



Friends of Firs Farm

General Meeting in Firs Farm Wetlands: 12th October 2019

Attendees: Andy Fabb, Angnieska Grzesiak, Anne-Marie Byrne, Caroline Wilmer, Chris Thomas, Claire Knipe, Derek Attree, Cllr. Dinah Barry, Dom Smith, Gail Nielen, Helen Osman, Holly Button-Stokes, Jo Attree, John Hepburn, John Prior, Karen Goode, Keith Hassan, Louise Denis, Mark Bradbury (MB), Nick Smith, Sarah Osmond, Soulla Thomas, Stewart Griffin, Toni Guiver, Paul Guiver and Vicki Lim-Betts. This included representatives from Friends of Firs Farm, Winchmore Hockey Club, Primal Health Tennis Academy and London Borough of Enfield (LBE)

Apologies: Cllr. James Hockney, Lisa Chapman, Elaine Hassan.

10am: Welcome (FOFF – Toni Guiver & Gail Nielen)

Brief overview of the Friends and members to date.

Brief introduction to Mark Bradbury, LBE Director of Property and Economy. Marks remit now includes Leisure and parks making the Firs Farm within his remit to take forward the Firs Farm building project. Mark is now leading on the Firs Farm Wetlands buildings project from LBE with the FOFF.

1. Firs Farm Community hub - Mark Bradbury (LBE)

MB highlighted the limited council resources and funding limits. There is a need for external funding. Acknowledgement of FOFF being instigator of building projects since 2015 including the hub both temporary and permanent solutions.

MB said he is fully committed to progress the Firs Farm building project in his capacity as landlord of this site.

Acknowledged the funds raised to date by the FOFF including Space Hive Funding Channel and Thames Water bid totalling more than 40K.

MB stated that he would be setting up Memorandum of understanding to acquire the funds and the long term strategy to deliver a permanent solution for the community hub. However the short term plan is to deliver a temporary hub.

Temporary solution:

TG (FoFF) and MB (LBE) approached Bell Containers to see what they could deliver for a cost. This would be to provide painted shipping containers including doors and windows. The quote was heavily discounted and still needs to be agreed.

Services to the hub will be determined by MB and LBE has already started the services survey to ascertain what needs to be done prior to the build. The location of these services linking the hub will be in existing car park in order to leave free the other area for the permanent solution.

Council now has a term contractor so some jobs are much quicker to get completed in-house.

Suggested Sizes

3 x 40ft containers which would include the café, community space, M/F changing places toilet with possible small changing area for sports refs as required.

Proposal is that this temporary building will last 2.5 to 3 years, until the permanent solution is implemented. The containers will be re-allocated to a different site in Enfield.

Next step:

Meeting with FOFF and architect to draft up drawings and the plan is to submit this side of Christmas. Usually 8 weeks to get planning. Plan to have installation Spring 2020, in time for the National Children's day (17th May) and launching this hub.

Bigger picture on long term future building in Firs Farm

The area of 144 Firs Lane is formally a council property and had planning permission for a doctor's surgery which hasn't materialised. LBE has been in open discussion with the landowner about purchasing the land back. It was decided that compulsory purchase order was not the route to be taken. Discussions are still ongoing and the friends will be notified. MB is aware that FFFF wanting a permanent solution for the hub and understand that this are will be part residential and part community. Likely permanent solution will be on the existing footprint due to the land being Metropolitan Open land.

The vision for the temporary build is to have toilet blocks where refs can change to help with football, to encourage school visits to the site and maximise the tennis courts and invest in pitches for hockey and football. Once we have toilets and café on site then we can build from there.

In regards to the café, the business model expected is to be part commercial and part volunteers. Primal Health keen to be involved in the café and in the tennis management. Most likely to be a local business and not large chain.

MB is keen to work in partnership with FFFF in the procurement process and in the special purchase arrangement for the design/ plan and build of the permanent solution. Aim is to get partially funded and then it is easier to get the full amount later.

Pre planning conversations

Thames 21 is keen to be embedded in the Firs farm wetlands and support the whole of Enfield as well as the Friends. Possible office space for Thames 21 within the temp solution and liaising with MB to that goal.

Funds: Winchmore school has raised money for a sensory area to accommodate their class visits with students who have special needs. More fund raising may need to be done.

Co-op's bid has been successful and FFFF will expect £1k to be assigned to the changing places toilet.

In summary, we need the hub for the May's children day event especially the toilets.

2. Tennis courts

All sessions for kids and adults will be ready and available by March 2020. LTA will help with event days and get the community involved. Advertising on social media and posters.

Trying to find a solution on vandalised nets. They are working with LBE to find a solution e.g. CCTV and Allan keys.

Last Sunday, morning event went ahead and will link to children's day next day with FFFF.

Long-term, bubble is being looked at to provide an all weather solution in Firs Farm. Coaching will be available from March 2020.

3. Events 2019

- Halloween – call for volunteers as it is a ticketed event for the 31st October.
- Every Monday plus 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month is a volunteering session

- Quiz night - 7th Feb at Winchmore sports club

4. Agreed minutes of Jan 2019

4. AOB

None

Future Meeting dates for your 2020 diary: