

**Blackheath Joint Working Party  
20 November 2014, 19.30  
Age Exchange, Blackheath**

**Attendees**

Cllr Kevin Bonavia (KB)	Blackheath Ward Member (LBL)	(Chair)
Cllr Amanda de Ryk (AdR)	Blackheath Ward Member (LBL)	
Cllr Aidan Smith (AS)	Greenwich West Ward Member (RBG)	
Shirley Broughton (SB)	Westcombe Society	
Tony Butler (TB)		
Philip Craig (PC)	Greenwich Society	
Margaret Dinkeldein (MD)		
Mike Norton (MN)	Westcombe Society	
Steve Ragdale (SR)	RBG	
Helen Reeves (HR)	Blackheath Society	
John Thompson (JT)	LBL	
David Walker (DW)	Blackheath Society	
James Wickham (JW)	LBL	(Minutes)

**1. Apologies And Introductions**

Apologies were received from Cllr Paul Morrissey, Cllr Matthew Pennycock, Cllr Gareth Siddorn, Gemma Buttell, Sue Corlett, Barbara Morris, Anna Townend, Keith Townend and Rob Widdicombe.

James Wickham (LBL) was introduced as the minute taker for the evening.

**2. Minutes Of Last Meetings (25 September 2014)**

*i Accuracy*

PC noted that under item 3 someone (perhaps MH) had reported that there were 40 complaints in total, 27 of these were related to sound. 9 of these were duplicates. This needs to be added to the minutes for 25 September 2014.

*ii Matters Arising*

KB stated LBL are reviewing the Events Policy and the draft is almost completed. It is scheduled to be approved by the Mayor and Cabinet in February 2015 (it was originally January 2015, but has been postponed in order to allow the BJWP to consider the draft at its next meeting in January 2015).

KB said that there was a concern how many events there will be next year, given that the current policy without limit still applies, but had received an assurance from the LBL

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authorising officer that no applications for large scale events, other than the two existing applications, will be considered for 2015.

**3. Review of OnBlackheath Festival 2014 Survey Results / Outcome Of Post-Event Consultation Meeting**

HR stated there was a huge response regarding the survey and people seem to have been pleasantly surprised about how well the event went. Young families attended and seemed to have enjoyed themselves.

HR noted though that some people were concerned about the use of the heath, especially people who lived close to it. There were experiences of babies not being able to sleep due to the noise. There was also concern about the road closures and the fact people could not walk across the heath as bouncers from OnBlackheath would not allow it. HR also said the rerouting of the 380 bus was not convenient for residents and that older people were unable to use it.

DW said the low frequency vibrations from the music were very unpleasant and this continued for the whole two days of the event. These vibrations particularly affected homes in Wat Tyler Road and Dartmouth Drive Terrace.

AdR stated she felt she could speak for everyone when she felt it was generally a positive day. Informally AdR had received comments which reflect those stated above about the road closures, noise volumes and the rerouting of the 380 bus. The event caused disruption to the lives of the local residents.

AdR noted some free tickets were given to local residents but there were inconsistencies in their distribution as many people who lived very close to the event were not given them.

HR said the survey did not ask who left the area when the event took place. This would have been useful to know.

KB stated he would meet with Kevin Sheehan (KS) [Executive Director for Customer Services, LBL] to discuss these points. KB's own thoughts were that he felt more confident about the way the festival had been managed but the area around the venue could have been kept more accessible. Regarding noise, moving the second stage could minimise this. Pedestrians need to be given more adequate access and better publicity for the event needs to be in place.

DW noted how happy he was at how quickly the heath had recovered from staging such an event.

AdR stated she had nothing but praise regarding the cleaning up after the event had taken place.

JT said he arrived on-site 07:30 on the Sunday morning and was pleasantly surprised in the fact there was not a lot of litter.

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PC noted that he had attended at the post-event meeting. He considered that OnBlackheath did not have to answer that many questions because most questions arose from concerns about the number of concerts to be held on Blackheath in future and similar 'policy' issues.

KB stated that as the OnBlackheath event had on the whole passed off well a consequence of this was a general concern that is there would be more events now.

The minutes of this meeting will be sent to KS so he can see the concerns that our group has raised. DW asked if we could meet KS as well to ensure KS understands what our thoughts are. **KB is happy to arrange this.**

#### **4. Blackheath (SMINC) Nature Conservation Group**

~~KB noted the funding application for this had come from the Community Fund.~~

~~It was further noted by KB that there are a known '92' different species of bees that reside on the heath. KB referred to the Group's report tabled to the meeting and noted the proposal to create a beebank in the Eliot Pits area. KB also suggested that proposed projects requiring funding could form part of the options for funding from the community fund deriving from the 2014 OnBlackheath event, which is to be decided at the next annual public meeting of the BJWP.~~

~~KB stated three~~ It was agreed that there were no issues arising from the report for holding this event.

#### **5. Review Of Pre-Application Questionnaire for Blackheath Festival 2015**

OnBlackheath representatives (Terry Felgate, Tom Waite and Alex Wicks) attended the meeting to answer questions about the event and to discuss their pre-event questionnaire.

Feedback received so far is very positive and all the litter was cleared up quickly.

OnBlackheath noted that whilst the event went well there were four areas they would like to improve on in 2015:

- a. Pedestrian Access: OnBlackheath were concerned pedestrians could not access the heath. A purpose-built walkway along Hare & Billet Road will be created for the 2015 event.
- b. Sound: Whilst the main stage's sound was controlled, there was an issue on the second stage. Next year the stage will be pointed towards Greenwich Park. All noise created from the event was within the legal permitted limits.

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- c. 380 Bus: Late communications about the rerouting of this service meant it was not used to its full effect with many residents unaware of the rerouting.
- d. Communications: Any restrictions around the site need to be communicated to residents as soon as possible so they know what is happening.

OnBlackheath acknowledged that there had been problems with low frequency noise. The representatives indicated that it should be better next year.

OnBlackheath asked BJWP how many of them had attended the event. It was one person (KB).

KB enquired of the group if they had any questions, looking towards the 2015 application.

HR asked why Allison Close needed to be used. OnBlackheath stated it was because they had to park their articulated lorry and the load had to be distributed equally. It is different to other events that take place on the heath. Also, keeping lorries on the road saves damage that could take place on the heath. DW noted the road closures caused inconvenience and asked that next year it be five days minimum. HR said the event would be more popular if we did not use that road. OnBlackheath appreciated this but the event could not take place without using this road.

OnBlackheath will work with LBL to ensure the bus can access the areas it needs to and there are no restrictions.

OnBlackheath said money was given to local charities and this is a long-term project. No money was made from this event.

AS asked about the second stage being moved to wards Greenwich Park. It was noted that the second stage would point that way, but would not be in Greenwich Park.

PC said that he thought the event went well, as he had already communicated to Terry Felgate. However, the impression was being gained that the public event was not publicised well and residents were being largely ignored not taken notice of. Also the application is a very lightweight document. OnBlackheath said they were happy to attend more meetings if necessary. Also, the website will contain all communications as quickly as possible.

DW noted it was the low frequency noise that was the issue and this travelled around the whole park and asked if this was directional. OnBlackheath said it was harder to control low frequency noise and is something they are aware of. This factor is also dependent upon who is performing/the type of music they play.

DW asked if the noise limit could be reduced to 65dB from 70dB. OnBlackheath stated they adhered to their licence agreement with LBL. MN said it should be 65dB. OnBlackheath stated this would make the event of a much lower quality and reiterated they adhered to their licence at all time.

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OnBlackheath stated they only received 19 complaints whilst the event was taking place (11 on Saturday and 8 on Sunday). Many of these were duplicates and regarding minor issues.

AdR questioned OnBlackheath's attitude towards local residents, especially in the light of their light-weight application (it kept referring to the event management plan when details should have been included in the application). It was very short-sighted to treat residents in this way. Free tickets offered to local residents were inconsistent in their distribution with many residents stating they did not receive them. OnBlackheath stated they had hand-delivered 300 free tickets.

KB stated their approach for 2015 needed to be more proactive, especially regarding their communications. The application should also not be viewed as a blank box ticking exercise but more of a persuasion exercise. More respect needed to be given to local residents living where events like this directly affected them. Regarding the 2015 event, the public needed to be consulted much further in advance and local schools needed to be more involved. OnBlackheath responded by saying many groups did not want to interact with them. They were learning (this was their first event) and this would be noted and taken on regarding future events. Regarding work with schools, OnBlackheath did a three-hour workshop with Thomas Tallis School on how to run a public event of this kind.

KB thanked OnBlackheath for the work they had done but was now interested in what they could do in the future and how they could improve in all areas. KB thanked OnBlackheath for their time in attending tonight and advised that their thoughts would be communicated to the Authorising Officer at LBL.

#### **DELIBERATION**

AdR noted the main issues were the noise, particularly the bass sound level, the siting of the stage, communication, policy towards compensating residents and the local transport arrangements (especially the 380 Bus).

It was agreed the amount of people to attend should be limited to 15,000 (with an additional 1,000 free tickets). The sound level needs to be at 65dB and also the issue of low frequency noise needs to be addressed. This needs to be impressed upon KS.

MD noted that her daughter attended and she had said the music was not loud enough which created a bad atmosphere. Given the need to keep noise levels restricted, this needs to be taken into account in considering whether Blackheath was an appropriate venue.

**KB will prepare a paper to be sent to KS. A draft will be sent around for comments before being sent to KS.**

#### **6. Review Of Pre-Application Questionnaire For Good Hope Festival 2015**

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Tommy Mizen (TM) represented the Good Hope Festival and gave a short presentation to the group, which will be distributed to members.

The presentation gave an overview of the event, with the hope that it will take place on 1 and 2 August 2015. It would be a family experience with many different things on offer (Zones: Technology/Fashion/Adventure/Beach/Main Stage) for people to do. Music is a secondary element for this festival. 20,000 tickets are being requested (5,000 more than 2013) and they want to keep ticket prices to a minimum. The event would ~~open~~ close at 09:30pm on both the Saturday and the Sunday.

Good Hope are trying to get sponsorship once/if they are granted permission to hold the event.

Good Hope understand the concerns regarding noise and are working with 'Vanguardia' to reduce levels where possible. They also have a noise management plan and will adhere to any licencing recommendations.

Good Hope noted all traffic will be kept to a minimum and only small roads would be closed. The use of cars/parking in general will be discouraged via the festival website. It is hoped that the nature of the festival will not attract an "anti-social" audience. It is also hoped there will be no issues due to the overindulgence of alcohol. A team of litter pickers will be available on both days.

Good Hope promise to hold a public consultation if LBL agree to a licence. Discounts for residents and a school programme will be synergised with the festival.

The key note for this event should be that it inspires people and "*they remember it forever*".

KB asked members for questions.

- DW said the issue of music over 70dB is an issue for local residents. It should also be noted it is not just the noise level but also the sound of the low bass. Is it possible this can be reduced to 65dB. **TM will speak to Vanguardia to see if this is possible.**
- DW said the stage pointing at the Church is a concern. TM stated they can be flexible as to what way the stage points itself towards. **TM will speak to Vanguardia.**
- PC stated applying for 20,000 tickets is high. TM said this was the best way to keep ticket prices down.
- SB asked, due to the acid grassland on the heath, if locations can be tweaked if necessary. TM said this can be done.
- AdR asked that Good Hope remember the local people. AdR thanked Good Hope for the amount of information they have provided in their application.

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**DELIBERATION**

It was agreed the limit should be 15,000 people (1,000 free tickets to the community).

It was very welcome to have their inclusive attitude towards the BJWP and their willingness to work with all local agencies. Their engagement with local schools was also welcome too.

**KB will prepare a paper to be sent to KS. A draft will be sent around for comments before being sent to KS.**

**7. Update On 2014 Blackheath Fireworks**

JT said there was an incident where one of the sub-contractors had driven across the heath and 'got stuck' causing damage to an area of grass. Work has now taken place to reinstate the grass back to its previous condition.

MD said the music played did not synchronise with the fireworks. MD also noted that at 19:30 litter bins were already overflowing. People were trying to use the bins that were provided but this of course made it more difficult. **JT stated he would take this comment back.**

KB said it was good Greenwich were now back on-board supporting the event and hoped for a more pro-active collaboration for next year.

**8. Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting will take place on Thursday [22~~15~~](#) January 2015, 19:30, at the Age Exchange in Blackheath.