

Minutes of the meeting on Thursday 10 July 2014 at 7pm

Present: Geoff Brown (Chairman)
Reay Elliot
Pat Grisdale
Monica Shamdas
John Reeder
Louise Speke

Apologies: Cllr Mike Markham, Cllr Douglas Mills, Cllr Susan O'Brien, Andy Boeckstaens, Carys Walker (Council adviser), Hayley Thomas

Abbreviations: FOSP – Friends of Shenley Park
LBH – London Borough of Hillingdon
RMCC - Ruislip Manor Chamber of Commerce
SNT - Safer Neighbourhood Team

ACTION

1. Introduction

The Chairman advised that the meeting would now deal with the main items of business.

2. Minutes of meeting on 27.6.2013

Subject to Reay Elliot being added as an attendee, the minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising.

The matters arising will be dealt with as separate agenda items.

4. Ruislip Manor Fun Day – 5 July 2014

The Chairman reported that the Fun Day had been very successful. The Treasurer reported that the £68.20 had been raised on the day.

One of objectives of participating in the Fun Day was to raise the profile of the FOSP and we had succeeded in this.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to Brian Grisdale for the help and support he gives to the FOSP both at the Fun Day and generally, even though he is not a member.

5. Green Flag Scheme

There was a Green Flag inspection in the park at the end of May. The Chairman, with Pat Grisdale and Andy Boeckstaens (Green Spaces) escorted the judges around the park. The Chairman and Pat Grisdale considered that the comments made by the judges were favourable. The judges were complimentary about the section for wildlife along the railway fence and the presence of the wildflower meadow. They recognised that improving the park was a work in progress. The result is expected in mid-July which Andy Boeckstaens will communicate to the Chairman.

6. Policing in the Manor and Shenley Park

The Chairman reported that PC Dave Butler from the Manor SNT had been invited to the meeting but he was on leave. Reay Elliott reported that the Ward panel (police liaison group) has not met for 18 months.

The impact of CCTV was discussed. It is monitored in a central control room and taped so it can be referred back to. The cameras had been positioned to cover as much of the park as possible. The impression was that this had not improved the behaviour in the park. There can be a lot of noise in the park. It was suggested that Andy Boeckstaens be asked if some members can go to the control room to see how much coverage there was.

It was felt that it was crucial that Adam Stitson speak to schools about pupil behaviour in the park. Gangs are turning up in uniform, one of which was recognised as the Bishop Ramsay uniform. The Chairman agreed to e-mail Adam Stitson about this and would copy the Councillors in. The big issue is the time after school.

Chair

7. Suggestions for new projects

The new flower beds and seating area near the Shenley Avenue entrance had been completed and had been a great success. The seating area was well used. The new children's playground equipment was very popular. Suggestions for new projects were invited.

There was a suggestion that new adventure playground equipment would be installed in an area near the railway line by the existing playground that was not fenced in. Similar equipment already exists in other parks. This would enable older children to be engaged on more challenging equipment. The aim would be to stop destructive behaviour which could be caused by boredom. It has been suggested by a parent at the Bandstand marathon. There was some concern that this would just attract more children into the park and increase noise. It was felt that a lot of the older children in the park were not local but were just looking for mischief. The Chairman agreed to talk to Andy Boeckstaens and Carys Walker about this. This project would need funding. It was acknowledged that there was a difficult balance to be struck between the needs of different generations.

Chair

The Chairman questioned what could be done alongside railway line. It was noted that one of the Green Flag judges had suggested that the FOSP get bundles of 'straps of hawthorn' which grow quickly once planted. These could be used to fill in the gaps. A question was raised as to the area alongside the bungalow in Willow Grove used by Transport for London to access track. Depending on whether Transport for London has a legal right of access it was proposed that this area should be planted. It was suggested that new planting could also include holly. It was agreed that the area area needed a thorough review with a tree survey. John Gurr should be approached about this.

It was suggested that Chrysallis funding could be sort from LBH to cover cost of replacing the remaining seats in the park to match the new ones installed in 2013 near the Shenley Avenue entrance and to renew and widen footpath which will prevent damage to grass.

Other projects that had been previously suggested included the creation of a new seating area behind the children's playground. This would make use of the existing paved area. There would also be a gate from the seating area to playground with the possibility of raised flower beds around the seating area. It had also been suggested local schools could be asked to adopt these flowerbeds as a school project to engage the children and take on responsibility for planting and maintaining them.

Chair

All the new projects would need funding. The Secretary referred to a list of sources of grant funding she had received from LBH, which was now out of date. It was suggested that the Executive Committee consider sources of grant funding for these projects. The Chairman also agreed to approach the Council about the proposed projects.

Chair

8. Fund raising

The Chairman introduced this topic and requested ideas to raise funds. He had been in touch with QPR FC to provide artificial grass to use in the goalpost area. The Chairman had also spoken to Peter Regler who may be interested in sponsoring a project.

The Easter Egg hunt was very popular and it was suggested that this should be repeated in 2015.

A teddy bears picnic was suggested as a good way of engaging with families, possibly in early May/June.

There was also a suggestion of holding a community fair. This would involve inviting local schools, charities and community groups to participate, paying a small pitch fee. It was felt that this should be like a traditional fair with no commercially run stalls to distinguish it from the Fun Day. It was suggested that this could run from 11am to 4pm. It was noted that it was not possible to charge adults an entrance fee as the park was a public space, but it was questioned whether a voluntary donation on entrance could be requested. This could be combined with the teddy bears picnic. Monica Shamdas

M Shamdas

agreed to consider the feasibility of this.

8. Review of outstanding action items list

The detailed action list was then discussed.

Issues relating to improvements

CCTV camera – a suggestion had been made to paint the columns dark green. However, the Chairman reported that there was still a debate about the colour.

New fencing & new arch “Shenley Park“ sign on main entrance & Willow Grove - although this work was completed in 2013, there was an issue about the quality of work at the Willow Grove entrance particularly as to poor finishing. The arch is poorly welded to the existing gatepost.

There was also an issue with the name arch over the Shenley Avenue entrance being left open. It was believed this was after it was unlocked for maintenance vehicles to enter the park such as when the grass was cut. It had been reported to Andy Boeckstaens. The Chairman agreed to raise this with him.

Chair

Wild flower meadow - Poppy seeds had been sown to commemorate the 100yr anniversary of the First World War. They are growing though they are patchy. It was believed that the weed mix contained a lot of weeds which have grown vigorously, hindering the poppies. Some of these were cleared on the action day on 28 June 2014, which has helped the appearance of the wildflower meadow, though more needs to be cleared. It was reported that people had been observed picking the wildflowers to make a bouquet.

Area at back of children’s playground – this needs regular clearance, pending determination of a further course of action. This would be tackled on a FOSP action day.

FOSP

Re-positioning of dog waste bins adjacent to entrances – this required a discussion between FOSP and green Spaces. It was suggested that the dog bin at the Willow Grove entrance could be re-sited next to the litter bin.

Improve signage to and in park - signs to the park in the Manor were promised as part of the improvement project. There is no sign of them being installed yet. There was also an issue with the quality of the signs at the entrances to the park. The Chairman had received quotes for 2 new signs which embraces the opening and closing times and have other information on them. It was suggested that the signs should include the fact that the park was monitored by CCTV. The quoted cost was £90 for both signs. It was suggested that this cost should be met by the FOSP with the money to come with from the publicity budget or the main funds. This would be finalised by the Executive Committee.

Exec Comm

Post and fence near children's playground – this needed removal to improve the appearance.

Ongoing issues

Fallen tree branches need removal - this was an ongoing issue. This would be monitored regularly by FOSP where possible and reported to Green Spaces.

Tree Survey – the FOSP wished to be advised of the latest tree survey. It was questioned whether there had been any assessment of impact of storms on park and need for replacement trees. If trees are to be removed because of damage or age the FOSP wished to be consulted on replacements.

Condition of trees alongside railway line - there was an issue with the proliferation of ivy damaging trees. The ivy appears to be dominating and destroying the original hawthorn trees. Green Spaces would be asked to advise on appropriate action.

Chair

Flower beds either side of the path near the main entrance – these were competed in 2013, although some plants arrived in poor condition and quickly died. Others have been stolen or have died over winter 2013. Replacement plants were needed. As temporary measure the FOSP had added annuals. This was competed in time for the Green Flag inspection. It was agreed that the condition of the plants in these flowerbeds would be kept under review by the FOSP.

Quality of workmanship during Park maintenance - the quality and timing of pruning of the shrubs in particular was an issue. For example, evergreen shrubs are pruned in December when they should be pruned in September to enable the shrubs to recover in time for winter. This would be monitored regularly by FOSP where possible and reported to Green Spaces.

Damage to grass by contractors/litter collectors – This was an ongoing issue that was worse when the ground is wet. This would be monitored regularly by FOSP where possible and reported to Green Spaces.

Graffiti - contact details for reporting graffiti are on notice board. Peter O'Brien had kit for wiping the graffiti off and was still kindly doing it, mainly on the benches

Litter – there was an on-going issue with litter not being picked up along the boundaries of park. There is a query whether it is possible for the frequency of bin emptying/litter collection to be improved to reflect the times when the park is busiest and litter increases. In the meantime, any issues regarding the litter should be raised through the contact centre. There was a suggestion that additional bins should be installed on the corner of Victoria Road near the park. This had been requested in the FOSP's Manor improvements survey response.

The Chairman had contacted Colin Russell, Waste Services

Manager. He had sent two e-mails about the frequency of litter removal with no response. After contacting Cllr Mike Markham he received a telephone call from Mr Russell who did not think there was a problem. It was suggested that waste management services should be asked to visit the park at key times, such as after school or weekends to see the extent of the problem.

Bread in park for birds – this had been reported to AB. This was an ongoing problem and the woman previously responsible had been seen in the park. The Chairman agreed to ask AB to write formally again to her. Chair

Poor infrastructure (brickwork) around the electricity sub-station - the wall is in poor condition and it was felt that this was a health & safety issue. Children play football against the wall and there was concern they may try to climb over to recover balls from inside the area. If responsibility for the wall and its maintenance was with the electricity board, it was suggested that the Councillors be asked to take this up as Cllr Douglas Mills had been previously successful in dealing with issue of the telephone boxes. The Chairman agreed to contact the Councillors. Chair

Locking of park - this is not happening regularly on Friday and Saturday nights. It was reported that the gates had only been locked twice in the past few months, on 28 June 2014 (by someone in a motorway maintenance vehicle) and just before the green flag inspection.

13. Any other business

It was agreed that there would be an action day in the park to take place in early August on either the 2nd or 9th. This would be confirmed.

14. Date of next meeting

This was to be advised.

15. Visitors comments/Closing remarks

There were no comments.