

Blackheath Joint Working Party

17 November 2015

Attendees

Cllr Kevin Bonavia (chair)	London Borough of Lewisham
Cllr Aidan Smith	London Borough of Greenwich
Cllr Mehboob Khan	London Borough of Greenwich
Shirley Broughton	Nature Conservation Group
Phillip Craig	Greenwich Society
David Walker	Blackheath Society
Margaret Dinkeldein	Tidy Blackheath
Sue Corlett	Hare and Billett Action Group
Helen Reeves	Blackheath Society
Mike Norton	Westcombe Society
Tony Butler	Friends of Greenwich Park
Keith Townend	
Robert Goring	Royal Borough of Greenwich
Steve Roedel	Royal Borough of Greenwich
Bob Hills	Royal Borough of Greenwich
Janine Whittaker	Royal Borough of Greenwich Events
Chris Devine	Royal Borough of Greenwich Licensing
Jane Dyer	Royal Borough of Greenwich
Martin Hyde	London Borough of Lewisham Parks
David Humphreys (mins)	London Borough of Lewisham

1. Apologies and introduction

Apologies were received from Cllr Amanda De Ryk, Cllr Gareth Siddorn and Gemma Buttell .

David Humphreys was introduced by Cllr Kevin Bonavia (KB) as the minute-taker for the meeting.

2. Minutes of meeting 22 September 2015

a. accuracy

Margaret Dinkeldein (MD) highlighted that in the 'any other business' section of the minutes of the previous meeting, there was no mention of severe erosion to the south eastern side of Shooters Hill road. The group agreed that this should be added to the minutes.

b. matters

There were no matters arising outside the agenda.

3. Circus Field Update

KB indicated that representatives from OnBlackheath were yet to arrive and hence made the decision to proceed to agenda item seven.

Janine Whittaker (JW) outlined that the Royal Borough of Greenwich were proceeding with informal consultation on the Circus Field license and that it is proposed that live and recorded music and dance events are to be held on Circus Field. JW highlighted that there would be no need for an alcohol condition for the license and that the license would be for between 10am and 10:30pm – with the exception of Sundays when a 10pm curfew would be imposed.

JW indicated that in addition to the licensing application, the Event Policy Agreement for all parties leasing the field for events is being revised and that the Royal Borough of Greenwich would be working with the London Borough of Lewisham to align agreements.

JW explained that there was initial interest in a production of *In the Night Garden* in an inflatable theatre and holding a food festival. JW detailed the streets which would receive a letter drop informing them of events and distributed a map to illustrate.

KB stated that he thought this was a substantial undertaking and asked when the Royal Borough of Greenwich was intending to lodge the licensing application. JW explained that a draft was completed a couple of weeks previously and, after feedback from the Blackheath Joint Working Party (BJWP), the intention would be to lodge the application by the end of November with a view to starting events in May or June 2016.

David Walker (DW) referred to the terms of the license agreement and in particular that the maximum capacity was to be no more than 4,000 and that there should be no more than six events per year. Bob Hills (BH) indicated that discretion would be used to determine the suitability of events with regard to field recovery time and damage to the Heath and gave the example of a request to construct a beach on the Heath which had been turned down.

JW identified the existing events: currently, three circuses, which run for approximately two weeks and the marathon. Phillip Craig (PC) suggested that limiting the number of event days, rather than number of events, would be more specific.

Action

Society representatives to circulate details of the proposals for responses to be provided to JW in the week preceding the BJWP meeting.

4. Review of Pre-Application Questionnaire (OnBlackheath)

Helen Reeves (HR) provided feedback from the OnBlackheath survey for information. HR explained that there were 313 valid responses – which represented little over half of the responses received the previous year. Of the respondents, 79 people were immediately local. HR commented that respondents were from a broad age range, some under 30 and others over 80. HR highlighted the following results:

- Over half of people were satisfied and approximately one third were not satisfied.
- Respondents felt that communication about the event from the Royal Borough of Greenwich was better than from the London Borough of Lewisham.

- The 61-70 year age group were more positive than in the previous year.
- The closure of Hare and Billet Road was inconvenient but the footpath and cycle route was convenient.
- The diversion of the 380 bus was more convenient.
- Comments indicated that there was a lot of disruption around Mountsfield Road.
- Fewer people found the sound intrusive.
- People were content with the behaviour in and around the event.
- Parking was worse.
- There were a number of comments relating to damage to the grass.

Tom Wates (TW) and Alex Wicks (AW) from OnBlackheath attended the meeting to present the OnBlackheath pre-application questionnaire.

KB indicated that there would be a consultation event for OnBlackheath in the Greenwich Hotel on 18th November.

TW highlighted that there was an increase in people attending OnBlackheath in 2015 to 36,000 with 5,000 of those being concessions. TW indicated that 70% of attendees were families and approximately 10% of tickets for under 12s. For the 2015 OnBlackheath event, 23% of attendees were from the Royal Borough of Greenwich, 14% from the London Borough of Lewisham and 60% of tickets in total going to local residents. TW outlined that there would be exactly the same number of attendees and the same license for the 2016 event.

TW outlined that there were 14 complaints to their hotline on the Saturday, 10 of which were in relation to noise and 4 in relation to free tickets. On the Sunday, there were 4 calls, with half in relation to noise and half in relation to free tickets.

TW detailed the two main issues in relation to the event: firstly, damage to the grass which was caused by HGVs due to the weather conditions when packing the event up (for which a (returnable) £10k ground damage fee had been collected). Secondly, noise was an issue and this was caused by a DJ overriding prescribed levels – this occurred for a total of 15 minutes over the course of the weekend.

DW suggested that more protective tracking should be used to protect the grass from HGVs. MH explained that he would be in discussion with TW and AW in relation to this point.

Mike Norton (MN) suggested that part of the problem with the noise was because of the wind direction. TW explained that they would be considering the position of the stage for the 2016 event.

DW made reference to the sponsors of the group and asked whether a new, local brewery should be used in light of Meantime being acquired by SAB. AW explained that a smaller local Brewery would not have the capacity for the event.

TB enquired about road closures as a result of the 2016 event. AW explained that they would be the same as the previous year.

Action

KB to draft a formal note outlining comments for the approval officer, Kevin Sheehan.

HR thanked the London Borough of Lewisham and the London Borough of Greenwich for help with the cost of conducting the OnBlackheath survey.

5. Review of Pre-Application Questionnaire (Food Festival)

Liz Lewis (LL) from Fantastic British Food Festivals presented this item and explained that they have been running food festivals for three years, at Blenheim Palace, Leeds Castle and in Wimbledon Park; the Wimbledon Park event had an attendance of between 10,000 and 12,000 over a bank holiday weekend. LL explained that they were now looking at Blackheath as a venue for a standalone food festival with entertainment such as folk music and cookery courses. LL highlighted that the event would run in August or July over three days.

HR pointed out that there was already a farmer's market on the venue on a Sunday. LL explained that they would look to incorporate the farmer's market and that there was flexibility in relation to the exact location of the event. KB highlighted that there would be no parking on the Heath and MH suggested that the Talbot Place car park could be used.

KB explained that the London Borough of Lewisham had a policy that there should be no more than two large events per year. SB referred to the pre-application questionnaire which indicated that there would be no more than 5,000 people per day.

KB stated that both the London Borough of Lewisham Council and the Royal Borough of Greenwich Council should be liaising in relation to such events and that comments should be provided following the distribution of the minutes of the meeting.

6. Review of Pre-Application Questionnaire: Blackheath Town and Country Show

KB told the BJWP that no representative of the Blackheath Town and Country Show would be presenting this agenda item at the meeting. MH explained that the organisers had held a similar event before, for example, in Southwark. MH highlighted the fact that the pre-application questionnaire did not give anticipated attendance figures and that the OnBlackheath field had been requested for the bank holiday weekend.

DW explained that there was usually a fair on the field on the days requested. JW said that these fairs would no longer be taking place due to the proposed production of *In the Night Garden*. PC highlighted that with a greater number of events taking place, there would be less time for the normal enjoyment of the Heath.

MH recommended that the event would be unsuitable as vehicle shows might cause damage to the grass and there would not be sufficient parking in the area to meet the pre-application request.

SB highlighted the fact that clarity was needed in relation to the numbers of people who would be attending the events. Cllr Aiden Smith (AS) added that the event organiser's website detailed an expected attendance of 6,000.

MD expressed concern that discussing event applications was taking up a considerable amount of time within the BJWP meeting. MH suggested that a BJWP subgroup which would meet in November every year be formed.

Action

KB to draft a formal note on the Town and Country Show and on the Food Fair.
Rosalind Jeffrey to establish a subgroup of the BJWP which will meet in November to discuss event applications for the following year. As pre-applications were discussed at this meeting, the sub group will be established for November 2016.

7. Review of Pre-Application Questionnaire (Royal 500)

KB explained that the event was to mark the 500th anniversary of the Royal Mail. MH explained that this would likely involve a procession of vehicles across the Heath. The BJWP agreed that this would be a good event to take place on Blackheath.

8. Preparation of a License for Kings Troop to use the Circus Field

Robert Goring (RG) explained that this was a request from the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to use Circus Field for ceremonial drills. RG highlighted that the request was to use Circus Field on two occasions per week, on a Monday and a Friday – with the exception of in the winter months where no activity would take place - and the MoD would be responsible for the cost of clean-up and repair. RG added that events would take precedent over the Kings Troop usage.

DW expressed concern at possible damage to the Heath from gun carriages. RG explained that the Kings Troop also uses Charlton Park and that on only one was excessive damage caused. RG clarified that the MoD would only be using the field in spells, for example when practicing for particular ceremonial events.

Action

RG to approach the Kings Troop for a more specific timetable of usage.

Steve Roedel (SR) explained that such practices used to take place in Hyde Park and the intention of the MoD was to use Woolwich Common in the future. SR added that Woolwich Park is not currently in a suitable state for the use of the Kings Troop.

TB asked why the MoD could not solely use Charlton Park. RG explained that the request was in order to create variety in where the ceremonial drills were practiced and highlighted that the license would be for a five year period.

9. Blackheath (SMINC) Nature Conservation Group

SB highlighted that there was concern and discussion in relation to damage to acid grassland following the OnBlackheath event and that she intends to schedule a meeting with Nick Pond, Martin Hyde and Glendale shortly after Nick returns from leave on 7th December.

SB explained that the new ecology survey had been received by the London Borough of Lewisham and was due to be sent out for consultation and requested an update on the timescales for this consultation. MH said Nick Pond would be able to brief the group when he returns from leave.

SB updated the group on the progress of the Prince of Wales Pond and thanked the BJWP, the Blackheath Society, the local philanthropist, the contractor – Miles Water Engineering, Martin Hyde and officers from Glendale.

10. Feedback Blackheath Fireworks

KB outlined that the Blackheath fireworks had been organised very well and that approximately 100,000 people were in attendance for the display which was slightly shorter than in the previous year.

SR highlighted that residents had complained due to a considerable amount of parking on the grass, particularly in one area which had not been secured. SC also expressed concern at the number of sparkler wires which had been left behind and asked if the fireworks would be continuing given the cost.

KB explained that the fireworks were a priority and that the total cost was £100k of which £10k was provided by the Royal Borough of Greenwich. KB added that the intention was for the event to be self-financing.

SC highlighted the fact that the event had led to fewer private fireworks parties.

11. Parks and Open Spaces Consultation

MH outlined the findings from the Parks and Open Spaces consultations. MH explained that respondents were asked if they would support the idea of paid ticketed events being held if the funds generated were used to support the Heath. 55% agreed in relation to Blackheath and 71% agreed in relation to other areas. MH added that in the future, tariffs are to be set for large music events, for example between £3-5 per ticket with the amount determined based on disruption caused.

MH highlighted that 67% of respondents would agree to limit the number of events for Blackheath and that the greatest number of people indicated that there should be more guided walks and talks on the Heath. MH highlighted that the second greatest number of people indicated that more sporting events should take place on the Heath and the third greatest number of people indicated that they would like more nature events. Music events were the fifth most requested event type.

MH explained that the findings of this consultation will contribute to a review of the events policy. Future charging for events could be considered by an events subgroup which will be established in 2016.

Action

BJWP subgroup to meet at the end of November to discuss events.

12. Discussion re 'The Point' proposal (Greenwich Society)

PC explained that The Point was very run down and that a local architect had been engaged at a cost of £70k/75k. PC added that once the money had been raised a presentation relating to the proposals would take place for the BJWP. SR highlighted that the plans largely involved the removing of trees to restore the view and that there was now a joint bid to the Agincourt fund.

13. Discussion re Tea Hut Curtilage

MH explained that there were two huts in this area. KB questioned whether the area could be fenced off. MH explained that the top layer of soil had gone and that he was meeting with Glendale tomorrow to discuss the options. MH clarified that those causing the damage would be responsible for the cost. MD explained that

reinforcement to the grass area was necessary to protect it from damage caused by motorcycles.

Action

MH to raise the concerns of the BJWP with Glendale and feedback to the group.

14. Any Other Business

MH outlined that the London Borough of Lewisham was renewing by-laws through Full Council and that they are currently held on deposit for one month for comment. RG added that the Royal Borough of Greenwich would be going through the same process next year.

KB highlighted that OnBlackheath would be giving £15k again to invest in the Heath. KB is proposing to ask for ideas of how the money is spent through the societies.

Action

KB to draft a note on the new process.

KB confirmed that the next meeting would take place on 19th January 2016.

Draft