



MINUTES OF RVPS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING **Held on Thursday 6th March 2014** **at Bromley Court Hotel**

Members present: Brian Atkinson, Deirdre Baffin, Keith Barrett, James Bazely, Carol Davidson, Heather Dovey, Mark Duncan, Cllr Nicky Dykes, David England, Doreen Fellingham, Gail & George Hamblin, Cllr Will Harmer, Carol Heather, Iris Holley, Tony Illingworth, Christina Jarvis, Maureen Johnson, Clive Lees, Liz Logan, Gillian McIntosh, Elizabeth McJade, Euan McMaster, Mike Mielniczek, Pat & Tony Morton, Linda Müller, Beatrice Osborn, M Oliver, David Page, Margaret Payne, Barbara Price, Brian Sanders, Peter Saunders, Kay Shaw, David Smart, L Stockwell, Richard Thomas, Cllr Michael Tickner, Pat & Leslie Tucker, Leslie & Wendy Watmore, Pauline Walton

Apologies: Ann Rowswell, Barbara Brown

- 1 **Chairman's opening remarks:** Leslie Watmore welcomed people to the meeting and introduced the Speaker, Mr Gavin Plaskitt from Lewisham Council on the topic of Beckenham Place Park, the bids for funding from Parks for People, and proposals for a flood relief scheme.
- 2 **Guest Speaker:** Mr Gavin Plaskitt from Lewisham Council
Gavin explained that his role is to investigate funding streams to benefit residents.
Beckenham Place Park is 74 hectares (compared to Greenwich Park 96 ha). It is often mistaken as a golf course or as playing fields depending on which side of the railway you live. The Cator family carved out the landscape. English Heritage lists it as one of the 10 most significant parks in London with buildings at risk. The Mansion House is Grade 2*. Initially there was a strategy to restore the listed buildings but large houses in public parks struggle to find a use. It would require £2.5M to £3M to restore. The roof is largely water tight but the interiors need an over haul and the plumbing and electrics bringing up to date. Productive use is the issue; it has tiny staircases which cause problems with fire escapes and disabled access. The current car park is in the wrong place; there should be a horseshoe carriage driveway. The Cottages are not listed. The Stable Block is Grade 2 and is next to the former garden area. It has not seen much recent use and was considerably damaged by fire in summer 2011. It would take £2M to £2.5M to restore. There are parts of the park which should be interesting, for example a spring fed ancient pond but it is fenced off over concerns for safety and has become a dumping ground. The play area at the Old Bromley Road end is a fairly standard urban park play area but the only toilets are 1km away as the crow flies – this does not encourage use. The Heritage Lottery Fund only funds projects of a big enough size. The Big Lottery funding is more focused on social benefits and social cohesion. The two funds have come together under Parks for People. Only a small amount of matched funding is required – 10% compared to 1/3 or more in other schemes. Parks for People visited the park in July 2013. They were very interested, seeing an unparalleled opportunity to transform an underused resource. A suggestion of funding of at least £4M was made.
Lewisham are proposing four Options.
Option 1: Retain the existing 18 hole golf course. Children's play area next to the Mansion and better cafe. Better walking routes. Path next to the railway line – all weather surfaces. Skate park enhanced. Adventurous play. BMX bike area. People need to feel welcome. Golf course impinges on the Mansion.
Option 2: Reduce to 9 hole golf course away from the Mansion. Areas between the holes for people to access the rest of the park. Better children's play provision.
Option 3: 9 hole par 3 course for families, young people and practice. Much more of the park available for people. Restored lake 300m long for educational use, boating, canoe. Shorter walks. Wheel chair accessible, all weather. Close to the house larger garden. Event spaces.
Option 4: Historic Landscape restoration. 1850/60 OS map overlay. No golf course at all. Eastern side more heavily wooded, reed beds, gravel pits.
Result of consultation on the options: Options 3 & 4 overwhelmingly most popular.
Timescales: Parks for People bid is 2 stage process. Hope to get pass at stage 1 for seed money. Outline ideas then detail for planning consent. If full funding obtained, start work 2016, taking 1-2 years.
Flood alleviation scheme: Risk of flooding (every 20 years) from Catford, through Lewisham to Deptford affecting homes and businesses, 2 electricity substations, sewage works, major roads, railways and the DLR. The Environment Agency has worked on River Quaggy at Sutcliffe Park in Greenwich. Outline plan to divert the river in Summerhouse Fields and The Common and raise banks to hold flood water. EA have money to develop proposals further. Similar timescales for starting work.

Nominations for elected posts were invited before the break for refreshments.

- 3 **Minutes of last meeting:** Approval of the minutes of the 2013 AGM was unanimously agreed by the meeting.
- 4 **Chairman's report:** Leslie Watmore said that it had been a watershed year for the Society. It had started badly with senior figures departing. New blood was required to modernise and promote the Society. Clive Lees in his role as Vice Chair has started this and Leslie hoped the Society would continue in good health in the years to come.
- 5 **Treasurer's Report:** Brian Sanders reported that for the year ending 31st Dec 2013 income was £2270 and expenditure £1285, giving a surplus for the year of £985, and a total balance of £10,655. The decrease in subscriptions for 2013 was due to the 2012 figure being inflated by late receipts. Bank interest was £42. There had been no expenditure on community projects, resulting in the increased surplus. £250 was donated to St Christopher's Hospice in memory of Peter Pain. The Accounts were agreed and signed.
- 6 **Planning Officers' Reports:**
 - a. **East:** Clive Lees. Two notable victories this year were defeating an appeal to build a block of flats at Billingford and saving the trees at 10 Crab Hill. Thanks to Councillors Tickner, Harmer, Dykes, Mellor and Wells for their support during the year.
 - b. **West:** Mike Mielniczek The planning permission finally granted for demolition of the pair of houses at 44 & 46 Bromley Hill was for a substantially reduced scheme.
- 7 **Roads & Traffic:** Brian Atkinson. The update to the written report was on the Controlled Parking Zone consultation – residents' feedback was overwhelmingly not to take any action.
- 8 **Community Projects:** Leslie Tucker. We have been able to accumulate funds owing to the economically produced newsletter and the generosity of the Bromley Court Hotel. A proposed project for next year is restoring the trees in Farnaby Road in conjunction with Bromley Council, with a possible cost of £3,000. Positive feedback and support was sought from the meeting and obtained.
- 9 **Beckenham Place Park Representative's Report:** Leslie Tucker said he had nothing to add to what the speaker had covered earlier in the evening.
- 10 **Membership Secretary's Report: Linda Muller.** Membership had dipped slightly from 498 to 491, resulting from tidying up the membership list. Farnaby Road has been split differently with one section 1 to 81 and the other 82 onwards. 7% of households had not paid. After 2 years' non-payment, membership is deemed to have lapsed. 38% of members have agreed to receive the Newsletter by email so far. Linda recorded her thanks to the Road Reps.
- 11 **New Logo:** Leslie Tucker said that the existing logo had been in place since 1987. The proposed new one is closely linked to the original and features the cedar tree, the preservation of which caused the foundation of the Society.
- 12 **Determination of subscriptions for 2013-14:** Brian Sanders had recommended that in view of the current surplus we maintain the £5 subscription, with Senior Citizens and those in special financial circumstances to contribute as appropriate. Proposed by Brian Sanders, carried unanimously.
- 13 **Appointment of auditor:** Pura Atkinson, being willing to continue, was reappointed unanimously.
- 14 **Election of Officers:** The Secretary, Beatrice Osborn, Treasurer, Brian Sanders and Auditor, Pura Atkinson, all being willing to continue, were re-elected unanimously.
The Chairman, Leslie Watmore, has held the post for the last 5 years and now wished to stand down. There was one candidate for the post, Clive Lees, and he was duly elected.
- 15 **Chairman's Closing Remarks:** Clive Lees recorded the Society's thanks to Leslie Watmore, who had taken on the role of Chair after it has been vacant for some time and had assumed the role with dignity and executed its responsibilities in a statesman like manner. As a token of gratitude, he was presented with a bottle of port.

The next bi-monthly meeting will be on Thursday 1st May 2014 – members are welcome to attend.

The meeting closed at 10:04pm