

Friends of Keston Common (incorporating Ravensbourne Open Space and Padmall Wood)

Annual General Meeting

7.30 pm

16 March 2016

Jubilee Room, Keston Village Hall

Present :

Please refer to secretary of details

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions

LH welcomed everyone to the eighth Annual General Meeting, in particular David Clapham, Chair, Keston Village Residents' Association; Patrick Phillips, TLG Director of Park Management Strategy; Peter Woodward, Chislehurst Conservators and Alan Filby, Chair of Friends of Darrick Wood

2. Apologies for Absence

Please refer to secretary of details

3. Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2015 were accepted

Proposed – MB

Seconded – DC

4. Matters Arising

6. FH had completed the survey of members and long-sleeved shirts/fleeces had been ordered and distributed; a few are still available - either very large or very small

7. LH and MC had met with Pherenice Worsley-Buck and RF and visited the ponds, Ravensbourne Open Space and Padmall Wood to prioritise issues needing attention; the rest of our area to be visited after Easter

8.2 LH to follow up the proliferation of memorial benches

Action : LH

5. Chairman's Report (LH)

-a challenging year due to the change to TLG led activities ; most of the time this has worked well with a ranger to lead work virtually every week; following staff changes we are now back to a ranger every fortnight

- TLG dealt very speedily with the matter of insurance securing an even better arrangement than our insurance under Bromley Council

- LH had been investigating the pattern of work schedules over the last six years (*copies distributed*); the most visited areas are Keston bog, the meadows, heathland, paths and bridleways, the ponds and Padmall Wood; however, it was difficult to establish a clear pattern; it was noted that the land adjacent to Heathfield Road car park, the SAM and the gravel pits featured very little
- on workdays there is an average of 10 or 11 volunteers, with 14 as the highest number and 7 the lowest; thank you to everyone involved
- MC asked if there could be more on the website about biodiversity
Action : LH to investigate putting this on the habitats page
- AF asked about archive material; LH explained that the priority is to keep the website up-to-date, rather than to keep all minutes

6. TLG Update (PP)

- PP welcomed the opportunity to attend the AGM
- it had been a difficult year with the change from LBB to TLG on 8th June and subsequent reductions in staffing; the team is virtually complete with one post to fill
- it is important to TLG that Bromley's contract is a success, especially as TLG wants to use the Bromley model elsewhere; the aspirations of Bromley Council are set out in a strategy document which is accompanied by an action plan which will be closely monitored
- TLG will be launching its own Bromley specific website and will ensure it is kept up-to-date
- there is a Twitter account
- each Community Manager has to produce information weekly for the Business Manager
- a major task relates to the future of BEECHE which has been making a significant loss
- TLG has set up a charity called '*Growing Greener Britain*' to help fund community projects in public-owned parks and green spaces. It can also assist with fund-raising and grant applications
- MC asked about the boundaries of the Common : PP confirmed that such details are not in the original contract with Bromley but the matter is being pursued; the new 'buddying' system for site managers should ensure that local knowledge of both the boundaries and other issues is not lost when someone leaves; as a Community Manager SH confirmed that this system should be very helpful
- PP emphasised the vital role that Friends groups and the Friends Forum play

7. Treasurer's Report (TD)

7.1 Adoption of Accounts

- TD presented the accounts for the year ending 31st December 2015, which showed a balance of £1,180 up from £112 at the end of 2014. This increase had been achieved by and large by receipt of the final Lottery Grant payment of £960
- other income for the year came from donations (£131), Countryside Day sales (£281) and LBB (£100) in return for completing their annual statistics form about FOKC's contribution to the community; AF pointed out that the LBB payment may not happen in future
- normal expenditure pattern includes tools, laminates, ink and paper, which amounted to some £404 in the year; this continues in 2016 and the current balance stands at £923
- the only way forward for additional income is through grants and crowd funding; TLG also has a charity

- SG asked whether the present income is adequate; LH said it covers tools etc. but not major projects; TD gave the example of the removal of the beech tree on pond 3 which came to £40,000; LH explained that TLG is not responsible for major repairs

- FH asked whether the Thames 21 group could be useful; LH said it had been in contact but was basically a voluntary group

Proposed - AF

Seconded - NL

7.2 Annual Donations / Membership

- TD would welcome donations for the new financial year

- membership includes approximately 25 families; about 11 members regularly attend on the Friday workdays

8. Site Report (SH)

- SH provided a brief summary but unfortunately no written document was provided

9. Review of the Constitution (LH)

- the committee has reviewed the constitution and is not presenting any changes

- the committee has discussed the pattern of open meetings and suggests reducing these to two a year – the AGM in March and the other meeting in September; members would be kept informed via the website, email and Facebook; the Committee will continue to meet three times a year

- a show of hands indicated support for the change to two open meetings a year

10. Election of Management Committee (LH)

- all are willing to stand again for election

- a show of hands indicated unanimous support

11. Local Green Space Designation (LH/TD)

- Keston Common is already protected by a number of designations, including Scheduled Ancient Monument and Triple SI

- the government has defined a framework for a new designation - Local Green Space - giving additional protection against planning applications on parks and green spaces; the process for implementation has been devolved to local authorities; the committee felt it should put forward a nomination to protect our site

- there are concerns about the process, especially the short timeframe and the fact that nominations are to be made against draft proposals; the Friends Forum has been tasked with putting views forward; the main concern is about Bromley's perceived intention in manipulating the outcome to suit their needs rather than that of the community

- TD referred to Zac Goldsmith's proposals to protect green spaces and the Green Belt if elected as Mayor of London; TD highlighted Bromley's support for our site as having special characteristics in its bid for World Heritage status

- TD had written to all three councillors but had not received a reply

- thanks to TD for completing the form

12. Countryside Day (LH)

- Sunday 26th June 2016; an organising committee of FOKC and KVRA members has met
- event documentation including risk assessment has been accepted by TLG
- emails have been sent to previous stall holders inviting them to attend; hoping for 28-30 acceptances
- FOKC will have its own stall and would welcome items and also volunteers to manage the day

13. Friends Forum (LH)

- umbrella organisation for 42 Friends groups with over 500 active volunteers
- meets with TLG every three months to discuss matters of progress and associated issues
- training courses to include first aid, IT and leading a workday; also looking at possible chemicals course; TLG have now banned the use of brush-cutters so a course on their use will no longer be provided
- open committee meetings are held every two months; the next one is on Wednesday 18th May, 7pm-9pm at the Civic Centre; Hannah Owens, a senior planner at the Council will be present to report on biodiversity issues in planning decisions; this is relevant in view of a current planning application for the Ravensbourne House site

Action : members were urged to submit objections to this planning application

- a conference will take place 10am - 4pm at the Civic Centre with Wednesday 29th June the expected date. All members were welcome to attend

14. AOB

14.1 GH wished members to be reminded of The Little Book of Scams, which is on the home page of the FOKC website, in view of concern about the number of scams in Bromley

14.2 PW expressed greetings from Friends of Chislehurst Common and said how useful it was to hear about the activities of other groups

14.3 TD thanked LH for keeping the group going, his work on the website and as Chair of Friends Forum

15. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 21 September at 7.30pm