

Friends of Palewell Common & Fields

Minutes of Meeting – 19th March 2009, 7.30 pm

Agenda

1. Welcome – Francis Rowland opened the meeting and welcomed the members.
 - 1.1 Attending: Francis Rowland, Jacqueline Pattison, Robin Laidlaw, Andy Sutch, Rikki Marks, Angela Howorth.
 - 1.2 Apologies: Dhun Kenny, Penny Cowell, Victoria Webb, Tony Dowson, Bernard Adams, Sally Troen.

2. **Previous Minutes:** The minutes of 18th September 2008 were accepted but it was noted that dog signs were still not in place, automatic gate closures were still not installed and the barrier was still not repaired. Francis Rowland informed the meeting that he and Jacqueline Pattison were meeting with John Holroyd and Tasha Hunter on site on the 24th March to review work to be done in the woodland before August and would raise these issues again.

3. **Membership:**

Robin reported that membership stands at just under 60 members a target of 100 was suggested. After discussion it was agreed that no charge would be made this year for existing members. New members would be charged the annual fee. Membership charges for 2010 to be reviewed.

4. **Banking & Accounts:**

Andy reported that the current account stands at £529.11. The Council have paid for work up to date. He raised the idea that if we become a second tier funder we may be able to get a grant. For selected and approved projects Richmond will match every £1 we spend with a grant of £2. Richmond would probably require an annual programme of proposed expenditure. To be discussed at the next meeting.

It was noted that Nationwide is closing its office in Sheen and the nearest offices will be Richmond or Putney.

5. **Pavilion:**

See Item 8.

6. **Role of FoPC**

Francis reported that the survey sent to the existing members seeking their views produced a very disappointing response. He asked the Committee to focus on the purpose of The Friends.

Andy said there were two main issues:

 - 1) The use of the site - do we want to increase the use
 - 2) Who is taking the long term view

- It was agreed that the Group should be taking the long term view.

- It was also agreed that the Friends can and should be a funnel for local people to raise issues which are of concern to them. The FoPC website should be used for this purpose.

Francis pointed out that the reason for events was to encourage local involvement.

- The Committee agreed to focus on one event to keep FoPC visibility alive and to hold that event in the middle of the year. Unfortunately the Love Parks date this year is 25th July to 2nd August which is too late. A date around the 14th June was suggested. Francis will check other local event days so that we do not clash and a date will be agreed which can be announced at the public meeting on the 30th April.

Suggested possible ideas for the Event were:

- Volley ball
- Boules tournament
- Nature walks
- Craft tent (Andy said the Home Guard have a marquee - ask to borrow)
- 5 a side football tournament (involve the people who have the football contract)
- Have stands e.g. BTCV, local police
- Possible entertainment for children e.g. merry go round
- Music e.g. jazz band, Barnes Brass Band, local school band

Robin proposed that a possible objective for the Friends would be to have an annual goal so that people felt happy contributing.

Andy suggested that a different approach would be that all money raised at the event could be used for a good (local) ecological cause - but not to be used as a charity event. Robin suggested that it could fund ideas such as the proposed scented garden.

Jacqueline raised the possibility of involving the children attending Play Week (20th/24th July) in helping with planting the scented garden or bluebells in the wood. (Contact is Melanie Crompton through Robin.)

- Francis confirmed that he has a key for the notice board on the Common.

- Robin will draft a notice to be laminated and displayed on the notice board and on the gates highlighting important and useful numbers for people to contact in the event of problems.

7. **Sport activities:**

- Tennis . Andy will approach the LTA to see if they will consider providing funding to allow the courts to be used free for all or part of the time.
- Boules. Bernard has a list of 30/35 people interested in playing and will organise a competition every other Sunday. Francis and Bernard will act as hosts. This could encourage other people to join and hopefully expand the use of the

facility. A replacement table and benches would be useful and Francis will ask the Council if the Friends can provide one.

- Volleyball. It was agreed that the Volleyball pitch should be permanently marked out and that, subject to Andy checking the liability situation, the nets should be put up for Easter and left up for some months in the summer holiday.
- Soft ball. The committee agreed to buy and provide equipment. (Speak to Peter Dunning)
- Walking for health. The PCT is keen to encourage walks for people recovering from illness, these walks to cover specific distances. The committee agreed to ask Tasha Hunter to prepare a leaflet for walkers pointing out things of interest and setting out the distances walked, these leaflets would be available at the kiosk and on the web site.

9. Woodlands & other work

- BTCV. The committee agreed to fix a few days in the year to work with BTCV on clearing and maintaining the common and particularly the woodland. Francis to review funding with Park's Department.
- Rikki was particularly interested to pursue the idea of a wild garden.

10. Membership renewal & fees

See Item 3 Membership.

8. Pavilion & other facilities

A paper setting out Richmond Council's proposal for the Pavilion was circulated to the Committee, it is being presented to the Council on Monday 23rd March. Option 1 is proposed: sell half of the pavilion to raise c£400,000 to refurbish the remainder to create 6 team changing rooms and 3 referee changing rooms, plus public toilet facilities. Rikki queried a change of use to existing building. The Council will be voting on the 23rd. Cllr. Nicola Urquart has registered to speak. Cllr. Nick True has asked for the item to be withdrawn for consultation. Robin will attend the meeting and register to speak, Jacqueline will also attend. Andy Sutch was upset that a letter had been sent to the Council purporting to have been sent following this Friends' meeting and it had expressed views that were either wrong or had not been agreed. This had not followed due process and could have compromised his position. The Chairman apologised and asked that his apology be recorded.

The main issue is that the Friends have been asking to be involved for the past two years and have been refused any consultation. The suggested Council proposal is not the best use of the available space for the community. The Friends accept that the building needs investment and that therefore a part sale is understandable but the proposal leaves the space unusable for the greater part of the week. Robin said that the local Councillors and the local M.P. had asked to be consulted and had been ignored. The Council has totally failed to consult. In principle there would not be an objection to part sale part conversion for

community benefit. Andy will write to Cllr. Liz Jaeger and to the Leisure Officer and Francis will write to all the Cabinet Councillors attending the meeting asking for further consultation.

Various issues raised by the Committee were:

- access. The proposal for changing facilities divided over two floors which is not efficient, fails to meet the needs of disabled people, may require a lift etc.
- lack of flexibility as changing rooms could not serve a dual purpose.
- car parking for the house
- security and privacy
- no consideration of public space available for other users of Palewell Common.

11. Annual General Meeting

The Committee agreed that the AGM will be held in All Saints Church Hall on April 30th at 7.30 pm. (Angela to confirm booking of the hall.) The Agenda for the AGM will be agreed at the meeting of the Friends Committee on Monday 30th March at 2.00 pm.

- Andy suggested that the Chairman invite representatives of the local schools to attend the AGM.

12. AOB

Discussion of items listed was deferred until the meeting on 30th March