



MINUTES OF RVPS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING **Held on Thursday 5th March 2015** **at Bromley Court Hotel**

Members present: Jean Anderson, Jennifer Ash, Brian Atkinson, Keith Barrett, H & R Brown, Val Crowdy, Carol Davidson, Heather Dovey, Cllr Nicky Dykes, David England, Annie Everet, Gail & George Hamblin, Christopher Jackman, Cllr Will Harmer, Lesley & Michael Hayward, Carole Hope, Iris Holley, Bill & Deb Jasper, Maureen Johnson, Andrew Lancaster, Helga Lane, Paul & Sue Lawn, Clive Lees, Olivia Livesey, Elizabeth McFall, Gillian McIntosh, Pat & Tony Morton, Linda Müller, Beatrice Osborn, David Page, Margaret Payne, Mick & Marilyn Pinson, Barbara Price, Peter Saunders, Richard Thomas, Sophie Tick, Cllr Michael Tickner, Leslie Tucker, Monica & Dave Wiltshire, V Wilson

Apologies: Tony Guyver, Sheila Mann, Kevin Molloy, Ann Rowsell, Cllr Michael Rutherford, Andrew Storey, Pat Tucker

- 1 Chairman's opening remarks:** Clive Lees welcomed people to the meeting, in particular new members, and introduced the Speaker, Mr Gavin Plaskitt from Lewisham Council on the topic of Beckenham Place Park, the bid for funding from Parks for People, and proposals for a flood relief scheme.

- 2 Guest Speaker:** Mr Gavin Plaskitt from Lewisham Council

Gavin recapped on the background to the bid for funding and the options considered.

The buildings in the Park include The Mansion, the Stable Block, the Homesteads Cottages, the Gardener's Cottage and the Changing Rooms near the Playground. The Mansion would require £3m to £4m to restore and bring into use and is not part of the current plans. People from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) came to visit the Park in 2013 and suggested that a bid for funding to develop the Park would be considered. Lewisham consulted on four options, meeting the requirements of Parks for People funding (understanding of heritage, education, training, social cohesion and developing use of public spaces).

Option 1: retain golf course, make play areas for different ages of children near mansion and a skate park. (Additional railway line crossing ruled out as too costly.) 23% of respondents chose this with 14% of Lewisham residents choosing it.

Option 2: reduce to 9 hole golf course which allows more walking routes. 5%, Lewisham residents 5%

Option 3: reduce to 9 hole Par 3 golf course at one edge of the park, allowing much more flexibility for walks and events. Restore Pleasure Grounds – formal garden and kitchen garden. Restoration of the lake (which silted up between WWI and WWII). 37%; Lewisham residents 44%

Option 4: as Option 3 with no golf 35%; Lewisham residents 37%

Consultation events were held in various locations with many current and potential park users.

Lewisham considered that Option 3 was voted for as the best compromise for golfers but golfers only wanted an 18 hole course and HLF would not pay for the Par 3 course. So Option 4 was put forward to the HLF.

Gavin then gave some more detail on the improvements Option 4 would bring for enhanced entrances to the Park particularly the Old Bromley Road entrance, with better car parking, new playground, with toilets and cafe. In the main Park there will be better routes and paths with sign posts, event spaces e.g. for a Farmers' Market, moving the car park, installing a bike track. The Pleasure Grounds would become a hub, with the Gardener's Cottage as a volunteer centre. The Kitchen Garden would be restored and the tennis courts moved and there would be a nature play area. The Stable Block restoration is expected to cost £1.7M, restoring the courtyard, adding accessible toilets, cafe, lift and function room. The upper floor would be an education centre providing outdoor learning for school children.

Lewisham have received the £4.9M they bid for. The money is released in tranches; initially £378,000 to work up the plans to the point of applying for planning permission. Gavin briefly talked about successful schemes in Brockwell Park and Telegraph Hill Park.

Flood Alleviation Scheme is being considered by the Environment Agency on the east side of the park. Banks would be built to provide a dry reservoir to store flood water to protect Lewisham and Catford Town Centres.

The next 12 months will be spent on design work, preparatory to planning application. By July 2016 there should be a decision to go ahead. Following European procurement regulations works would start in 2017 and go into 2018 with the longest bit being the Stable Block. Lewisham will also commence work on Stage 1 funding proposals for the Mansion and Homesteads Cottages. Conservation and landscape architects are shortly to be appointed. Consultation with the public will be on going. RVPS will assist with providing information about opportunities to be consulted. Some members at the meeting wanted to revisit the decision to remove the existing golf course but this was not the appropriate forum.

Clive introduced the Officers present.

- 3 **Minutes of last meeting:** Approval of the minutes of the 2014 AGM was unanimously agreed by the meeting.
- 4 **Chairman's report including changes to the Constitution:** Clive briefly outlined the changes to the Constitution: Membership Secretary and Vice Chair to become elected posts as these Officers are signatories to the bank accounts; broadening the purpose to include wider benefit to the community; the Chair can be got rid of after 10 years and if the Society is wound up any remaining funds to go to the Mayor of Bromley's charity. The meeting voted in favour of adopting the revised Constitution.
Clive also took the opportunity to thank our local Councillors Will Harmer, Nicola Dykes, Michael Tickner and Michael Rutherford.
- 5 **Treasurer's Report:** Dave Wiltshire explained that he had taken over part way through 2014. The accounts were audited and approved Jan 2015. For the year ending 31st Dec 2014 income was £2251 and expenditure £1021, giving a surplus for the year of £1230, and a total balance of £11,885. The Society has since committed £3,000 to the Farnaby Road tree project. Received.
- 6 **Planning Officer's Report:** In addition to the written report provided, Clive commented on an application to build a four storey block of flats at 74, Madeira Avenue. Richard Thomas has recently agreed to become the Planning Officer and will support and encourage residents to take action as required. The meeting thanked Clive for holding the fort.
- 7 **Roads & Traffic:** Andrew Storey had recently taken on this role. In addition to Clive's written report, Andrew added that we are currently lobbying for improvements in road safety on Beckenham Lane outside Valley Primary School, and for improvements to the parking situation on Crab Hill around Ravensbourne station.
- 8 **Community Projects:** The main project, jointly with Bromley Council, has been restoring the avenue of trees in Farnaby Road with the planting of 16 oak trees. Also 7 birch were planted in Downs Hill and 2 hazel in Warren Ave. We will mark the joint venture with a celebration. Our Tree Officer Monica Wiltshire has been invited to the first ever Tree Symposium. We welcome suggestions for other projects.
- 9 **Beckenham Place Park Representative's Report:** Leslie Tucker said that the Working Party should now support the chosen scheme, which was the purpose of the Working Party, and work to get the best possible out of it.
- 10 **Membership Secretary's Report:** Linda Müller said that the Society's area covers about 1200 households of which 493 are members. Membership has been stable over the last 5 years. 52% of households have agreed to receive the newsletter by email. Ann Rowswell stepped down as a Road Rep and Monica Wiltshire has taken over. Non payment of subs is 7%, so many thanks to Road Reps.
- 11 **New Logo:** Clive had asked Ravensbourne School to design a new logo but this hadn't worked out. We will return to the topic at the next Members' meeting.
- 12 **Determination of subscriptions for 2014-15:** Dave had previously reported that the general reserve was healthy so recommended that we maintain the £5 subscription, with Senior Citizens and those in special financial circumstances to contribute as appropriate. Carried.
- 13 **Appointment of auditor:** Pura Atkinson, being willing to continue, was reappointed unanimously.
- 14 **Election of Officers:** The Chair, Clive Lees, the Secretary, Beatrice Osborn, and the Treasurer, Dave Wiltshire all being willing to continue, were re-elected unanimously. Now that we have adopted the new Constitution, the previously appointed Vice Chair and Membership Secretary Linda Müller was duly elected to both posts.
- 15 **Chairman's Closing Remarks:** Clive Lees said how delighted he had been to chair the Society this last year, overseeing a new newsletter format, increased use of the website, getting the accounts on spreadsheets, and the Tree Project. He thanked the officers for their work. Beatrice proposed a Vote of thanks to Chair on behalf of the meeting.
- 16 **The next bi-monthly meeting** will be on Thursday 7th May 2015 – members are welcome to attend.

AOB: One member asked if it is this Society's declared policy to support the no golf option for the Park. Clive said that the Park had been on every meeting agenda and the majority of members attending had indeed supported options without an 18 hole golf course. The member then resigned his membership.

The meeting closed at 9:50pm.