

Friends of Palewell Common & Fields

Minutes of Meeting – July 15th 2008, 7:30 pm

Held at 51 Hertford Avenue, East Sheen, SW14

Agenda

1. Welcome – Francis Rowland opened the meeting and welcomed the members
 - 1.1 Attending: Francis Rowland, Jacqueline Pattison, Robin Laidlaw, Dhun Kenny, Rikki Marks, Nicky Meakin
 - 1.2 Apologies: Angela Howarth, Bernard Adams, Tony Dowson, Andy Sutch, Gaye Galvin, John Holroyd, Victoria Webb, Jackie Reeves
 - 1.3 Chrissie Proctor has resigned from the committee due to pressure at work but has offered to assist with landscaping issues if required.
2. Previous minutes – The minutes of 11th June 2008 were reviewed and accepted.
3. Progress Report

3.1 Membership

- Robin reported that membership now stands at 34 which is encouraging.
- Robin will act as Membership Secretary while Dhun has to have an operation. (We all wish her well and hope that this is a complete success).
- **All members are asked to talk to neighbours and local friends to encourage them to join the Friends**
- Some committee members have not joined – RL to contact them
- We will try to put a notice and some forms at the Kiosk. RL will also arrange for application forms and newsletters to be in the Library, All saints Church and other local venues.
- RL will consider other publicity and marketing of the Friends
- We should ensure that local press gives publicity to the formation of the Friends and early successes. Rikki agreed to write a letter to the local paper for this to be included in the letter page.

3.2 Banking and accounts

- Current account stands at £315
- **Jacqui to follow up with Gaye Galvin about refunding cost of web domain to FR**

3.3 Pavilion and park improvements (short term)

- The Friends team, with the help of LBRuT, have made significant improvements to the local amenities and activities, including
 - Kiosk & Pavilion painted
 - Toilets refurbished and now kept clean and serviceable
 - Boules Pistes restored
 - Involvement and plans with Safer Neighbourhood team
 - Discounts for Friends & families for Golf & Tennis
 - Tramp and dumped scooter removed
 - Green Flag award for Palewell Common & Fields
 - Love Parks event with Boules, Woodland walks
 - Affiliation with several local organisations including BTCV, Mortlake & East Sheen Society, Friends of Richmond Park and other links on our web site

Robin reported on progress regarding the Pavilion

- We have written to Paul Chadwick to ask for a progress report either on plans for the pavilion or appointing consultants but we have not had a clear reply, despite being chased by email and offering to meet the consultants and assist.
- It appears that no significant progress has been made for over 18 months since Paul presented his 'plan'
- Our local councillors have offered to assist and we will involve them if Paul does not respond soon
- A local charity (the Bridge for Social Communication) have expressed an interest in using the pavilion and possibly purchasing it but Paul has refused to negotiate until he has completed the consultation process (but this has not started!!)
- The committee also have ideas about the use of the site, including small offices, meeting rooms, coffee shop etc and feel that restoring this as a residential building may not offer the best use
- **We will try to chase again and then escalate directly and through our local representatives**

3.4 Common & Woodland condition?

- Generally the Common is in good condition and looks good
- We complained about the **nettles & brambles**, especially on path adjacent to wall by Richmond Park and path from Enmore Gardens, and were advised that this would be done after nesting season. The problem has got worse and must be addressed. **(FR to Raise with Parks team)**
- **Path by Kissing Gate** has had some bark but still gets waterlogged. Needs to be raised or implement better drainage – **Parks Team**
- Rubbish has been accumulating along river bank, behind railings. Ownership of this area has been discussed before but we would like to get some action to keep this clean otherwise it will become a dumping ground. **(FR to Raise with Parks team)**
- Need signs to remind people to remove dog mess – **Parks Team**
- Paddling Pool needs cleaning again. This has been done but becomes dirty very quickly. **(FR to Raise with Parks team)**
- Dog Walking organisations. Richmond Park has bylaws that limit people to four dogs with two on a lead. Is there anything similar for Palewell Common? **LBRuT**. There are several commercial dog walkers that park in Enmore Gardens or near Bank of England and then go onto the common with 6 or more dogs and then do not always pick up dog mess. This is a growing problem and we need a long term solution. **FR to send email to mydogwalker.com** and **review with Parks Team**. Friends should note telephone number of vehicles bringing dog walking teams and let FR know.

3.5 Sports Activities

- Tennis: We would like to know terms and duration of lease for Tennis Courts and how to improve access for local people. We will contact LBRuT and LTA to understand how we could participate in Tennis for Free Campaign. Few 'Friends' use the courts – they prefer the courts at local (private) sports clubs but also Tennis Courts only cost £3.00 per hour on Sheen Common compared with £5.50 per hour on Palewell Common – which we believe to be expensive, especially considering the condition of the courts.
- Tennis coaching costs £20 per hour and then you have to pay £5.50 for the court, which is more expensive than other locations in Richmond. Is this putting people off?
- Boules – need to review with Bernard to see if we can get regular team? (FR)
- Cricket – not seen regularly – should this be promoted and by whom?
- **Volley Ball** – Andy Sutch has identified equipment that can be made available with costs shared between Sports Council & either Friends or LBRuT. RL will liaise with Andy to set up a demo day, where anyone can join in and try Volley Ball, and we can then review if there is a demand to maintain the facilities – Potential date – **weekend of 26/27th July**. Need to agree where to site the net(s) and also agree if we keep nets & balls in Kiosk and have them available daily or at weekends?

3.6 Safer Neighbourhood

- Dhun & Victoria continue to monitor security on the common and keep safer neighbourhood team informed of any problems
- We had a major incident when the table on the dog free area was destroyed (by fire). This had been donated by Waitrose and is unlikely to be replaced
- Need to review patrol schedule, especially on Friday & Saturday nights between 10:00 and 12:00 pm. Cover seems to be irregular because of shift patterns but this is high risk time.
- Need new notice on notice board to tell people how to contact Safer Neighbourhood team or Friends to report problems

3.7 Young People & local schools

- Schools now on holiday so will review initiatives in September
- All Saints summer camp will be using the common for various activities
- One Friend has suggested that we could create a 'Scent Garden' for children and visually handicapped people. This could be a good project to involve local schools. **FR to review with LBRuT**

3.8 Web Site

- **Excellent Feedback – our thanks to Tony Dowson for setting this up.**
- **Needs regular updating – FR will take this and work with Tony to update and add news**
- **Members pages** - we will provide Tony with list of Friends and their email addresses so that they can be invited to register for access to this area. Onstitution and minutes as well as other discussions will be included in this.

3.9 Notice Board

- We would like to be able to put Friends' notices or information about events on to the board. **FR to ask if we can have a key.**

3.10 Newsletter.

- We do not have any volunteers to produce a Friends Newsletter three times each year - **if anyone is willing to lead this with some other people please contact Francis.**
- In short term FR will update web site and print relevant pages for people without internet access
- Committee will prepare a template for newsletter to initiate the process

3.11 Love Parks Event

- Although short notice, this was a great success. Many thanks to Robin and Bernard for their hard work in getting this off the ground.
- The nature walks by Tasha Hunter were most enjoyable and very well received
- We had some recruitment success and people enjoying the Boules Pistes
- We will need to start earlier next year with an organising committee to run it.

3.12 Green Flag

- Delighted to inform the Friends that Palewell Common is one of four locations in Richmond that has been awarded the Green Flag scheme, as announced on July 17th. Our thanks to Rikki Marks, Bernard Adams and other Friends and the LBRuT team for their work in preparing for the inspection.
- We will be reviewing the benefits of this and how to maintain the standards for next year

3.13 Problems (raised at meeting and follow up from Public Meeting in June)

- **Kissing Gate** - still concerned about disabled access and people who find the clasp difficult to operate
- **Gates** - we discussed with LBRuT the need for automatic closers on the gates in Dog Free area and Children's Playground. **FR to review with Parks team.**
- **Dog Free area** - notice missing on gate by kiosk. Perhaps this could be described as 'picnic area – no dogs allowed'?
- **Barrier** (by Pavilion) has been damaged. It has been left open several times at night which results in people driving in and then having to turn around (often at speed). We recommend that barrier is kept shut at ALL times, even by park contractors.

3.14 Future Events

- We are considering a '**Palewell Picnic**' and sports day – possibly weekend of 4th October or 11th October.
- **Need feedback from Friends to confirm interest and offers to assist in running this**

3.15 **BTCV – FR to contact Simon** and organise further projects to improve the area

3.16

4. Next Meeting will be at **7:30 pm on Thursday 18th September**

5. Meeting closed at 9:30 pm