

FRIENDS OF BLYTHE HILL FIELDS & BLYTHE HILL FIELDS FESTIVAL 2022
Committee meeting
16 March 2022 at 8pm



ATTENDEES:

Kevin Sutton
Sailesh
Fran
Helen Raggatt
Rich
Jim
Nicholas
Inma
Jo K
Catherine
Mike Williams
Jo Upton
Jo Miller

Apologies: Dani, Seeta

WELCOME

Rich	Treasurer, ongoing
Inma	Keen to see how can help, potentially with social media (no previous involvement)
Nicholas	Has lived opp BHF 37 years (former Labour Councilor). BHFF since 2007 (Fun day 2006)
Jim	Involved many years - table/chair tree planting
Helen	Project Manage Festival 2019/2021 and wants to still be involved
Catherine	Volunteer from 2011-15 in craft tent. Wants to help out
Kevin	Takes reins of BHFF for 2022. Lives Ravensbourne Park. Normally head of service delivery Princes Trust - currently parental leave
Jo U	Organised food stalls in 2021 and taking minutes
Fran	involved in BHFF. Always ran kids zone but might do something different
Sailesh	Moved to area 2020 (Vancouver Rd). Keen to get involved
Mike	Joined June 2021 with funding and raffle. Learning the job, but interested in using money raised to deliver park improvements. Keen to build on the Goundworks blueprint developed in 2015
Jo K	34 years resident and keen to get involved in the fields.

BLYTHE HILL FIELDS FESTIVAL 2022

We're delighted this is now going ahead, now that Kevin Sutton has volunteered to serve as new Head of Festival.

DATE

- Proposed date - **Sunday 3rd July**
- **12pm - 5pm** - easier to organise volunteers.
- Rich suggests finishing at 5:30pm. Allow stall holders to trade until 5:30pm but **officially finish at 5:00pm**
- 16 weeks project lead into festival and several things need booking in the next week or so (ie funfair)
- Keep it as a family event with early finish (so no anti-social drinking)
- Hard to get volunteers to work across the full day
- Staggered shut down ie Woodland stage first, main stage second
- Glendale charge if BHF not left in great state
- Need to get someone to pick straw bales back to Sedgehill allotments early
- Cadets brilliant at volunteering in 2021 (use again?)

Helen proposed a sub committee to organise stalls and Ts & Cs

TEAMS

- **Stalls team also take on raffle** (talking to same people)
 - Dani / Seeta keen to be involved again
 - Jane potentially able to help with raffle?
- **Kids tent take on Woodland stage.**
 - Battery operated speakers require someone being on hand to operate.
 - Marion helped last year.
 - One person or multiple people? Fran says could be multiple people but need to feel comfortable talking publicly
 - Jane Martin interested with helping out
 - Jo K / Jane Martin potentially interested in organising volunteers
- **Volunteers on the day**
 - Work with organisations / networks who want to link in / give back
 - Forest Hill 6th form
 - Goldsmiths University students
 - Easier to get volunteers 10am - 12pm (vs pack up)
- ACTION: Need a volunteer coordinator role
- ACTION: Meet up with stalls team and review Ts & Cs and pricing with Dani, Seeta and Jo U
- ACTION: Decide on small teams
 - General logistics: toilets / rubbish
 - Finance team
 - Stalls & raffle
 - Kids team

- Friends tent
- Volunteers (Catherine & Jo K?). Catherine Walsh: cathelinor@gmail.com (offer to do volunteering coordination for the festival)

DONORS

- Mike to contact 5 / 6 donors
- Will see if Hunters want to extend beyond 2021
 - Sebastian Roche as an alternative?
- Requires 100 houses to put up boards
 - Inma volunteered from organising houses
- Public donations - buckets
 - ACTION: Need to explore cashless alternative
 - Need to publicise that's it's run by volunteers (not by Lewisham Council)

PUBLICISE

Need to let enquirers know there's a date

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PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Update on signs

- We have secured sign off from Lewisham and the signs have gone into production
 - Small increase in price but Rich has rejigged budget
 - Will hopefully see this in place in early Summer and ideally before the Festival

EVOLVING PARK IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Updates

- Have met Peter Maynard (Lewisham Council)
 - Mike looking to build a productive relationship with him
 - Has also met with Nicholas and Alice to understand tree planting and development priorities proposed in the Greening Fund bid.
 - We have walkabout meeting pencilled in with Glendale reps and Peter Maynard to discuss issues / challenges. This is likely to take place in early May and any interested committee members are welcome to attend.
 - Once we have had that meeting, Mike is planning to develop a draft plan for discussion with the committee.

Ideas for moving forwards

- Mike suggests that we should respect overall plan developed in 2015 by Groundworks, which was a high quality piece of work, developed in consultation with the community, and make progress more intentional.

- At the same time, we should build on current committee priorities agreed previously, such as applying for Green Flag status.
- A key part of the Groundworks plan was based on the community priority to protect the essential character of the fields as a naturalistic public space, while taking a light touch approach to development.
- With this overall vision, the Groundworks plan mapped out some key future improvements, such as the older children's play area, meadow areas and zones for planting additional trees.
- Mike believes that evolution to the plan could have two tracks. The first part would be a longer term update of the core plan, which is now nearly 20 years old.
- This update would have to be professionally produced and we would need to secure funding to create it. The update could cover major projects and ensure the blueprint for the future is in line with current good practice around community spaces and nature conservation and management, while being backed up by a community consultation process and firm community mandate.
- While the core plan update is in progress, the fields should not remain static, so we also need an interim plan with some ongoing projects and quick wins, as a continuation of the approach over the past few years.
- Key projects and quick wins could include the older children's play area, the community garden, improvements to how we manage trees in the fields, better meadow management, upgrades to the current playground, gym equipment upgrades and improvements to the entrances, improving accessibility and overall appearance.
- Both long term and interim plans must be done in consultation with the community, the council and Glendale and agreed by the committee.

Tree management plan

- An initial quick win, which is in line with the original plan and ongoing community priorities, will be to develop and agree a plan for managing trees in the fields. We are seeing multiple requests for memorial trees and ongoing planting initiatives. We want to encourage more trees, but ensure that appropriate trees are planted and that they are well maintained. A framework will enable us to fast track new tree requests since key principles will already have been agreed.
- Rich raised that this should include how we manage dead trees (there's at least 3 in the park). Mike will check with Glendale whether current good practice is to create managed log piles for wildlife or removal and incorporate that into a draft plan for review by the committee.

Meadow management

- Another quick win could be to improve meadow management. Previous attempts at creating meadows have not succeeded, and we may be able to learn from recent projects elsewhere about how to do this.
- Nicholas raised that one issue in the past has been that Glendale mowers have not been properly briefed, and cut the meadows too short at the front times.
- Another key issue, according the Lewisham, is community engagement, since people can sometimes think they are a 'mistake' and a sign of neglect.
- Mike suggested it may be possible to fix this following contemporary design principles. A possible solution, used in projects elsewhere, such as middle Ladywell Fields and the Northern

edge of Beckenham Place, has been to create gently mounded areas, so that these meadow spaces are more recognisable to the community and less likely to be misinterpreted by mowers.

Older children's play area

- Seems to be general agreement that our major project focus should be the older kids play area, which was one of the key components of the Groundworks plan.
- This should be a space to be proud of, professionally designed and potentially naturalistic to fit the style of the park, eg, big boulders and wooden structures for clambering on.
- We should set up a sub committee to evolve this project.
- Funding
 - We could explore how Peckham Rye secured funding for their new park
 - How to tap into pots of funding (CIL)
 - Kevin - research piece for Lewisham Council on playgrounds
 - Greater London has a greening fund that encourages projects such as 'rewilding'; there is also a fund linked to the Great North Wood.
 - ACTION: Lewisham Council has consultation on 'play' in Lewisham
 - Push older children's play agenda
 - Need significant funding £30k+

Community garden

- Peter Maynard has made it clear that the Friends taking control of the current semi-circular bed as community managed 'garden bed' is a key part of the Fields being awarded Green Flag status.
 - Nicholas - kids use it heavily so plants will get ruined
- We need to find a way forward with this that accommodates children's behaviours, so it is a child friendly space, while also respecting it as a garden.
 - For example, community garden design could involve simple solutions such as brick paths
 - Posts with ropes to section areas off, as used very effectively at Beckenham Place Park.
- We should find a professional garden designer or landscape architect who could volunteer to support this. Part of the brief should be to design it with kids in mind and the ability for it to be maintained by community volunteers.
 - Would be planted, maintained and weeded by Friends of BHF
 - Incorporate kids play within garden design (ie brick paths and designed planting) - as per Coin Street
 - Needs to be really well designed
 - We should look at Greenwich playground as another source of good ideas
 - Notice board will remain in situ.
 - Hilly Fields has a community garden maintained by the church.
- Blythe Hill Fields is part of Great North Wood and there is potentially funding available
 - New Cross Gate Cutting is promoting and detailing Great North Wood (Vester Road)
 - Jo has recently been involved in creating a Micro museum there.

Freddy's Walk

- Proposal - for memorial walk

- Are they a good fit with the 2015 plan or a clash?
- Could they request they scale back?
- Need to better understand where they've had agreement across different groups
- Agreement in principle
 - Rich suggests Contingent across agreement of other areas?
- Ornamental - flowering cherry trees
- Have flowering trees near Codrington Hill entrance
- Concerns re random trees in park / blocking view
- ACTION: Agree it can go ahead with some adjustments, that is, that we have clusters of trees at the two entrances with just one toward the middle, sited in such a way that it doesn't obscure the view.
- As part of the tree management plan, we need to establish a framework for memorial requests.

New committee roles

Head of Festival: Nick

Secretary: tbc

Communications / Social Media: Inma

Volunteer coordinator - potential support from Catherine Walsh

AOB

Suggested we run subcommittees for the festival and park improvements to make meetings more manageable in future.