

Blackheath Joint Working Party

Minutes of Meeting

18 July 2017

Venue: Age Exchange Blackheath

Attendees

Cllr Kevin Bonavia (chair)	London Borough of Lewisham
Tony Butler	Friends of Greenwich Park
Janine Whittaker	Royal Borough of Greenwich
Sue Corlett	Hare and Billet Action Group
Shirley Broughton	Nature Conservation Group
Helen Reeves	Blackheath Society
Mike Norton	Westcombe Society
David Walker	Blackheath Society
John Thompson	London Borough of Lewisham
Lisa Lawrence	Royal Borough of Greenwich
Trevor Thorne	Hare and Billet Pond Community Project
Nick Stabeller	London Borough of Lewisham
Paul Aladenika	London Borough of Lewisham

1. Apologies and introductions

Gemma Buttell, Cllr Gareth Siddorn, Cllr Aidan Smith, Cllr Amanda De Ryk, Joe Beale, Margaret Dinkeldein, Ian Andrews, Cllr Mehboob Khan and Nicholas Pond

2. Minutes and matters

i) Accuracy

Cllr Kevin Bonavia asked that future BJWP minutes meeting are circulated earlier, to allow sufficient time for actions to be followed through.

Janine Whitaker did not attend the meeting of 18 April. However, the minutes of that meeting show that she was in attendance. This needs to be corrected.

Misspelling of Janine Whittaker's surname. The correct spelling of Janine's surname is Whittaker not Whitaker.

ii) Matters arising

Funfair organisers

Agreed that Gemma Buttell and Janine Whittaker should invite the funfair organisers to attend the next BJWP meeting. If this is not possible, it is proposed that one of the organisers should be invited to attend the September BJWP and the other to the November meeting.

ACTION – Gemma Buttell and Janine Whittaker

Storyboards

Helen Reeves asked when storyboards will be erected. It was confirmed that Glendale will be doing this. However, before doing so, it was noted that Glendale will need to secure agreement from Lewisham and Greenwich Councils.

ACTION – Gemma Buttell and Lisa Lawrence

Phase 2 grassland ecological survey

It was agreed that this should be sent to Lisa Lawrence who would arrange for it to be uploaded to the Royal Borough of Greenwich website.

ACTION – Lisa Lawrence Janine Whittaker

Litter in ditch near the Paragon

Agreed that John Thompson should liaise with Vince Buchanan on this.

ACTION – John Thompson

Coaches

Tony Butler advised that two further accidents had occurred, which had resulted in hospitalisation for the victims. Agreed that Janine Whittaker should speak to Tim Jackson in the Royal Borough of Greenwich Highways team about the possibility of BJWP representatives attending a future inspection.

ACTION – Janine Whittaker

3. Nature conservation group report

Cllr Kevin Bonavia noted that the report began with an update on the management of the Hare & Billet Pond. Cllr Bonavia reminded the meeting that the BJWP had agreed to provide £500 p.a. from the OnBlackheath community fund towards the costs incurred by the volunteers working on site (currently Eugene Kirk and Trevor Thorne). Cllr Bonavia also said that there were a number of practical issues that needed to be resolved, in particular the difficulties faced by the volunteers in obtaining the plants and equipment when requested and differences of opinion between the volunteers and members of the Nature Conservation Group as to how the pond should be managed. Meetings between the interested parties and Nick Pond had been held in an effort to agree a management plan. Nick Pond was drafting a plan, but was absent from the meeting on leave.

Trevor Thorne of the Hare and Billet Community Project spoke about work being undertaken to enhance and manage the Hare and Billet pond. Mr Thorne noted that the work is being undertaken by local volunteers with an interest in the area. Mr Thorne added that in a number of instances, enhancements to the pond had been funded out of the pockets of the volunteers. A discussion then ensued about the effective management of the pond as well as how or whether the Hare and Billet Community Project would be able to reclaim expenses incurred through its activities at the site.

Shirley Broughton then took the meeting through the group report. Specifically referencing the Hare and Billet pond, Ms Broughton noted that a decision needs to be taken as to whether the pond should be ornamental or wildlife. Ms Broughton added that whilst the effort of volunteers should be encouraged, these efforts should be properly managed. A further discussion ensued as to whether or not there should be fish in the pond.

A summary of actions arising from the above are as follows:

ACTION - A working group comprising Cllr Kevin Bonavia, Gemma Buttell and Nick Pond look into the issue of public liability insurance for the Hare and Billet Community Project

ACTION – A draft management plan for the Hare and Billet pond to be signed off at the next BJWP meeting in September

ACTION – John Thompson to liaise with Nick Pond to ensure that the Royal Borough of Greenwich liaise with Shirley Broughton about the grassland survey

4. Circus Field condition

Helen Reeves raised concerns about the condition of Circus Field following the funfair and the marathon. Ms Reeves expressed concern that the use of the field needs to be better managed and that the use of track-way, across such a wide area, meant that the field has not recovered as quickly as it should. As part of the discussion that ensued, it was noted that parts of the field would be re-seeded, whilst dips would be re-filled. It was also noted that the field should get seven months rest before the next major event at the site. No further action was required.

5. Unused toilet block

Helen Reeves raised concerns about the unused toilet block located on the Greenwich side of the heath. Ms Reeves noted that there is a possibility that the building could be of commercial use and if so, Crown Estates do not appear to be opposed to this. Ms Reeves added that any commercial application would likely be on the basis of a peppercorn rent, as significant refurbishment would be required to make the building viable. However, if no practical use could be found for the block it should be demolished. The Working Party was informed that the estate agent to contact is John Payne.

ACTION - Agreed that Lisa Lawrence should take this back and ask that Royal Borough of Greenwich consider options and feedback to the BJWP

6. Use of Heath by the Gaelic Athletic Association

John Thompson advised that the GAA are no longer pursuing their interest in using the heath.

7. Progress of the work to the Point

Tony Butler reported that the revamp work to the Point is progressing well and is expected to be completed by 4 August 2017. Following the work, an opening has been arranged for 1 October 2017. It total, £33k was secured to undertake work at the site (less than the £80k originally requested). Mr Butler advised that the contributions were from a wide-range of sources, including the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

In light of the previous agenda, item dealing with the Hare and Billet pond, Mr Butler noted that it would be beneficial to have some sort of management plan for the site once all the work is completed.

8. Duke Humphrey Road

This item related to the coaches issue as covered earlier in the meeting in Matters Arising (see above).

9. Clarifying right of way

John Thompson advised the Working Party that the main issue is that cyclists should be considerate and give pedestrians priority, however this does not always happen.

A discussion then ensued on the appropriateness of signage. As part of this it was agreed that signage must be much more explicit in giving pedestrians priority.

ACTION – Agreed that John Thompson will approach Nick Harvey, at the London Borough Lewisham to look at the issue of appropriate signage and publicity

ACTION – Agreed that John Thompson should invite Nick Harvey to attend a future BJWP meeting

10. Joint events policy update

John Thompson advised the group that a policy had been drafted, which had received provisional approval by the Royal Borough of Greenwich. Mr Thompson informed the Working Party that it is often difficult for a policy to be approved by two councils. However, the policy once formally approved, will run from 2017-20.

A discussion then ensued, during which several members of the Working Party expressed concerns about the number of event days that each local authority would be allowed on the Heath. It was noted that according to the draft policy, both Lewisham and Greenwich would be able to utilise the Heath for 90 days each (a combined total of 180 days).

ACTION – Agreed that John Thompson would make a note in his report to Mayor & Cabinet, of concerns raised by the BJWP of potential overuse of the heath

11. Blackheath Joint Working Party Constitution

Cllr Kevin Bonavia noted that he was seeking to agree a mechanism for review of the BJWP constitution. Cllr Bonavia proposed that the best way to do this would be to organise an extraordinary general meeting. For the purposes of the review, it was agreed that the first part of the September meeting would be an extraordinary general meeting. Ahead of time, it was agreed that a formal email would be circulated with a formal notice period.

ACTION – Liz Bryan to circulate formal notice of EGM as part of September meeting of BJWP.

12. Dates of future meetings

Dates of future meetings was agreed ie

19 September 2017

17 October 2017 (for approval of 2018 events)

14 November 2017

13. AOB

- i) Sue Corlett noted the work on the Heath relating to All Saints' School and demolition of the neighbouring house. Cllr Bonavia explained that the work on the house was likely to be split across the summer holidays this year and next, so remedial work to the Heath was some time off.
- ii) Shirley Broughton asked whether VAT on Blackheath monies can be reclaimed and the process for doing so.