

Friends of Palewell Common & Fields

Minutes of Meeting – September 18th 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, Robin Laidlaw, Dhun Kenny, Sally Troen, Rikki Marks, Andy Sutch
 - 1.2 Apologies: Angela Howarth, Jacqueline Pattison, Bernard Adams, Tony Dowson, Tally Foster, Yvonne Kelleher, Victoria Webb, John Holroyd
2. Previous minutes – The minutes of 15th July 2008 were accepted. Some of the members stated that they had not received them. And FCR agreed to send them again.
3. Progress Report

3.1 Membership

- Robin reported that membership now stands at 44.
- FR is waiting for key to notice board (from John Holroyd). When received we can put information about Friends on board and some forms at the Kiosk.
- RL will continue to arrange for application forms and newsletters to be in the Library, All saints Church and other local venues.
- FR has added information and links to London Local <http://www.yourlocallondon.com/east-sheen/>
- We will print and distribute 2000 leaflets to publicise event on October 19th and include invitation to join the Friends group
- Put signs up in local shops and pay, if required, for cards in newsagents (RL)
- FR agreed to write to neighbours (that overlook the Common)

3.2 Banking and accounts

- Current account stands at £405.19
- Agreed rule that any bill or expense over £20 must be agreed by Committee
- Obtained new asset – Volley Ball equipment that is being stored in Kiosk (Value £143.50)

3.3 Pavilion and park improvements

Robin reported on progress regarding the Pavilion

- We have written and chased Paul Chadwick to ask for a progress report either on plans for the pavilion or appointing consultants but we have still not had a reply, despite being chased by email and telephone on a number of occasions
- We have had three proposals for bringing Pavilion back into use (which were circulated prior to meeting). The committee decided not to review in any detail until we get some response from the Council.
- Our local councillors (Cllrs True & Urquart) have offered support but we now need to ask them to take up the matter in council meetings. Andy pointed out that we need to press them and also involve our local MP (Susan Kramer). We should emphasise that the local community want the facility and the proposals meet local needs, as well as supporting social needs and community activity. RL and FR agreed to take this further.

3.4 Common & Woodland condition?

- We had a day with BTCV and cleared nettles and overhanging trees on paths, along wall and other areas. More work to be done on some of the smaller paths.
- **Dogs. Need signs to remind people to remove dog mess. There are no signs at the entrances in Hertford Avenue, Enmore Gardens or main entrance by Kiosk. Parks Team.**
- **Dogs have been seen in dog-free area and signs need to be replaced and door closers on gates. (Parks Team)**
- **Dog Walking. We are still waiting to hear from Parks Team about Byelaws and how we can resolve problem of dog mess. (FR/Parks Team).** Need Friends to report people, especially dog walking teams who allow dogs to mess.
- **Scented Garden** - agreed that this would be a good facility and that best place is to enhance garden beds around the pavilion. (Any new areas would likely be trashed and not maintained.). Suggest that we work with Parks Team to redesign the planting and

work could be done by Friends on next date with BTCV? (FR to review) Design and plant selection can be done with RHS (Keith Hutchinson) or Chrissie Proctor.

3.5 Sports Activities

- Tennis: See note attached detailing discussion with Peter Dunning. This will be discussed with Parks Team (FR). Andy agreed to talk to LTA to see if they can help fund free tennis or enhanced facilities. FR to talk to Peter Dunning to see if we can have free tennis for a few hours on October 19th.
- Boules – there has been some increase in use this summer. Repair to wood end agreed with Parks Team and request for new sand. **Need to move bench away from fence back to Boules area (Parks Team)**. Possibility that Waitrose will provide replacement for the table that was burnt.
- Boules tournament to be arranged for 19th October (BA & FR) and consider having a French Theme and prize(s) to help promote activity? Also, contact All Saints Active Retired group to see if they would like to arrange regular play for the members (RL/BA)
- **Volley Ball** – volley ball equipment supplied by Sports Council and now in kiosk. Andy will arrange for the Richmond Team to come on 19th October to play and lead the Volley Ball games. We will plan for how to promote and get regular play from next Spring.

3.6 Safer Neighbourhood

- Dhun & Victoria continue to monitor security on the common and keep safer neighbourhood team informed of any problems – nothing to report this month (except that Victoria Webb had bicycles stolen from her shed)
- Need notice on notice board to tell people how to contact Safer Neighbourhood team or Friends to report problems (FR to discuss with Parks Team)

3.7 Young People & local schools

- FR to discuss with Mona Adams to see if any initiatives can be taken, especially with East Sheen Primary?

3.8 Web Site

- Needs regular updating – FR will take this and work with Tony to update and add news
- Agreed to limit contact information – only include with prior agreement from members

3.9 Notice Board

- We would like to be able to put Friends' notices or information about events on to the board. **FR waiting for key.**

3.10 2009 Events

- Possibility of participating with Love Parks event in 2009 but it was pointed out that the week clashes with many local events (TBA)
- We agreed that we should plan an event in the Spring (April/May) to try to get more community involvement and use of our facilities, including regular Volley Ball and Boules
- Review Green Flag with Parks Team and plans or requirements for next year

3.11 Problems (some raised at July meeting) to be discussed with Parks Team

- **Kissing Gate** - still concerned about disabled access and people who find the clasp difficult to operate. The area is dry at the moment but has a plank lying on ground as this was reported as becoming very wet once we have rain. LBRuT agreed to level and put down some more bark).
- **Gates** - we discussed with Parks Team the need for automatic closers on the gates in Dog Free area and Children's Playground.
- **Park Wall** – some new graffiti has appeared.
- **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.
- **Area around Pavilion needs weeding** – is this work for Veolia or Friends? Discuss with Parks Team (FR)
- **Litter Bins** – Gaye Galvin had agreed to provide litter Bins but these have not materialised?
- **Illegal Parking** – Gaye is still holding on to sign about 'No Parking after Dusk' which needs to be replaced. Also, the gate has not been replaced and we have seen people driving on to the common in the evenings and parking around the Pavilion. **Parks Team to address.**
- **Entrance Gate** – still broken and usually left open.
- **Footballers' rubbish.** Reported that litter, especially bottles and other debris is left on touch lines after football matches. Need to ensure that organisers know that they are responsible and have it collected. (apsoccerstars@yahoo.com is one organiser but check with Council)
- Check on who is responsible for ivy and other growth from Pitch & Putt area into gardens?

3.12 BTCV – seen as successful, FR to contact Simon and organise further projects to improve the area.

- Some more clearance on main paths, along river side would be useful.
- **Review work plan and funding with Parks Team (FR)**

4. Next Meeting will be scheduled when required but most likely early 2009. We will also plan a public meeting in Spring to update local community.

5. Meeting closed at 9:30 pm

Discussion with Peter Dunning (September 4th 2008)
Re: Pavilion and Sports facilities

Pavilion.

Peter explained that the garden room (with the French windows) was reduced in size after the café closed and the space was incorporated into the groundsman's house. The room is used to store tennis coaching kit but this is not a formal arrangement and the room could be cleared for other uses. It may now be too small for café when the catering facilities are added.

Peter has previously asked the council for permission to expand the kiosk and refreshments provided. His contract and rent for the site include the assumption that he will provide refreshments. If we were to invite anyone else on to the site then he would require the council to renegotiate the terms of his lease. Also, he would be keen to take on any new café if this were to be developed. However, this would have additional cost implications as he will need to continue to man the kiosk for security reasons and control of the pitch & putt facilities.

He pointed out that the council have always prioritised work on the play area without investing much on other facilities.

Tennis.

We reviewed the LTA initiative to provide free tennis in parks. This was raised by the council but they were also not willing to compensate him for any loss of revenue, which would mean that they would no longer be commercially viable.

The tennis court fees and rate are set by the council and reviewed annually. The council set the rates higher for controlled sites (where there is a caretaker or operator), and lower for machine operated sites. Therefore any desire to offer free tennis or reduced rates would have to be negotiated with the council.

The condition of the courts has deteriorated further. They were last resurfaced in 1995 with a planned 10 year life. With subsidence and surface quality deteriorating Peter agrees that the price may need to be reviewed but would also expect the council to review his lease.

Francis Rowland