



Minutes of ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
held on Thursday 13th October 2011, 7.30pm
at Ackroyd Community Centre, SE23

Present:- Friends of Blythe Hill Fields members:

Marcel Jenkins (Chair), Josh Smaller, Sydney Couldridge, Molly Bertrand, David Byrne, Chris Thompson (Glendale), Gavin Bolam, Nicholas Taylor, Leo Stevens, Lynne Owen

Apologies:

Alan, Bailey, Noelle O'Conner, Liz Downie, Kylie Barnes, Lewisham Community Sports

1. Welcome

Marcel Jenkins (MJ) opened the meeting, introduced himself and was delighted to welcome a number of new faces to the group. He also welcomes and introduced Chris Thompson from Glendale.

2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

MJ briefly went through the minutes of the last meeting and they were agreed as a true record. There were no matters arising, not already on the agenda. He went on to present the annual report for 2010/11. It was to be made available on the website and the following was just a summary some of the main highlights:

Alan Bailey (AB) who had chaired and led the group for three years was re-elected and happy to stand as Chair for a fourth year but sadly was taken ill not long after and was unable to lead the Friends. MJ agreed to step up in order to make the Festival happen.

There had been a number of great participatory events through the year including hedge planting and scrub clearing.

The significant achievement of planting the 100 trees the year before had been marred by the fact that many of those trees had died or been vandalised. MJ felt that the Friends really needed a tree advocate, someone who could really concentrate on the supply and maintenance of the trees in the park.

New merchandise to raise the profile of Blythe Hill and raise funds for the group had been quite successful – all the mugs were sold and many of the bags.

Over the year, it was sad to report that there had been a small number of incidents on the Fields including criminal damage and personal attacks. A picnic bench had also been stolen in recent weeks and Glendale was unable to replace it due to a lack of funds. Unfortunately, it was not covered by insurance however he assured the Friends it will take priority should funding become available. We were keen that people were not put off going onto the Fields at any time and were keeping a good relationship with the local police.

The new benches bought by the Friends had been an excellent addition to the park. As well as being positioned in the best place in the park for the views, the plaques also helped raise the profile of the work of the Friends.

It was agreed that the playground is the Friends biggest legacy. However, there were serious issues with the grass banking and Chris Thompson was asked to do what he could to repair it.

A funding application had been submitted on behalf of the Friends for a trim trail, a long-term ambition that has been consulted on over a number of years. We would hope to hear the outcome in the next couple of months.

Gavin Bolam (GB) had applied to the Crofton Park Localities Fund for a £1,500 grant from to help fund next years festival. The outcome would be known the following month.

MJ wanted to prioritise the putting up of the bat boxes that had been sold at one of the previous Festivals. Glendale would advise where they would best be located.

MJ was also keen that another more concerted effort was made to create a wild flower meadow in the Fields – something that many people has suggested – and a project that did not work as well as hoped the previous year. Other possible projects to pursue included a wooden sculpture or view board will be erected on the Fields.

3. Financial Report

MJ presented for discussion, a detailed Financial Statement. He went through the main points and invited questions. Everyone present at the meeting was happy with the contents of the 2010 / 2011 financial report and it would therefore be signed off by MJ and AB as soon as possible.

As well as being financially stable with £4000 in the bank, the friends also have approx. £600 worth of assets such as marquees and teapots!

4. Resignations and Appointments

The following committee members resigned from their positions:

Alan Bailey (Chair), Kylie Barnes (Secretary), Marcel Jenkins (Deputy Chair), Molly Bertrand (Festival Entertainment/General Committee member).

MJ thanked those members for their hard work. He was keen that some new blood was elected onto the committee.

The following were duly elected/re-elected for 2011/12

Marcel Jenkins (Treasurer)
Leo Stevens (Secretary)
Noelle O'Conner
Sydney Couldridge
Gavin Bolam
Lynne Owen (Tree advocate)
Nicholas Taylor

Despite some considerable discussion, the meeting was unable to appoint a Chair, nobody felt able to take on the leadership of the group. It was suggested that the Chair's role could be shared, and a separate core of Friends could do the organising of the festival. **Marcel will send out an email to this effect.** GB volunteered to take on Molly Bertrand's (MB)'s role of arranging the entertainment at next year's festival.

5. Playground Safety Report

The annual inspection took place in August. A hole is to be cut in the side of the ship to allow small children to climb into it.

Chris Thompson is to look into the options around replacing the turf on the playground banks.

Following complaints about increased dog fouling in the Fields, Glendale are going to spray “bag it & bin it” signs on the path at each entrance. The FBHF will put up a new sign regarding this on the notice board.

Chris explained that the classification of dog mess had recently changed and it was now not considered hazardous. It therefore did not require special dog bins. There had been rumours that Glendale were removing dog bins but Chris assured the meeting that it was not a Glendale policy and that the dog bins would remain on the Fields. Look out for Fido the dog poo “hoover” – he’s coming to the Fields soon!

6. Trees

MJ had been approached about a memorial bench and tree being placed on the Fields. ***Angus from Glendale will identify whether the requested tree is appropriate to be planted on the Fields.***

Chris Thompson from Glendale will clarify why some of the trees are dying and who will dispose of them once dead. Is it possible to keep the trunks in the Fields as benches. He will also liaise with Lewisham Council and find out whether they have yet mapped the Fields as part of their tree mapping exercise across the borough. A copy is to be sent to the FBHF once done.

60 sapling trees are to be delivered to the Friends in January 2012 funded by the Forest Hill Brownies and Guides. ***Lynne Owen (LO) to look into whether their planting can be delayed until the spring.***

7. Any other business

The issue of lighting in the Fields had been raised again. In light of recent incidents this could be seen as improving safety, although would be very costly.

It was suggested that on occasions such as bonfire night when the Fields are busy, the FOBHF could erect a marquee for publicity and to capture a different audience from the local community.

7. Future meetings

MJ agreed to send out an email to the membership suggesting dates.

MISSION STATEMENT

Friends of Blythe Hill Fields (FBHF) 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.