

# ***Friends Meeting - Thursday 9th October 2014***

## ***Minutes***

### ***Present:- (14)***

(11 friends)

Enfield Council: Julie Bland

Parks Police: Megan & John

Friends: Carl Redondo, Gail Nielen, John Wells, Joanne Hellerman, Julia Armitage, Keith Hepburn, Olga Hepburn, Sylvia Shannon, Toni & Paul Guiver Tony Askew

### ***Apologies:- (14)***

Friends: Caroline Howard, Christina Giorgio, Christopher Downie, Frank & Wendy Bundle, Geraldine Cosh, Highfield Primary, Jo Leonard, Joanna & Steve Brown, Roummie Llieva, Roy Hooper, Mary Askew, Steve Price,

### ***Welcome***

- Started prompt @ 7.30pm
- Thank you to Winchmore School for use of room and to their Talented 6th form art students, who are creating a logo for the friends group.
- To date we have 38 registered Friends of Firs Farm

### ***Items discussed***

#### **1. Parks Police**

Megan and John based Enfield Town attended. The team cover 137 parks & open spaces in Enfield.

Shift: 8am – 10pm. Other times may be organised if deemed necessary.

Reminder of numbers to call: - 101:Non-urgent calls. 999: Urgent calls. The team will be aware of calls via their walkie-talkies.

Committee members only may leave message on 020 8345 1139 (Office No.)

The team can provide (dependent upon available numbers) support for policing events in Firs Farm but they do not police football matches, or the fun fair (who have their own security), unless needed.

A “Dog control officer” is available to give advice to dog owners if we can get a group together who are interested.

Update:13 people stopped in past month - 2\* intelligence reports.

2 people fined for dog fouling.

2 mobile phone thefts (Football)

*3 Fire engines & 1 hr. road close in Firs Lane today - fire was at the property address privately owned in front of the Firs Farm changing rooms. (The group asked Julie (Parks) what would be happening with the supposedly demolished property and the plans for a medical centre (To be continued).*

Group to note that Parks police are on call therefore must be first on at these meetings and then have to go.

#### **2. River consultation**

The group looked at the council proposed and as built plans again. Toni will feed all comments captured in the last week, since the consultation meeting, back to the council.

Other comments were :-

- The resulting cleansed water from Firs Farm watercourse and wetlands will run into the Pymmes Lake.
- The watercourse project is funded from government purse not local council.
- The council plan to rotavate and sow wild meadow seed around the banks and the “Bund” area.
- Current wildlife identified - Foxes, squirrels, bats, numerous birds, also wild cats have been spotted in the cemetery.
- The spinney is a designated wildlife conservation area.
- We would like to have some bat and bird boxes as currently there aren’t any in Firs Farm yet we have an abundance of bats and birds here. (Add this to our improvement plan).
- Julia Armitage gave a run down on what we currently have in Firs Farm in terms of wildlife, plants and trees – these have already been posted on our facebook pages and in time will be added to our website (Which is already underway – but we do need some help with this). The group invited Julie Bland (Council officer) to look at facebook pages for Firs Farm and the Friends. (Julie will share this information with the Council’s biodiversity team).

#### Feedback comments for the council:-

- Plant species to create greater diversity e.g. nectar for bugs. Also plenty of berries for wildlife.
- Use of wood (possibly from clean up of the Spinney ) to create Habitat piles along the watercourse to encourage wildlife. Would a hide be possible?
- We would like to know from the council what has / has not worked in the past.
- We would also like a trim trail (possibly around the Spinney or along the watercourse?)
- A lot of interest in terms of what could hopefully be achieved for children both educationally and recreationally (I.e. play area/s, along or beside the watercourse where appropriate).
- What about a nature trail in the Spinney?
- The group were keen to mention that access (for ALL) is a big issue and they would like the council to consider this when drawing up the next phase of this project.
- When will the water start flowing?
- We want to have a pond to see some water attracting water fowl
- What about benches – can we have these? The elderly / infirm are unable to walk around Firs Farm as there is currently nowhere to sit along the way.
- Planted in best positions to attract as much wildlife as possible but also for best views from bench / footbridge / foot (wheel) path (where available).

#### Plant suggestions from FoFF:

- Trees for the riverside (tree root systems can help to stabilize the soil, especially on slopes, and provide a variety of growing conditions).
- Willows (Weeping, bay, pussy or crack willow).
- Osier is another willow, which though not strictly native, has become naturalised. Its twigs are used in basket making (which might be of interest). Alder & Beech trees.
- Snowdrops on banks?
- Water lilies (abundance of colour) , Carex Pendula ( Pendulous or Weeping Sedge ), Bullrushes, Nymphoides peltata ( Water Fringe or Floating Heart ), Aponogeton Distachyos ( Water hawthorn
- (Julia to provide a copy of her list please to include here, as I didn't capture all of the names?)

### **3. Enfield Council -Parks (Julie Bland)**

- While group forming likely to meet more frequently.
- Julie will attend Friends meeting and requires copy of minutes.
- She will support us to achieve our Priority AP (Short, medium and Long term aims).
- **Enfield in Bloom** - Bulbs may be available. Julie looking into this (Type, numbers and planting advise).
- We would like bulbs for along the front area facing onto Firs Lane all along and preferably on the slopes of the blanks to the watercourse.
- **Training** The group asked Julie what training was available for Friends Groups for Planting, Health & safety, Maintenance (e.g. River / Watercourse – Thames21 (We have already booked for a group training session – Carl picking this up now from Toni.)
- Group asked what is happening with the land known as The Oak / 144 Firs Lane as currently a H&S risk and an eye sore. Children have been seen climbing into this area - risk to their safety. (Julie will try to find out for us)
- Dead trees are an issue - risk of danger to public as some overhanging. (Post meeting note Branch now down across pavement in Firs Lane (close to Barrowell Green)
- The Spinney, we understand, was put in order and flagged as “Conservation” area about a year or so ago – but not maintained. Why? Sadly this is now very overgrown, attracts fly tippers and is used by some for relieving themselves in more ways than one! – Opposite a school zebra crossing!.
- Agreed we should have a litter picking team to visit Firs Farm (Some equipment may be available from the council) Agreed group would try to meet one Saturday around the footballers time to create an awareness

of litter. Point to note this is not the long-term solution merely a quick fix. We do need to try to address the root cause of the litter perhaps look into how other green space recreational grounds deal with this type of issue> What success have they had? Will pick up again at next meeting.

#### 4. Firs Farm : Issues

##### Issues / Risks / Wish list (Future)

*A number of "issues" & "wants" were captured from the group and from the walkabout with the council earlier this week and placed on a map of Firs Farm:- (see attached)*

*These covered:-*

- *Litter – across the park - mainly on all the football pitches – strangely not on the rarely used rugby pitch!*
- *Drinking / alcohol in the park – empty bottles lying around and seen poking out of the bins. (Post meeting note: Saw footballers hanging around in the car park late Sunday afternoon. They had bottles of alcohol on the floor between them. Asked them politely to not leave litter around as they wouldn't like to turn up to play with litter blowing across their pitch interrupting their game*
- *Cutback of overgrowth all round the park but in particular along Firs Lane where people have been seen form the road relieving themselves Also a couple caught out in a state of undress in the Spinney by one of the group recently .*
- *Scooters / Quad Bikes have been seen racing across Firs Farm (Gone by time anyone on site to sort this out – but now we have the friends group we shall all be on the lookout for this and try to nip it in the bud )*
- *Food left out for crows is another issues pointed out as this encourages rats & foxes.*
- *There are a number of areas in Firs Farm used for fly tipping these have been recorded on a map which were shared with the council.*
- *At the end we spoke about our ideas for the future of the park such as attracting wildlife, trim trails and other playground options (possibly something that follows the flow of the stream?) , park benches, toilets and a cafe. There was also mention of a bird hide.*
- *We also wanted to organise a clear up one Sat/Sunday during or after the football.*

#### 5. Elect Committee Members

Chair: **Toni Guiver** (Proposed by John Wells: 2<sup>nd</sup> Tony Askew)

Treasurer: **Carl Redondo** (Watercourse/ New River) (Proposed by Toni Guiver: 2<sup>nd</sup> Gail Nielen)

Secretary: **Tony Askew** (Proposed by John Wells: 2<sup>nd</sup> Toni Guiver)

**Christopher Downie** (Schools/ Education) - (Proposed by Toni Guiver: 2<sup>nd</sup> Julia Armitage)

**Julia Armitage** (Plant/ Trees/ Wildlife) - (Proposed by Paul Guiver 2<sup>nd</sup> Gail Nielen)

**Gail Nielen** - (Proposed by Toni Guiver 2<sup>nd</sup> Keith Hepburn)

**Sylvia Shannon** - (Proposed by Toni Guiver 2<sup>nd</sup> Olga Hepburn)

**Keith Hepburn** - (Proposed by Gail Nielen 2<sup>nd</sup> Julia Armitage)

**Olga Hepburn** - (Proposed by Julia Armitage 2<sup>nd</sup> Sylvia Shannon)

#### 6. Meeting

Usually only 3 or 4 per annum however, we agreed more frequent meetings to start till we have our improvement plan in place. 2 weeks time for next committee meeting.

We finished on time today 8.30pm.

##### Next Meeting dates:

Committee Members meeting:- **Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2014 7.30pm. Venue TBA.**

All Friends Group meeting:- **Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2014 7.30pm. Venue TBA.**

*Thank you all for your contributions to our 1<sup>st</sup> Friends meeting....*