

MILLFIELDS USERS' GROUP

Minutes of General Meeting of the Users' Group on Thursday 30 July 2009 at All Souls Church, Overbury Street, E5

1 MEMBERSHIP, APOLOGIES , AND WELCOME

Present: Bob Benge (Vice Chair); David Brunetti; Michael Day; Tim Evans; Daniel Farmer; Vivienne Foxley; Garfield Hackett; Claire Kelly (Notetaker); Kriss Lee; Anna O'Brien; Andrea Oliver; Anna O'Sullivan; John O'Sullivan; Lesley Prince; Ian Rathbone (Chair); Anne Thesenvitz.

In Attendance: Bruce Irving (Parks Development Officer); Nathan Eysers (Theories Consultants); Dave Carson (National Grid).

Apologies for Absence: Cllr Linda Kelly; Katy Andrews; Mike Caulfield; Teddie Sawyer; Brian Weller (Secretary); Barry Buitekant.

New members were welcomed.

2 MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING ON 2 MAY 2009

2.1 Minutes were **AGREED** as a correct record.

2.2 Matters Arising

Claire said that the ranger situation was continuing to deteriorate with both rangers (Steve and Dave) on annual leave at the same time. Dave due back on Monday but only for one day per week. An agency ranger had the previous week driven the buggy into the river and been dismissed so no buggy either and just 2 dedicated gardeners spending too much of their time litter picking and with no buggy and the mower broken and waiting to be fixed.

AGREED; Bruce Irving would look into situation and report back.

3 RESTRUCTURING OF PARKS DEPARTMENT – SUPPORT FOR MILLFIELDS

Bruce Irving (Parks Development Officer) said that Parks department had been restructured. He would provide a 'map' of the new structure and a list of the staff allocated to Millfields. Parks development officers will attend

user groups in future. Bruce introduced himself as a 'one stop shop' for all park related matters. Instead of the previous arrangement of the HPF having an independent worker this job will be undertaken by these officers. Hackney Parks Forum meetings will continue as before. Bruce explained that he was involved in quite a lot of meetings at the moment concerning the Millfields Masterplan and recently appointed consultants Camlin Lonsdale and is collecting a list of all stakeholders to be consulted by them. Bruce can be contacted on 0208 356 4958 or e-mail Bruce.Irving@hackney.gov.uk

Ian Rathbone pointed out that Hackney Parks Forum are wary of the removal of the HPF independent Support Worker, feeling that user groups need a worker who is independent of the council, a 'critical friend' who can tackle the council's failings in a robust way which a council employee can't. HPF will be looking for a review of the decision after 6 months.

4 ITEM BROUGHT FORWARD FROM SECRETARY'S REPORT – NATIONAL GRID (NG)

Renewal of Water Mains

Dave Carson, site manager for the NG substation site, explained that Thames Water were replacing the Victorian water main that runs from Lea bridge across south Millfields, which will mean digging up Hillstowe st. It will take 4 weeks for the Hillstowe st section and another 4 weeks to get across the park. For the 4 weeks that Hillstowe st. is up they are proposing creating 15 parking spaces in the layby on the access road in the park. This means that at night security would be moved from the white barrier to the red barrier at the sub station. The bays would be marked specifically for the use of Hillstowe St. Residents would be given stickers for their cars. Tim requested that Clancy Docwra be reminded of the regulation preventing them driving vehicles over or near tree roots. Dave said he had noted this.

Alternative Access to Substation site

Ian reported on a meeting on 18 June when 7 access routes were presented, one being Hillstowe st. and another along Millfields Rd. and via the old powerstation/EDF site. The other 5 were various routes across the park.

There was a linked suggestion to take waste by conveyor belt to the canal to go on barges to North London Waste at Edmonton. Ian explained that the original National Grid Project only had one more year to run but they had now announced a new scheme which will take another 5 years to 2015 digging another tunnel this time from Haringey to Millfields, and building a new headhouse inside the substation site. The User Group's aim is still to get compensation in the form of the funding necessary to convert the old Lodge into a state of the art community centre/café. Members asked if we will get the canal side path back and Bruce was asked to ask LBH who have currently commandeered it for waste station development.

AGREED: the reports be noted, and Bruce Irving investigate the state of play on the canalside path.

5 MILLFIELDS MASTERPLAN – UPDATE

Bob Benghe had represented the User Group on the interview panel which appointed Camlin Lonsdale as Master

Plan consultants. Bob explained that 3 firms tendered and that **CL** stood out as having the best with the most creative ideas about the park.

There were 300 public responses to the original survey and the main recommendations were for a café, public toilets and refurbished playgrounds. **CL** have been supplied with a stakeholder list and will set up consultation meetings from mid August to mid September. User Group members were ipso facto stakeholders. **CL** had promised not to go over old ground.

There is a project board consisting of John Wade (Head of Green Spaces) Sam Parry (Parks Development Manager) and Lara Gibson (Design for London). Then there is a steering group which is Bruce and MUG committee members (Bob Benghe, Ian Rathbone, and Brian Weller) meeting with the Consultants.

Andrea Oliver (member) said that she and her partner, Garfield Hackett, were developing a business plan for a café using food grown locally with an education about nutrition theme. They also want to work on reintegrating socially excluded kids. They have already met with Camlin Lonsdale and will continue to be involved in the process. Michael Day mentioned that the Old School House was also a possible café site.

AGREED: All User Group Members to be advised of the date of the Stakeholder consultation meeting; and the outcome of Steering Group meetings to be reported back to User Group.

6 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBER

The Chair said that as a result of the recent resignation of Tony Janes, we needed a new committee member. Vivienne Foxley and Andrea Oliver were proposed and seconded.

AGREED: Vivien Foxley and Andrea Oliver be elected to the Committee, one to be co-opted.

7 PATHFINDER – NEW PLAY FACILITIES FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Nathan Eysers from Theories consultants for the Pathfinder project explained that decisions on siting a new playground on the south side was on hold but on the north side their favoured site was up by the Beecholme estate as the most suitable site for natural play. The area beside the old playground was too bland and did not

lend itself to the type of natural play they had in mind while the area below Beecholme estate has natural clumps of trees, a boggy patch and is in an acoustic hollow away from residents and the sound of the Leabridge road. They had spoken to Camlin Lonsdale(consultant) who was happy about the use of this site and they had spoken to Christine Williamson the vice chair of Beecholme TRA and It was agreed that provided they continued to talk to TRA the user group was happy for them to continue to consult over building a pathfinder playground on this site.

A short questionnaire accompanies these minutes and members are asked to complete and return and distribute to interested local residents for completion.

Members asked about the south side of the Park location and Nathan explained that out of 4 original sites 2 had been dismissed: the canal side site as too far out of the way and too close to the canal and the one by the graffittied wall with the barbed wire on top as being too hard to work with within the budget constraints. This left the space by the lodge and the sacred ring. Members were not happy with the choice of the sacred ring as it is dark, cold and has other uses so Nathan accepted that it was unlikely to be offered as a location although it was his preferred option because it was such a lovely place to be with the tree canopy. He confirmed that no trees would be damaged or even touched in the making of this play equipment but that they create a natural play space environment in which a climbing structure fits perfectly. Concerns were raised about over consulting and Nathan agreed to talk to Camlin

Lonsdale to endeavour to coordinate and cut down on consultation as much as possible.

AGREED: that the report be noted; that the Beecholme Estate site be agreed in principle; and that the consultation on that site be issued with the Minutes of this meeting.

8 NORTHERN OLYMPIC FRINGE AREA ACTION PLAN

It was reported that the User Group had just received a long-awaited consultation document from Waltham

Forest Borough Council entitled “Northern Olympic Fringe Area Action Plan – Lea Bridge Area Issues and Options

Consultation”. The consultation period at this stage is 8 July to 19 August.

AGREED: to set up a sub-group consisting of: Brian Weller, Bruce Irving, Anna O’Brien and Bob Bengé to draw up a draft Millfields response, with Bob acting as convenor.

9 SECRETARY’S REPORT

M11 Link rd – Exchange Lands - item postponed to next meeting

Mural on National Grid Boundary - item postponed to next meeting

Notice boards: Bruce was asked to look at notice board situation. He proposed supplying all rangers with appropriate key, which would help (provided of course

there are rangers!) He said that the council was currently reviewing park signage and that there would be more news on this in due course.

Cycling: cycle racks have been recommended to be installed by the playground and would be coming soon. Anna OB asked why they are installing cycle racks in the one place in the park where there are plenty of railings to lock bikes too already and why not have them in places where there is nowhere to lock a bike? There was general agreement with this sentiment from the floor and a few alternative suggestions for bike racks such as by benches.

10 FINANCE REPORT

Ian reported that Brian has sorted out a plaque for Gerald Laufer, a former very active member of MUG and a location for a memorial bench is being identified. Claire reported that when the plaque is paid for there will be no money in the bank, but that an application for Grassroots grant for £5000 over 3 years could be submitted in October.

Bruce was asked to find out if LBH could pay for leaflet printing as part of their commitment to involve the public freeing up the grant for more interesting things like summer events etc.

AGREED: Claire Kelly be authorised to seek Grassroots grant funding, and Bruce to report back on funding of publicity by LBH.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Confirmed as **Sat October 31st 1.00 pm** – venue to be confirmed.

12 AOB

Bruce Irving reported that he is putting in an entry to 'Mayors Great Spaces' on behalf of Millfields – not an application for funding more a profile raising exercise.

AGREED: to seek more information from Bruce.