness for flood defense. This is a regular rehearsal with the group.

Friends of Kings Norton Local Nature Reserve

They have planted trees around the reservoir but have had some recent instances of arson.

Friends of Ley Hill Park

They too have suffered with the usual anti social behaviour over the holidays, for example scramble bikes and arson. The police have been very poor at responding. Sadly there had been a suicide in the park.

West Heath Park

Struggling to find residents who are willing to start a friends group.

It was noted that Frankley police had started an inter-MUGA football group. This interesting idea could be discussed with other local police teams in members’ areas.

Action All

Report from Parks Rangers

To contact the Rangers go via the email lickeyhub@Birmingham.gov.uk or contact Birmingham hub <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/parks> (very informative site).

There is a serious issue on the Lickey hills with Phytophthora ramorum a fungal infection which is a plant equivalent of foot and mouth disease. Currently part of the Lickey Hills is sealed off to prevent it spreading. There are 3 confirmed areas contaminated by the fungus, which attacks rhododendrons and bilberry and originated in North America. (It can also affect beech and larch trees). It spreads easily. A press release has gone out: (<http://Birmingham/2011/04/serious-disease-of-bilberry-found-at-the-lickey-hills/>).

Grounds Maintenance and Monitoring

Grounds maintenance are now in the main grass cutting season. The computer system known as POPI is being rolled out. If scheduled items and maintenance are not happening in your area, such as mowing, then go on to the Birmingham website where you can fill in a self help form, which will then produce a paper trail. So far this season the weather has been good for grass cutting but in some parks more grass is being left uncut.

The question was asked about the parks department's use of chemicals. Sue answered that the parks department do not use as much chemicals as the highways department which has a lot of hard landscaping. The parks department try to use less and where they do, they keep it to a minimum. One key chemical in their arsenal is Glyphosphate which can be very effective against knotweed over time.

The new maintenance plans of which NCEF know very little can be changed on the ground. Sue will come to local group meetings and explain the schedule and will talk to Kevin about maintenance schedules and the use of POPI. It would be good for NCEF to see the system up and running at the next meeting? **Action Sue**

Any other business

Noted that **Birmingham Open Spaces Forum** was to hold its AGM on the coming Sunday. They were also to co-host with Greenspace the National Conference on World Parks Day - Saturday 17th September at Austin Court, Birmingham.

Graham informed the group that North Worcestershire golf club was planning to move according to the Birmingham City Plan 2025. *Graham has subsequently sent a link out enabling people to read on the web exactly what is planned. It was noted that Cllr Delaney had already raised a petition.*

Date of the next meeting 15 August at 2 pm; venue to be confirmed.