

Minutes of Friends of Hilly Fields Open Meeting: 9 September 2014

1. **Present:** Rachel Mooney (Chair), Tom Moulton (Secretary), Andrew Harper (Treasurer), Symon Knightswood, Wayne Dyer (Glendale), Luke Shacklock (Glendale), Mick Singer, Bryn McNeill, Ron Phillips, Sue Hastings, Frances Ward, Rosalind Watson, Fred Harding.

2. **Apologies:** Helen Mercer, Alison Stone, Keith Ward

3. **Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising**

Agreed as correct. All matters arising to be dealt with under agenda.

#### 4. **Maintenance and Repairs**

- (i) Tennis courts sign re 'no hogging'. Agreed to drop it. No queues reported and thought money could be better spent elsewhere.
- (ii) Grass cutting issues: to be discussed with Angus (Glendale). **Action TM**
- (iii) Agreed to go back to GreenScene & agree a protocol. Ask them to replace the bench taken away. **Action RM**. Rachel and Symon will put together a plan following their survey of benches, bins etc. **Action RM/SK**.
- (iv) Skanska: Council has signed off positions of lamps, any changes would now cost. Rachel has asked John Thompson if GreenScene are willing to take out the direction signposts. She will follow up. **Action RM**
- (v) Small hole in tennis court: Glendale have told Chris Thompson. **Action Glendale**
- (vi) Table tennis table cracked since May (approx). People still playing on it but damage bad. Glendale will look at it. Put sheet of stainless steel over top? Wayne and Fred will both speak to Fred Baverstock. **Action Glendale/Fred H.**
- (vii) Brambles need cutting back along Vicars Hill. Also vegetation on eastern side of Upper Eastern Rd ('the lane') where it's impeding agreed car parking. Glendale will look at. **Action Glendale**
- (viii) Playground maintenance: new sand needed. Also sandpit ladder badly worn. Wayne will follow up. **Action Glendale**
- (ix) Tennis courts: line marking needs repainting. Wayne will follow up with Paul Harper (Glendale Sports Development). Also danger of moss cover during winter. Wayne will follow up. Possibility of involving Lee (park keeper). Possible special winter service, then line painting. **Action Glendale/Wayne**
- (x) New park notice board: funding needed. **Action RM**

#### 5. **Impact of the Cuts, LBL Conference, Budget Challenge**

- (i) TM outlined his concerns re the forthcoming cuts. LBL has to make cuts of £85 million over the next 3 financial years. Impact on council and Greenscene staffing levels likely to be severe; funded park services likely to suffer badly. Council might seek increased volunteer effort to maintain parks. Others commented that Lewisham Council has good record of getting extra money in and that houses around park perimeter benefit from increased property values which might attract extra volunteer effort/put pressure on council.
- (ii) TM highlighted the 'budget challenge' on the Council's website which enables people to 'get involved' in deciding which services should be cut. Worth doing if only for illustrating the scale of the problem. *[Post-meeting note: the end result does not have to be submitted].*
- (iii) This year's Annual Parks Conference will be entirely devoted to the cuts and will be held on 25 October in the Town Hall Civic Suite from 10.00-12.30. Also Councillor Rachel Onikosi, whose brief includes parks services ('Cabinet Member Public Realm') will be attending the Lewisham Parks Federation meeting in December.

#### 6. **Trees/Tree Strategy**

Still waiting for Council's tree strategy. Friends have had no time to do the Opal Tree Health Survey this year, but can be done next year. Noted that Glendale are only obliged to deal with tree damage.

#### 7. **Boundary Hedges and Proposed Working Parties**

Trees by bowling green need trimming. Much work needs doing, eg. orchard, boundary hedges, Octavia Hill Garden and memorial meadow. Need for plan and more volunteers. Suggested regular volunteer work sessions first Sunday in every month. Plan needed. Could include bowling green. Also discuss with Nature's Gym. **Action RM/TM**

#### 8. **Octavia Hill Garden**

Little progress made since funding bid rejected. Will be covered by above work parties. Plan needed. **Action RM/TM**

#### 9. **WW1 Memorial Meadow**

Judged a success. Poppies have now faded, still some cornflowers. Intention is to repeat every year up to 2018 but probably on smaller scale. TM will inform Angus that it can now be mowed. **Action TM** Need to decide future area of MM & plough/dig it over. Glendale have been asked to quote for replacement of two trees taken out of the area before the portakabins were installed. There was a further plane tree removed and Rachel queried why this wasn't being replaced. Rachel has applied for grant to buy 450 saplings, partly to provide hedging alongside school.

#### 10. **Hound Watch**

Alison is dealing with. Putting together a database of dog owners, although you don't have to be one to participate in the scheme.

#### 11. **Eastern Rd**

- (i) TM gave an outline of the roadworks carried out to the upper part of Eastern Road aka the Lane. Prendergast School had agreed to pay for works (as required in the registry deeds granting them a right of way) including resurfacing and new parking arrangements at the top end. GreenScene had handed over management of the works to the school and no consultation with the Friends had taken place. Hearing that the works included yellow lines down both sides of the straight sloping part of the road, the Friends forced a meeting with the school and GreenScene on 3 June. Agreed not to go ahead with the yellow lines on the slope. A single line did appear on the western side of the road in error and was painted over with black paint (now fading). In resurfacing the road, the contractors had to remove the posts and railing on the west side pavement, which were then declared too rotten to reinstall. On the top section leading directly to the school, yellow lines and cross hatching have been painted to restrict parking in the run-up to the school. The Friends supported this, recognising that vehicle access to the school (including emergency vehicles) needs to be kept clear. However, drivers are now parking regularly on the pavement to avoid the yellow lines. Windscreen notices promised by Greenscene/Glendale have not materialised. The Friends consider the best solution to be restoring the post and rail & extending round the corner towards the school, thus making pavement parking impossible. Glendale have estimated the cost at £5K. On 3 June, Greenscene agreed to find the funding, but have now backtracked saying that if any spare money becomes available, we will have first call.
- (ii) It was agreed that the Friends could not and should not pay for the post and railing to be replaced. The school and Greenscene could deal with the parking situation if it got any worse. Decision on whether to pursue a formal complaint was deferred while RM/TM contact GreenScene to discover what is happening regarding the two lots of Section 106 money (totalling £20K) and how it is proposed that should be spent. **Action TM/RM**
- (iii) The Friends still wish to have setts installed by the Eastern Rd park gates to slow drivers down. That could be covered (wholly or partially) by the Section 106 money.

#### 12. **Park wildlife and plant surveys**

- (i) Nick Bertrand, Kate Coss and TM had surveyed the South Field 'wildflower meadow' on 1 July and recorded 11 different types of grass and 41 flower species. Pete Robinson surveyed the memorial meadow area in mid-August and recorded 7 types of grass and 40 flower species including the poppy and cornflower. Both sets of results have been forwarded to Nick Pond for addition to the GIGL (Greenspace Information for Greater London) database.
- (ii) Both surveys indicate the potential for wildflowers in properly managed meadow areas. However, the South Meadow (est. 1993) was described as 'rank' (ie. out of control, grasses too tall, thuggish plants proliferating). More management during the year needed probably with volunteer input. New contractor using agricultural equipment to mow meadow areas across the borough. TM will discuss their working methods with Angus. **Action TM**

#### 13. **Bowls**

- (i) Bowls Club reps reported that the clubhouse building was in poor shape and could be condemned. Report expected end of Sept. Proposal made that if a grant opportunity comes up, bid should be made for new combined building straddling the two areas of Bowls Club and Octavia Hill Garden which would serve the Bowls Club, the Friends (for possible forest school lessons) and the sports clubs. After much discussion, the Friends agreed in principle to support the idea if a more developed proposal proved feasible and beneficial. However, they emphasised that any proposal would need to be low key and tie in the ideas for a quiet Octavia Hill Garden.
- (ii) Reported that four more break-ins had occurred since the June Friends meeting. Each had been reported to the police with no response other than a CAD no. The cricket green had also been dug up & vandalised on occasion.
- (iii) The Friends were thanked for the gift of plant bulbs.

#### 14. **Events**

The Friends stall at the Hilly Fields Midsummer Fayre had been a success. The Surrey Bat Hospital representative had been moved to a separate stall because of noise and the bats had been very popular. A bat walk will be held on 18 September to be led by Nick Pond.

#### 15. **Bird Champion**

Not given due to time constraints.

#### 16. **AOB**

- (i) Reported that motorbike and quad bikes were going through the park at night. A problem in most parks.
- (ii) A brief discussion was held on memorial benches and why the Friends are not keen on them.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 9 December, 7.30 – 9.00pm

Date of RSPB Big Birdwatch event: Sunday 25 January 2015 10.30-12.30