

Minutes of the meeting on Thursday 23 July 2015 at 7pm

Present: Geoff Brown (Chairman)
Reay Elliot
Pat Grisdale
Cllr Mike Markham
Peter O'Brien
George Ocaya
Monica Shamdas
Louise Speke

Apologies: Cllr Douglas Mills, Cllr Susan O'Brien, Neil O'Conner (Green Spaces), Carys Walker (Council adviser), Les Drussel

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 10.7.2014

The minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising.

The matters arising were dealt with as separate agenda items.

4. Ruislip Manor Fun Day – 4 July 2015

The Chairman reported that the Fun Day had been very successful. The Treasurer reported that the £73.60 had been raised on the day.

Although there are no costs to pay for the Fun Day, the situation was not ideal as a small amount of money was raised. It was agreed that it was worth doing to raise the profile of the group.

It was noted that no events are undertaken without council approval. There was concern at suggestions for a party in park that may

damage infrastructure and clearing up. The last fun day caused a lot of damage to the new pavement so the Council had concerns about the presence of rides on Victoria Road. Not all traders think the Fun Day is beneficial to them so there is a question mark about the future of the fun days. This is RMCC event and although it needs LBH approval the organisation of it is down to them.

The Chairman confirmed that the FOSP could never envisage the fun day taking place in Shenley Park. The Post-Olympic Concert was very good as was the Easter egg hunt day.

It was agreed that an approach would be made to Ladybanks School to ask if they would they like to make use of the park.

The secretary raised the issue of insurance for an event in park. IT was acknowledged that the Council owned the area that was used by residents.

George Ocaya referred to an event in Harefield with community groups. It was suggested that a paper should be sent to local council as insurance would not be an issue if it was a council event.

6. Green Flag Scheme

There was a Green Flag inspection in the park on 12 June 2015. The Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary of the FOSP with Neil O'Conner and Dragana Knezevic from Green Spaces escorted the judges around the park. The LBH and the FOSP were awaiting the outcome.

Cllr Mike Markham confirmed that he had not heard whether this had been successful.

[Post-meeting Note: Confirmation that Shenley Park had been awarded Green Flag Status was confirmed the next day]

7. Policing in Shenley Park

There are dedicated Safer Neighbourhood teams in the manor with new officers who were very keen to be involved.

8. Suggestions for new projects

Councillor Markham raised a suggestion for a shelter to provide protection from rain and sun. It was noted that the misuse of shelter an issue. It was agreed that the FOSP would consider the options but this would have to be something that did not detract from CCTV coverage.

It was suggested that Chrysallis funding could be sought for capital projects, which could include new paths to make them wider.

A request to upgrade the gym equipment was made. Reference was

made to the Healthy Hillingdon project and it was noted that Shenley Park was the first park in West London which had an outdoor gym.

The Chairman reported that the goal posts had been put back in time for the Green Flag inspection. The installation of artificial grass in an area underneath the goal posts was again suggested. Cllr Markham said to raise this with councillors as it may be something that could be funded with a grant from Ward funds. However, George Ocaya said muddy patch was part of the experience and artificial grass was harder to fall on.

Ward funding may be possible for raised beds for school children to have responsibility for.

It was noted that the Head had changed at Ladybanks School. It was suggested that the school could use the park for sports day.

It was noted that Jonathan Bianco was the cabinet member for green spaces.

9. Fund raising

There was reference to the National Trust parks initiative. Cllr Markham considered that LBH would have looked into it.

10. Review of outstanding action items list

The detailed action list was then discussed, although the Chairman remarked that it was still not known if Neil O'Conner was the FOSP's official contact as it appeared that he had to refer back to his boss Adrian Batten for decision making. Cllr Markham encouraged the Chairman to always copy the Councillors in to any e-mail correspondence with LBH staff.

Issues relating to improvements

Wild Flower meadow - The ground has been rotovated and re-seeded although there are large dips in what should be level ground. Growth appears patchy and as with the seed mix used in 2014, the mix appears to contain a lot of weeds (identified as Fat Hen) which are growing vigorously and had crowded out the actual wild flowers.

There was an issue with suppliers which was acknowledged in an e-mail from Dragana Knezevic. It was suggest that the FOSP take over planting of wildflower meadow if LBH prepare the ground. Cllr Markham asked the FOSP to counsellors in to all e-mails sent to LBH staff. Cllr Markham was the LBH Champion of heritage and environment so it was important to keep him informed.

Area at back of Children's Playground – this needed clearance pending determination of a further course of action. LBH has undertaken to clear this area, including breaking up the concrete/paved area. The FOSP would consider whether to suggest a new project in this area. In the meantime it was suggested the area is re-grassed following clearance. The grass seed could be mixed with wild flowers to create a meadow effect.

Re positioning of Dog Foul bins adjacent to entrances – this needed a discussion between the FOSP and the Green Spaces team. It was suggested that the dog bin at the Willow Grove entrance was re-sited so that it was adjacent to the existing rubbish bin.

Area beneath existing Willow Grove dog bin - this was still unsightly with melted plastic following previous dog bin fire.

Water main near main entrance – An access point to the water mains in the park has been located (previously used for toilet block located in park). LBH are to identify if this could be a usable source of water in the park, particularly to water plants. A suggestion was made for the installation of dog water fountain.

Seating and pathway - Replace remaining seating in park to match the new ones near the entrance and renew and widen footpath to prevent damage to grass. A possible Chrysalis funding application would be needed to finance this.

Ongoing issues

Tree Survey - FOSP to be advised of latest tree survey.

New Stone Pine tree is in poor condition. It appears to be dying from the centre.

If trees are to be removed because of damage or age FOSP wish to be consulted on replacements.

A branch had fallen from a horse chestnut tree near the Railway line. This had been reported to John Gurr (LBH) who had attended and arranged for the branch to be removed. It would appear that another horse chestnut on the Shenley Avenue side of the park had reached the end of its life.

Fallen Tree branches need removal - This is an ongoing issue which was to be monitored regularly by FOSP and reported to Green Spaces.

Condition of trees alongside railway line - There is an ongoing issue with proliferation of ivy that appears to be dominating and destroying the original hawthorn trees. Green Spaces to advise. It was noted that the two new Hawthorn trees that had been planted were doing well. It was reported that London Underground were also concerned about the condition of the trees along that side of the park.

Railway side of park requires an ongoing continuous improvement programme – The FOSP are to liaise with Green Spaces and determine action plan.

Shrub beds adjacent houses to be re landscaped. - Some new shrubs and perennials have been added but there are questions as to whether they will survive particularly the perennials (aquilegias) as

the plants appear to have been of poor quality (e.g. pot bound) and badly planted. FOSP to keep under this review and liaise with Green Spaces as appropriate.

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

Park maintenance: Quality of workmanship - 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. To be monitored regularly by FOSP where possible and reported to Green Spaces. George Ocaya suggested that the FOSP could put plaques in park with information about the trees/shrubs which included how they should be maintained e.g. when and how to pruning.

Damage to the grass by contractors/litter collectors - To be monitored regularly by FOSP where possible and reported to Green Spaces.

Graffiti - The Chairman expressed the view of the FOSP that the Council were very good at removing graffiti that had been reported to it. There had been no graffiti on the new train play equipment as had been feared. It was felt that this was because a lot more people were using the park which acted as a deterrent as did the CCTV. It was noted that Peter O'Brien still had a kit for wiping the graffiti off the Chairman thanked him for continuing to do so.

Litter – this was an on-going issue with litter not being picked up along the boundaries of park. There is still an issue about domestic waste being left in the park, either in the bins causing them to be filled more quickly or alongside them. Reay Elliott reported that some teenagers in a nearby property had had party whilst the parents were away. They had cleared up and took 3 sacks of rubbish which they left in the park so that there was no evidence of the party at the house in question.

There was a query as to 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. It was felt this would assist obtaining Green Flag status.

The Chairman had contacted Colin Russell, Waste Services Manager. He had sent two e-mails in 2014 about the frequency of litter removal with no response. After contacting Cllr 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.

In the meantime, any issues re the litter should be raised through the LBH contact centre.

Bread in park for Birds – this had been reported to LBH. This was an ongoing problem and the woman previously responsible had been seen in the park. Rats have been seen in the park which is a concern. The Chairman would ask NO'C to write again to her.

Poor infrastructure (Brickwork) around the Electricity Sub Station - The wall is in poor condition and is a health & safety issue. Children play football against the wall. There was a concern that they may try to climb over to recover balls from inside the area. Responsibility for the wall and its maintenance is that of electricity board. The Chairman agreed to ask the Councillors to take this up with the electricity board.

It has been suggested that the path in front of the wall should be removed and a flower bed created with plants to hide the wall.

Locking of Park - This was still not happening regularly on Friday and Saturday nights. The Chairman referred to an e-mail from Neil O'Connor with regard to the locking of park.

Reay Elliott reported that the park was being used as lavatory by some men. This included the council worker driving the truck to water the trees. She had spoken to him and he had apologised. Also the traffic wardens were culprits. There was general disgust at this behaviour.

11. Any other business

There was no other business.

12. Date of next meeting

This was to be advised.

13. Visitors comments/Closing remarks

There were no further comments.