

Palewell Common & Fields Friends AGM
Wednesday 14th April, 2010 at All Saints Church Hall

Councillor Nicholas True welcomed all those present and thanked them for coming to the AGM. He was delighted to be involved with the Friends and greatly admired the work between the Friends and Richmond Council which has achieved so much in the past year. He then introduced Jacqueline Pattison who was chairing the meeting.

1. Chairman's Report:

The Chairman thanked Councillor True and thanked the Rev'd Chris Palmer who would be speaking a little later and also welcomed all present. She was standing in for The Chairman, Francis Rowland, who is away on a sabbatical. The meeting was scheduled to take an hour and she asked that questions be held until the end of the meeting. She also asked that anybody who had ideas or suggestions of things they would like to see done to add them to the flip chart using the 'post it' notes provided.

The Chairman gave a resume of the achievements of the past year:

On the 14th June 2009 the Friends held an activity day on the Common which was very enjoyable.

Medivet had attended - promoting 'good dog ownership'.

There had been a Health & Safety demonstration.

The Mortlake with East Sheen Society had been present.

Sporting events had also been organised.

Throughout the year The Friends had been involved in looking at :

The Ecology of the Common:

The kiosk flowerbeds are now planted with lavender and roses.

There has been a request for a scented garden, this is on hold 'pro tem' awaiting outcome of Pavilion..

The Friends have been working with the Council on bat and bird boxes

BTCV had organised some volunteering days which had been a great success and most enjoyable, all are very welcome to join in.

Finally on 23rd December on a very cold, icy day the Friends, again with Simon of BTCV's help, planted 9 fruit trees and 200 bulbs, pictures are on the website www.palewellcommon.org.uk

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Francis Rowland, Bernard Adams, Len Griffiths and Councillor Nicola Urquhart.

The Chairman introduced the Treasurer, Andy Sutch.

3. Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer had prepared copies of The Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2010. (*See appendix 1*).

The subscriptions and donations were those received from new members. As the amount of expenditure for the year, £165, had been very low existing Friends had been given a subscription 'holiday'. Support from Richmond Council for all printing costs had contributed to this, however this funding will cease and future printing costs will need to be paid for by the Friends.

Expenditure looming:

- The boules piste needs some repair
- The website may need some expenditure
- Other plans and ideas will probably incur some costs.

To ensure that there are funds available the Committee are re-introducing membership fees: £5 for an individual and £10 for family membership. Membership fees are payable now for the year to April 2011.

Richmond Sports Council has donated funding for an outdoor concrete tennis table and Sheen Sports have generously donated soft ball equipment.

The Friends will make Grant Applications to other sources for any possible/proposed developments in the coming year.

The Treasurer thanked Ken Cook who has audited and signed the Accounts.

4. Nomination & Election of Committee:

Councillor Nicholas True proposed the nomination of the existing committee members who had all stood for re-election. He also invited other nominations to be proposed. Councillor True asked for a formal show of hands and confirmed that the existing committee were re-elected.

5. Sports Update:

The Chairman invited Andy Sutch to give a sports update.

Andy Sutch reminded members that they receive a discount for both tennis and pitch and putt thanks to Peter Dunning's support of the Friends.

Boules: He thanked Len Griffiths for his work. He, and the Friends, are keen to encourage its growth. There are notices in the kiosk giving times of arranged boules matches. Boules are available from the kiosk for people to use.

Volley Ball: Richmond volley ball were here in July and had a very good day and are keen to come back. Volley ball equipment is available in the kiosk. Hopefully the court will be permanently marked out for the summer

Soft Ball: came here for the Activity Day which was very enjoyable and successful and they will come back. The Council kindly marked out the pitches. Equipment is available from the kiosk. It is hoped that pitches will be marked out for the summer.

Outdoor Table Tennis Table: The provision of an outdoor table has been suggested and funds are available from the Richmond Sports Council but the possible site may be an issue.

A Frisbee Event: This is under discussion.

Andy Sutch asked for ideas for any team games. Richmond Council operate the letting of the pitches and would encourage their use.

6. Working with the Friends Group:

The Chairman invited the Rev'd Chris Palmer to speak:

The Rev'd Palmer said he would focus on two aspects, namely tree planting and Play Week.

The Parish (all three churches are involved), run a holiday club for 100 children which takes place during the first week of the summer holidays. All outdoor activities take place on Palewell Common and the woodland is used for orienteering activities.

The Church ran a Frisbee camp five years ago which was a great success.

Helping to plant trees last December he said was a great morning. It was just before Christmas and the experience of doing something physical and social was very therapeutic. He took his children to the Common later to see the results of the morning's activity. He felt that the Friends of Palewell Common lift the experience of the community.

7. Ecology of Palewell Common & Fields:

The Chairman invited John Holroyd, Community Projects Officer of The Parks Department to speak, as Tasha Hunter the Ecology Officer could not be with us this evening.

John Holroyd said that Tasha Hunter is waiting for the results of a woodland survey, a meeting is scheduled for 28th April which will give an update. He said that the Council is very happy to work with BTCV and to walk through the woodland. He mentioned The Nature England scheme - this could provide more protection for the site.

On more mundane matters of Council involvement he mentioned that:

- New benches, new litter bins and dog bins had been installed
- Trees and bulbs had been provided for the orchard planting
- A hosepipe had been bought to water the trees.
- The 'fit point' (exercise machine) is now back on Palewell Common.

'Parks Week' takes place in July and he hoped that the Friends would be able to organise something as part of that week.

He reminded members that Palewell Common and Fields had been awarded a Green Flag for two years. In future the inspection to retain this will be by random visits.

He invited residents who have any issues of maintenance to please let the Council know via Robin Laidlaw, Deputy Chairman.

8. Pavilion Update:

Robin Laidlaw, Deputy Chairman, spoke on this important matter.

The main issues were: there were no public funds, the original plan was for 9 changing rooms and there was no community involvement. The Friends became involved with the Council and key priorities were established namely:

- 1) Changing rooms - but reduced from 9 to 4.
- 2) Public toilets and baby changing facilities.
- 3) A café.
- 4) A community space within the Pavilion.

To achieve the required funds a sale of the original Park Keeper's cottage had to include the club room and room above. This meant that some Community space would be lost. The Friends

opposed this and after negotiation it was agreed that an extension would be built on the Fields end of the Pavilion so that the facilities considered to be key priorities could be incorporated in the project. Final plans were drafted and a public consultation held on the weekend of 14th & 15th November 2009.

The up to date position is as follows:

- Planning Application was submitted on 18th January 2010
- Permission was granted on 15th March 2010.
- Plans now go to Cabinet meeting for final approval on 19th June 2010.
- Separation works to open up the cottage to the club room will start asap.
- It is hoped that the auction sale of the house will take place in July/August. Assuming a successful sale the design and tender phase for the remaining part of the building will be completed by the end of October.
- It is hoped that construction of the refurbishment would commence in December 2010 and be completed by April/May 2011.

Finally Robin emphasized that the Pavilion project was just one example of projects that can be achieved by local people who care about the area in which they live. He encouraged any non members to join the Friends and have a voice in the area's future development.

Robin Laidlaw then introduced David Sharp, Head of Construction Services for the London Borough of Richmond.

David confirmed that new facilities were planned , the café, a covered buggy area, baby changing area and patio area. One final consent was required regarding disabled facilities before the auction could proceed. The receipt from the sale will fund the development and, in addition, Richmond Council had given a commitment to fund any deficit up to a sum of £100,000. Cllr. Nicholas True wished to assure all those present that although the Liberal Democrats had committed the £100,000, the Conservatives, if elected, would honour this commitment - it is a locally driven project and is to be encouraged.

David pointed out that planning approval is for a domestic property, however a change of use would require planning consent. It was noted that a 'change of use' request from a purchaser wishing to use the house as a Nursery would be looked upon sympathetically by the Council.

9. Questions / Suggestions

Various points regarding the Pavilion were noted for consideration once this stage was reached. In particular:

- Some provision for shelter was requested on the proposed patio for dog walkers wishing to use the café.
- Clarification of how toilets would be accessed during day time as external access was no longer possible, in line with Council policy.
- A member suggested the property be double glazed to aid noise levels. D. Sharp replied that no physical improvements were being made to the property pre-sale other than enabling works.

- An indication of price was requested by a number of members. D.Sharp replied that he was not in a position to speculate or be drawn on this subject at this stage.
- Another member requested indication of refurbishment costs. D.Sharp replied with a very approximate figure of £500,000.
- A question was raised about the potential café owner. D.Sharp replied that the Council would be looking for an experienced person to bid to run the café. It was important that it was kept as a community facility and it would not be leased to a big chain. One or two parties have already expressed interest.
- A member asked about a possible caretaker. D.Sharp replied whoever is running the café would maintain the lavatories. The Council would maintain the changing rooms and lock up. Finer details to be agreed by contract.

Other general questions:

- A member requested that it be made possible to renew membership by standing order or automatically renew membership online each year. This was noted and would be investigated.
- The Chairman asked the Membership Secretary how many members had renewed this evening. She confirmed the total was 16.
- Another member asked how many members were in the Friends. The Chairman responded that there were now over 100 members.

Robin Laidlaw, Deputy Chair, expressed the committee's profound thanks to Tony Dowson for creating and maintaining the website and all his willing support and help. It was of huge importance to the Friends.

The Chairman asked members to look at the plans for the Pavilion which were on display. She requested any ideas and/or suggestions be left on post it notes at the side of the hall.
(see Appendix 2)

There being no further business the Chairman repeated her thanks to all who attended.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Appendix 1

Friends of Palewell Common and Fields

Receipts and Payments for the year ended 31st March 2009

| | | £ |
|---|-------|-------|
| Balance at bank and cash in hand at 1st April 2009 | | 529 |
| Subscriptions received | | 445 |
| Expenditure: | | |
| Printing and stationery | (91) | |
| Banner | (37) | |
| Gazebo | (11) | |
| Hall hire | (26) | |
| | <hr/> | (165) |
| Balance at bank and cash in hand at 31st March 2010 | | <hr/> |
| | | 809 |
| | | <hr/> |

Report of the Independent Auditor

I have reviewed the above summary of the Receipts and Payments of the Friends of Palewell Common and Fields for the year ended 31 March 2010 and confirm that they are in agreement with the underlying accounting records.

Kenneth Cook

6 April 2010

Appendix 2

Ideas for future Friends activities.

1. The idea of "-----? DAY" e.g.
 - Fitness Day/Keep Fit Day
 - Sportathon
 - Sports Relief Day tie in
 - Football Day
 - Walkabout Day
 - Run Day/Fun Run Day
 - Tree Planting Day
2. Picnic tables & chairs to borrow or rent.
3. Summer Concert like small Marble Hill (Jazz?).
4. Offer camping for Guides and Scouts.
5. Could a quieter leaf blower be used on the tennis courts?
6. Maybe a Group could be formed to bake homemade cakes for special occasions?
D. Crone (could not find on the membership list).
7. Doggie events - for instance obedience competition. Dog Blog.
8. 'competitions' unique to Palewell Common to help bring in people from outside the area as well as making the park more attractive to locals.
e.g.
 - Frisbee competition
 - Tennis
 - Volleyball
 - Sports Day East Sheen (or offer facility to local schools for their Sports Days)
 - Football tournament with local celebrity