

Friends of Hilly Fields
Minutes of meeting 13th March 2012

Present:

Rachel Mooney (chair), Helen Mercer (Secretary), Andrew Harper (Treasurer), Wayne Dyer and Gary O'Hara (Glendale), Mike Keogh, Josh Franklin (LCS), Colm McCormac, Jill Jenkins, Katarina Thomson, Tom Moulton, Marcus Fox, Lee Bailey, Keith Ward, Sue Roberts (Headteacher, Prendergast), Amanda Potts (Sweett Group – Prendergast rebuild)

Apologies: Ruth Pepper, Tom Collis (Millfields Cricket Club)

1. Minutes of last meeting: matters arising discussed.
2. Maintenance
 - a) Vicars Hill entrance self-seeded ash trees have been removed
 - b) Drinking fountains in the playground still not resolved. It was proposed to replace the drinking fountain as it had a design flaw (ie no way of clearing blockages). Groundwork London had proposed alternative , but the contact had since left. Glendale will follow up. With regards to the water emerging at bottom of playground and passing over the footpath, it was proposed a soak away be installed on the path side. Friends are keen to retain some of the wet ground, as the dogs liked the water and it was an opportunity for a micro habitat. Rachel suggested she meet with Glendale on site to discuss location for the soakaway prior to any work being approved.
 - c) Meadow area: noted that area which should have been left unmown as a refuge for crickets, was mown. Noted that mowing was very odd this year with a very large part not being mown until very late. Gary (Glendale) will investigate.
 - d) Cycle paths: Lewisham Highways had previously designated incorrect cycle route at Montague Avenue entrance. The previously burnt off sign had now been repainted. Andrew to ring Carol Crankshaw (Cycling officer)
3. Prendergast – planning application to extend planning permission for the portakabins to December 2012

Sue Roberts explained that the extension had been requested as they had not realised initially that they would be short of classrooms for a longer period, they also thought the original application had been for a longer period. The current classroom shortage was due to a new lift being installed, which took out classrooms and due to the fact that the first new blocks to open will not provide many classrooms.

In discussion it was confirmed that Lewisham has not yet decided on the planning application. The £10,000 section 106 monies promised to the park as part of the original planning application has been paid by Costains to Lewisham but so far nothing has been done with it. Amanda Potts offered to check what is happening and to try to ensure that the money is spent on the footpath on Eastern Avenue and on creating a crossover into the park and NOT on improving the road itself.

There was disappointment that no more money would be forthcoming to compensate park users for the extended impact of the rebuild. The Friends had been told that there would be compensation for giving up part of the park for use by portakabins, this was not the case. Scaffolding lorries had previously damaged the footpaths which were then only patched and the money proposed would not stretch far for repairs to paths extensively used by the school.

Rachel explained proposals for an ongoing montlyly notice “what’s in the parks?” and how it could be a club school project. Sue Roberts will liaise with the school Walking Club about working on this .

Once the iron gates on Eastern Road are repaired so that they can be closed, Prendergast will return to the old regime and close them when the school closes.

4. Development issues.
 - a) Orchard – watering needs to start in early April. The Wassail in January was well-attended in the snow. We needed some more volunteers, Colm and Lee offered to help with watering.
 - b) Octavia Hill / Kyrle memorial garden. Agreed to have two ‘work-ins’ on 25th March and 1st April to clear one of the beds and replant. Glendale offered to take away the waste and also to provide mulch and waste bags. It was agreed to approach local garden centres for support.
 - c) Café. This has been delayed but they are hopeful that it will open in May in time for the start of the cricket
5. Cricket: this is due to start in May. On May 13th there will be a match between the Mayor’s Eleven and Millfield and they are hoping Mike Gating will umpire. Millfield have 10 matches planned on the pitch in 2012. The plans of the new changing rooms (on the Bothy site) were available. Rachel has queried the absence of a brown/ green roof on the buildings when this is part of planning policy. Prior to the area being renovated it was very overgrown and full of birds, it would be beneficial to improve the site’s habitat. Martin Hyde said that there is no money for adding this now and it would have to be retrofitted. Had anyone consulted with the Friends prior to everything being agreed and sorted, then they could have looked for the additional funding from grants etc. Mike agreed to look at what changes would be necessary to retrofit a green roof , the cost and possible sources for funding.
6. Lewisham Community Sports: will not be using the park until the Summer and is dependent on the progress of the Prendergast rebuild after half-term. It continues to use the lower site and obtained funding through the Ladywell Assembly.
7. Birds: Tom is making monthly counts which are sent to Glendale who enter them on Birdtrack. Big Garden Birdwatch held in the park on 31st January was well-attended with over 30 people. Agreed to try to have another Dawn Chorus event in May. (now arranged for 26th April at 5am)
8. Bats: The Friends are part of the Bats Conservation Trust and there are plans for a Bat Walk in the park at some point this year.
9. AOB: Discussion on mange in the fox population and whether foxes should be fed with medicine that cures the mange or not encouraged.

Next meeting: Tuesday 12th June, 2012 at 7.30pm

Where? We are hoping to be able to hold the meeting in the Café, but this will be confirmed.

DAWN CHORUS is now confirmed for Thursday 26th April at 5am. We will meet by the Bothy, along from the Bowling Green off Hilly Fields Crescent. This year, the walk will also include Brockley Cemetery.

The first cricket match of the season will be on Sunday 22nd April (weather permitting?)

Brockley Design Festival (now "Design Project") is running an Architectural Treasure Hunt on 28 April, and the route will include the cafe area on Hilly Fields at roughly 12.45 to 2.15pm.