



**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 13TH November 2008, 7.30pm
held at The Ackroyd Community Centre, SE23**

Present:- BHFUG members:

Alan Bailey (Chair)	Kylie Barnes (Secretary)	Sydney Couldridge	Gavin Bolam
Andrew Barnes (Treasurer)	Elizabeth Downie	Marcel Jenkins	Judith Brassington
Alix Adams	Albert Blackmore	David Byrne	Josh Smaller
Tim Hall	Zara John	Nicholas Taylor	Sylvia Scott – Ward Councillor

Apologies:-

Lara Al-Jabi (Glendale)	Councillor Jackie Addison Molly Bertrand	Mark Wellband Caroline Sefton
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1. Welcome and Apologies

Alan Bailey opened the meeting.

2. Chairman's Report

Alan Bailey (AB) produced the Chairman's Annual Report for 2007/2008.

Our last AGM was on the 22nd of October 2007.

We held a Bulb Planting Day/Morning on November the 10th. A good mix of Adults and Children, over 30 in all, turned up to help and 1,000 each of Bluebells, Snowdrops and Daffodils were planted. With the help of Glendale, 25 sponsored Bird Boxes from the Fun Day were put up in the trees. There were some problems in the Spring with the grass mowers cutting down the blooms. We are asking the Park Managers to do their utmost to avoid this happening again.

Some members still regard the exit onto Codrington Hill as a concern. Since the kerb was lowered to allow cyclists easier access to the path across the Fields, it looks more likely that an out of control bike could go straight in front of a car. I have found no solution to this as yet and would welcome any member who is concerned to contact me so that we can try to develop a reasonable solution.

On the 9th and 23rd of February, we held hedge planting Days/Mornings. Thanks again to Lara and Glendale for supporting us with plants, their time and equipment. And thanks to members of the Green Gym for helping us too. We have now planted shrubs along the perimeter of the Fields from the North East corner (top of Bexhill Road), along the back of Montacute Road, all the way (with a few metres left to go) to Brockley View. We will discuss a 2009 date for hedge planting at our meeting tonight. It would be worth reviewing just how much further we wish to go and also consider what efforts we need to undertake in order to maintain what we have already planted. Although Glendale have applied some weed killer around some of the previous planting, it is important that we help to ensure that the plants establish themselves properly.

Unfortunately, some of our planting fell victim to the grass mowers. We had a meeting in the Fields with Glendale in June. Lara has replaced some of the plants by Austin Close and Glendale have promised to do some replacement planting along the Montacute Round boundary to replace plants which have gone missing there. We have been advised that we need to erect plastic fencing around any new planting until it establishes itself and Glendale have undertaken to be more careful when grass cutting.

I would like to see some of us come together to more carefully explore what plants and planting we want and why. Encouraging wildlife is an obvious goal and I'd like to see a more focused effort to pursue it.

At the beginning of 2008, Lewisham Parks/GreenScene, in the form of Martin Hyde the Manager there came up with £10,000 worth of funding to be used in the Fields for Park Furniture and the like. We

hummed and ha'ed about how to use this generous and very much appreciated resource and eventually asked if it might be carried over into 2009/10. This was because we wanted to see how other funding possibilities work out and more on this later. Double thanks are therefore due to Martin and GreenScene as it is not easy to juggle finance in this way and we appreciate the accommodation made.

There is also a possibility that we may be included in a pilot scheme for some new signage in the Fields. This has been rumbling on for a little while but could be very useful indeed as our existing signs and notice board are in need of some TLC.

Our Festival on the 28th of June went off rather well. It was made possible by a grant from Lewisham Arts' "One Lewisham Fund" which promotes "understanding across the community". It's mission is to celebrate, respect and promote the diverse range of identities, lifestyles, histories, experiences, cultures and beliefs within the borough and to draw on the diversity of our communities to create a more inclusive, tolerant and cohesive Lewisham. We had a shot at most of that and, I feel, succeeded more than not.

Our success owed something to the weather, which was beautiful. In fact, for me that day was my Summer. But it also owed a huge amount to those who organised it and helped out at it, both prior to and on the day.

I won't go into a long list of those who deserve thanks. We tried to thank everyone immediately after the event and I hope we succeeded. We had some brilliant performers and stallholders and the variety was stunning. Thanks to the Mayor, Sir Steve Bullock for opening the Festival again and to the London Cycling Campaign and Sainsbury's for further financial support.

There were some problems on the day and we will need to work on them for the 2009 event we have already committed to. And there is a need for more "help" on the day so volunteer ways in which you'd like to help and be ready to be asked.

We have been successful with a funding application to the Tree Council and will be holding a tree planting day on Sunday the 30th of November from 11.00 a.m. We have nine trees to plant which should encourage more wildlife with their blossom and fruit (for the birds). It is a "Family Day" as all under 16's will be encouraged to help plant, then adopt a tree and will then be asked to report on their tree's progress each season. Pictures and drawings are encouraged and we will include these on our web site.

On the 5th of November, we invited members to join us in the Fields to view other people's fire works. There was a modest turn out but we were heavily outnumbered by non members and we should have been busily recruiting them but hadn't gone prepared. We mulled some wine and had a good, if cold, time.

Kylie and I made a pitch for funding for our Play Ground in September to the Mayor. The Playbuilder Programme will inject about £1m into the borough over three year to improve play facilities for young people. We were not ready to join the 08/09 release of funds but we still have hopes for the second and third year. The results of our bid are anxiously awaited. If we are successful, we will need to move quickly to pull our plans together.

Thanks to Molly we have a Facebook Group and I undertake to learn how to use it over Christmas when my daughters are at home to show me.

Thanks to Marcel and Mark we have a very good and up to date website which we hope to continue to build on.

Thanks to the Ackroyd Community Centre we have a good meeting place although I'd still like to organise a meeting in the Fields.

Tonight we should be deciding a new logo and a new name. I am sure that that will lead to yet another phase in the successful history of the Group. Since October 2003 our purpose has been to achieve sustainable improvements and facilities in Blythe Hill Fields for the benefit of the whole community. We aim to continue to promote the increased use and enjoyment of this essential open space.

3. **Treasurer's Report & Statement of Accounts to 30 September 2008**

Andrew Barnes reported that there was £2,710.03 in the User Group's Bank Account and £153.95 currently being held in petty cash.

4. **Name change to "Friends of Blythe Hill Fields"**

It was voted to go ahead with the name change from Blythe Hill Fields User Group to Friends of Blythe Hill Fields. In order for this to continue, the Constitution needs to be amended, the bank account needs changing too and contact details for Lewisham Life and all other avenues of raising awareness need to be changed too (ie, SE23, SE4 – KB said she would do this).

5. **Logo Proposal**

There was a rather lengthy discussion about the newly proposed logo which had come from a young person's design. It wasn't clear however if this new logo would replace the banner or the oak leaf that we use on our paper or be in addition to the ones we currently use. Sydney Couldridge is to take the comments raised back to decide the best way forward.

6. **Committee Resignations & Appointments**

AB stated all members of the Committee for the User Group had to resign, be re-elected and seconded by members attending the meeting.

Alan Bailey resigned as Chair - Alan Bailey has been elected to stand as Chair
Kylie Barnes resigned as Secretary and was re-elected as Secretary
Andrew Barnes resigned as Treasurer and was re-elected as Treasurer
Gavin Bolam resigned as a Committee Member and was re-elected as a Committee Member
Sydney Couldridge resigned as a Committee Member and was re-elected as a Committee Member
Molly Bertrand was elected as a Committee Member

7. **Any Other Business**

Josh Smaller had been having discussions with Josh from Lewisham Community Sports concerning the pot holes in the fields. He said that the ground was very uneven at the level of places. To encourage people to use the fields for adhoc football games this matter needed to be resolved as the potholes could become a health and safety issue.

Noticeboards can be produced by Lewisham College.

MISSION STATEMENT

Blythe Hill Fields User Group (BHFUG) exists to represent everyone living around or using Blythe Hill Fields. Our purpose is to achieve sustainable improvements and facilities in this vital resource for the benefit of the whole community. We aim to promote the increased use and enjoyment of this essential open space.