

Blackheath Joint Working Party (BJWP) Meeting Minutes 17th October 2017

Venue: Age Exchange, Blackheath

Attendees

Cllr Kevin Bonavia (chair)	London Borough of Lewisham
Janine Whittaker	Royal Borough of Greenwich
Sue Corlett	Hare & Billet Action Group
Philip Craig	Greenwich Society
Shirley Broughton	Nature Conservation Group
Mike Norton	Westcombe Society
Helen Reeves	Blackheath Society
David Walker	Blackheath Society
Gemma Buttell	Glendale
Jane Dyer	London Borough Greenwich
Nick Pond	London Borough of Lewisham
James Bravin (mins)	London Borough of Lewisham

1. Apologies and introduction

Cllr Bonavia opened the meeting. Apologies were received from Ian Andrews, Mehboob Khan, Joe Beale, Cllr Aidan Smith, Tony Butler, Lisa Lance, and Cllr Amanda De Ryk.

2. Minutes of the last meeting (19th September 2017)

(i) Accuracy:

Marilyn Little was down twice once as representing the Westcombe Society, and once as representing the Westcombe Park Society. The Westcombe Park Society entry should be deleted. In AOB David Norton should be changed to David Notton.

Action: Liz Bryan to amend the minutes where appropriate.

(ii) Matters arising

Nick Pond (NP) clarified the receipt of liability insurance for the Hare & Billet Pond volunteers and this has been reconciled by Glendale. Cllr Kevin Bonavia (KB) asked if there was a copy. NP noted that he did not have a copy. KB said that NP should try and get a copy to keep on record.

KB noted that meeting to look at the BJWP constitution has been diarised, and that the constitution will be sent out two weeks before the meeting.

NP noted that he had met with Shirley Broughton (SB) regarding comments on the Hare & Billet plan.

David Walker (DW) commented that there should be some link up with the Lewisham council and Royal Borough of Greenwich Cycling plans & strategies as Lewisham Council had presented their strategy and plans at the last BJWP. Janine Whittaker noted that the Greenwich plans should come from [Tim Loroughtagel \(?\)](#), so that there can be a joined a joined up approach to cycling on Blackheath.

Commented [BJ1]: Wasn't sure about this name

NP noted that attempts had been made to remove yellow flag, however it was still ongoing as it was difficult to remove entirely.

NP said that he was happy in principle with David Notton's proposal to create a bee bank. SB clarified that it wasn't a traditional bee bank. KB added that a proposal to create a full bee bank would require more work. HR said that specific plans had been created for the construction of the bee bank but contact with the designer had been lost. KB volunteered to find the name of the bee bank designer to re-establish contact.

Action: NP to get a copy of the liability insurance.

Action: JW to liaise with RBG cycling officer to ensure Lewisham and Greenwich plans are joined up.

Action: KB to re-establish dialogue with bee bank designer.

3. Let's all Dance

Gemma Buttell (GB) provided a background to the *Let's all Dance*, explaining that it was a new application and that they were happy to negotiate on the specific date that they would like to use Blackheath.

GB introduced Orit Sutton (OS) the Founder and Artistic Director of *Let's All Dance*. OS explained that *Let's all Dance* is a dance company that has been running since 2010. In 2013 they produced their first professional show. They ran 4 shows a year and they were all family orientated. OS explained that she was a resident of Blackheath so was also very aware of the noise issues that could arise from holding events on the heath. The *Let's all Dance* event that would be held on Blackheath would be a daytime only event which was pitched mainly at 2 – 9 year olds but would also have some entertainment for older children. There would be three marquees which would opened if the weather were good enough. The main marquee would have shows from professional dancers as well as activities for children. The second marquee would be an activities tent with arts and crafts. The third tent would be a chill-out zone, including a buggy park and space for breastfeeding. All food stalls would be outside the tents in different breakout areas and there would be some entrainment such as stilt walkers surrounding the food stalls to keep people entertained while they eat.

JW asked if *Let's all Dance* had organised outdoor events before. OS said that they had previously done a pirate themed event outside. *Let's all Dance* used a specific infrastructure company for all their events (Crew Co), but overall the event was managed directly by OS herself and she would be onsite all day every day.

SB asked for more detail on the numbers of people who would be attending the event and what the car parking arrangements would be. OS said that they would be hoping for 5000 a day for the 1st year but would be looking to expand this if the event was a success. OS would be encouraging people not to use cars as it was a summer event and Blackheath was easily accessible by public transport. There would be no on-site car parking provided to attendees.

KB asked for examples where *Let's all Dance* had run similar events. OS answered that the most similar event took place at Lees Cliff Hall Folkestone, however they had never run an event on this scale before. The only staff parking required would be for the set up on Friday and the dismantling on the Monday.

SB asked what the footprint of the event would look like. OS said they she was happy to work with the BJWP and the relevant authorising officers to find the site which would be best for the event. JW noted that as part of the full application the full capacity of each tent would need to be specified. Mike Norton (MN) noted that he had thought about where the best area for the event to take place and one of the potential sites that he had identified was the Church field. KB agreed but the potential issues would be the traffic around the site, and the surrounding church, shops and housing.

KB asked what the noise produced at the event would be like. OS said that they set the noise levels low because it has to be suitable for young children's ears, and would be no louder than other events that have taken place on Blackheath.

KB asked when the event will take place. OS said that the ideally the event would be end of July or beginning of August, or as an alternative May half-term. JW said that May half-term is possibly taken. GB said that the whole of August is free, so the beginning of August would work. OS noted that end of July/beginning of August is ideal because both private and state schools will be on holiday.

HR asked how much the event would cost. OS said that this is still being discussed with the ticketing agency Little Birds. OS anticipates that a day pass that will get you into all the shows will cost £15 – 20 for children, and £25 for adults, or £80 for a family of 4. HR noted that this seems quite a lot for an event. OS said that this is actually quite reasonable for 6 hours of entertainment in at a London event. JW said that it did seem quite reasonable given that it was for 6 hours, with similar 1 or 2 hour events costing £15 - £20 per person. OS said that the ticketing structure wasn't agreed, and that there were different pricing options being explored as well.

The BJWP agreed the event in principle depending on how it would fit in with the other events that were being held on the heath. KB outlined some of the potential issues. Firstly what the best site to use would be. GB said she would be happy to work with OS to find a site that was suitable and safe. KB said that the noise levels could be an issue. OS noted that the noise levels would be monitored by CrewCo throughout the event and that the levels would be well below an event like *OnBlackheath*. KB asked what the total numbers of attendees would be. OS said each day it would be 5000 over the 6 hour period. KB said that would mean that it would hit the limit of a large event. OS said that they could limit the

numbers as it would be the first year for the event, to see how it went. JW said as long as there were an effective crowd management plan in place the numbers should be fine. OS said that when the *In the Night Garden Live* was launched there was a letter sent to all residents telling them about the event and also acted as an invitation. OS would like to take this approach.

KB said that in terms of when the event could take place it looked like the end of July and beginning of August were free. KB explained what the following steps in the process were and wished OS good luck in the application process. OS thanked the BJWP for their time.

RECOMMENDATION: Approved but with the following comments for officers and/or organisers as appropriate:

Action: GB to agree footprint with OS and confirm proposed location to BJWP

4. Race for Life/Pretty Muddy

GB introduced the *Race for Life/Pretty Muddy* event outlining that it is basically the same as last year but the event organisers have streamlined the event so that it only takes place over one day.

Sam Beare (SBe) outlined the event: a 5km *Race for Life* fun run, and a 5k obstacle run, *Pretty Muddy* on the same day. The *Race for Life* event would be taking place on the 1st July at 10am. At 12pm 8 waves of 300 people will be sent to go on the *Pretty Muddy* run every 15 minutes. KB asked where the obstacles would be set up. SBe said that this was not decided and they were flexible where they could go. There would be 5 – 6 muddy obstacles in total, and the mud that was used was just top soil compared with a different type of mud that they used to use. This mud either dried up and washed away, and was watery rather than gloopy like before. SBe said that they had a safety report on the type of mud that they were using which they would be able to provide to the group if they requested it. MN asked where the mud would be placed on the heath. SBe said that it would be contained in paddling pools or on sheets so it would not be in direct contact with the ground except for the mud that might fall off people shoes and clothes. SBe said that the route could be arranged so that it does not go on any areas of ecological significance. HR asked how long the route was. SB said that it was 5km with 10 – 11 obstacles (5 -6 of which were muddy ones), and the route finished with a mud slide. KB said there would need to be a walk around to ensure the route is suitable. HR asked how the obstacles are fixed. SBe said that they were either weighed down or driven into the ground. SC asked if the new mowing routine on the Blackheath could affect the route and whether this might mean that the route would need to change to avoid the new meadow areas.

KB said that there would need to be a transport plan to follow – SBe said that it would be a no car-parking event, and people would be encouraged to take public transport to the event. GB said they have worked on the noise management, and SBe added that there have not been any noise complaints in the last 3 years. GB said that there was a phone number which any resident could call at any time if there were any issues on the day.

KB added that he liked the fact that both events were happening on one day, and he was glad that the soil had been changed as the impact on Blackheath is likely to be minimal. He added that it was great that the organisers were happy to work on the route with the relevant officers and BJWP to ensure the route is suitable.

RECOMMENDATION: Approved with the following comments for officers and/or organisers as appropriate:

Action – GB to organise a walk around of the site to establish the route and location of obstacles in November.

5. OnBlackheath

Tom Wates (TW) from *OnBlackheath* started by summarising the success of this year's event. He said that overall it had been a very successful event, and there still had not been any arrests made at the festival. TW thought that this was helped by the fact that it was pitched as a family orientated event. Anecdotal stories suggested that some attendees felt that the festival security team could have done more bag searches given the current terror threat level. TW noted that this was a change in attitudes as people had become more security conscious in the last few years. 28,000 people attended the event this year and Blackheath was left in good condition. There was a minor bit of scuffing around the heath but this was reinstated by Glendale. Sound was still a bit of a double-edged sword, as the sound was the best it had ever been but there were still isolated issues. Most readings were below 60db. There was a specific area where 64db was reached at the top of Westcombe Park and this will be a focus to improve on next year. Over the weekend there had been a total of 12 calls to complaining about the noise. Next year there should be a permanent person from Vanguard noise consultants at Westcombe Park to make sure that the team could be proactive about any sound issues that might arise. 7500 information letters had been sent out to Lewisham residents but none to Greenwich which was an oversight due to a breakdown in communication. *OnBlackheath* would ensure that all residents on both Lewisham and Greenwich side receive letters this time. TW said that he wanted complaints to go directly to *OnBlackheath* staff so that they could be dealt with more quickly in future. Finally TW wanted to note that he and the team were very proud that in the first 4 years *OnBlackheath* have made over £100,000 in donations to benefit local charities and causes, and considering that there had been minimal impact to Blackheath during the festival, there had been a significant positive effect to the surrounding area.

TW wanted to address the issue surrounding Whitefield's Mount. This year it was blocked-off as requested. TW was frustrated by this as he thought in the previous year they had done a great job cleaning the area up, and made it look as good as the team have ever seen it, to create a storytelling maze which was enjoyed by 1000s of children over the weekend. This year it was completely blocked off, and TW personally felt that it was a shame that it wasn't used. NP produced a report for Executive Director for Customer Services at LBL, assessing the impact of the use on the Mount. NP noted the report had been difficult as there was no baseline measures of the wildlife in the area, however NP said that his report

found no significant impact from its use that year. SB said that Whitefield's Mount was a very important and rare natural habitat for birds: if it were opened up for use for children, it would damage its undisturbed nature. SB said that openings were cut, and that this could cause damage to nesting areas. TW said that nothing was cut but the area was just cleaned up to make it safe for children, as there was a lot of rubbish strewn about the area. The maze was designed so that it wasn't a free-for-all, and people were carefully guided around it. TW said he appreciated that it is an important habitat for birds but its use was not endangering that. KB said that he thought the issue was not so much about the Mount's use over the weekend but more whether it gets used more over the year as a consequence of it being cleaned up for the festival. KB asked if there were any evidence to show that Whitefield's Mount has changed as a result of its use. HR said that pathways had been cleared through. KB noted that it was not as if no-one ever used it anyway, and he wasn't sure how its use would dramatically change as a result of *OnBlackheath* using it. TW said that if there was evidence that it did permanent damage to the birds' habitat then he would of course not want to use it. SB said that she felt it wasn't too much to ask for *OnBlackheath* not to use it. TW felt he wanted to use it to showcase Blackheath in the best way, but it should be up to the experts to determine if damage was being done. Philip Craig (PC) said he felt it was a difficult issue, but the area had definitely been used by people before as at one point there was even someone living there. KB said from his point of view, he would be concerned if there was evidence of permanent damage. But if there wasn't evidence then his inclination was that it be allowed to be used but closely monitored and reinstated properly every year. SB said it was a music festival primarily and it seemed like a small ask for *OnBlackheath* not to use it. KB noted there was no agreement at the meeting on whether the Mount should be permitted to be used at the event, so he proposed that any expert views (whether for or against) would be presented to the authorising officer with a request that he take both into account before making a decision on this point.

MN said that despite there only being a dozen noise complaints, people were still talking about the noise levels being too high. Another issue was that the event was held on the Last Night of the Proms, and this created a particular issue for many residents who wanted to watch it on television but couldn't because of the noise produced by the festival. TW said that the noise was continually worked on and will be improved next year. Tweaks to stages and equipment can mean that the noise issues should be reduced next year, and it was a constant work in progress.

KB thanked TW for coming and noted that, apart from the noise issues in Westcombe Park as well as the issues at Whitefield's Mount, the festival was a popular and successful event.

HR wanted to say formally that she very much appreciated the donations that were given to local charities.

RECOMMENDATION: Approved with the following comments for officers and/or organisers as appropriate:

Action: Greenwich postcodes for information for residents to be sent to *OnBlackheath* via ESAG.

Action: GB to provide a spreadsheet detailing all the of charity contributions that have been made by *OnBlackheath* so far.

Action: NP to share Whitefield's Mount report to be attached to minutes (see Appendix)

Action: SB to provide evidence from Joe Beale regarding the impact of *OnBlackheath* to the bird habitat at Whitefield's Mount (see Appendix)

6. AOB

GB said that the John Ball School's sponsored run should be added to the calendar. This usually takes place in May. HR added that there should be an event to launch the storyboards.

JW said that the Greenwich fair was trying to use Showman's Guild politics to stop LBL's from taking place. KB said that he would raise this at other forums.

DRAFT

APPENDIX TO MINUTES OF BJWP MEETING 17 OCTOBER 2017:

USE OF WHITEFIELD'S MOUNT

The issue before the BJWP was whether or not the site of Whitefield's Mount should be permitted to be used by OnBlackheath as a children's exploration area (as per its use in the 2015 event).

LBL's Authorising Officer had, as part of his approval of the 2016 event, restricted use of the Mount pending a review by LBL's ecology adviser (Nick Pond).

The BJWP for its part does not have an agreed view on the use of the Mount, but requests LBL's Authorising Officer to consider and take into account the attached reports from Nick Pond and Joe Beale before making any decision regarding permission on the use of the Mount.

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