



**Minutes of 22nd Group Meeting held at 1st Forest Hill Scout Hall,
St Germans Road, SE23 on 26th October 2006, 7.30pm**

Present BHFUG members:

Marcel Jenkins (Chair) Sydney Couldridge	Kylie Barnes (Secretary) Ray Ashley	Andrew Barnes (Treasurer)
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Maureen Couldridge Albert Blackmore Malcolm Trott Harriet Jenkins	Sharon Lloyd Ben Turley Nick Marks Caroline Sefton	G.P. Ray Jim Radford – HOPRA Anne Scott Elizabeth Downie
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Also in attendance: Fiona Alleyne – Lewisham Borough Council, Lara Al Jabi - Glendale

Apologies: Gavin Bolam Mark Wellband Josh Smaller
Francis O'Connor Kathy Ashley Martin Hyde – Lewisham Council

1. MJ opened the meeting with welcome and apologies.
2. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

Under AOB, it had been suggested to meet up for bonfire night. Jim Radford (JR) suggested there be a bonfire on Blythe Hill. After some discussion it was agreed that a bonfire would be undesirable, not least because it would need a license from Lewisham Council and Fiona Alleyne (FA), felt that it would not be approved.

3/4. Committee Report / Questionnaire Consultation Report - Update

The recent Committee meeting mainly discussed the Consultation Report and a new fund, BBC Breathing Spaces designed to support projects around developing urban spaces and wildlife.

After some discussion, the Committee wished to formally recommend the Consultation Report to the User Group. It was a detailed study on what people would like to happen in the Fields and therefore a useful reference point for the Group to plan the way forward. To be able to start those plans the Group needed to adopt the report. MJ summarised the main areas of development/enhancement that the results showed:

- Lighting;
- play facilities;
- bio-diversity;
- dog free areas; and
- tackling anti-social behaviour.

MJ suggested the only possible contentious issue could be lighting but was something that would take some time to discuss and implement. Any plans would also be subject to planning laws. Nick Marks said it was a “predictable report”, a good presentation but the lighting issue could make it dangerous if it were to be installed. A number of views came out of the discussion: trying to tackle anti-social behaviour with lighting just the paths, could have a draw

back in the ability to see beyond the paths at night; the environmental impact of lighting; and lighting spoiling the night-time view from the Fields.

It was felt that starting with some of the smaller things on the list like planting days would lead to a sense that the Group was effecting visible and positive changes to the Fields, raising confidence to tackle bigger improvements in the future.

Moving on to other possible developments, FA explained that it might be possible for Lewisham Council to cover the Group's hall hire and photocopying costs. KB to investigate.

There was also a discussion around permanent park keepers, such as at Ladywell Fields. FA explained that with so many parks in Lewisham it was not possible to install park keepers at each one

5. Guest Speaker

MJ apologised that despite several attempts he had been unable to find a guest speaker for the meeting, his contacts at other park user groups had all been unavailable.

6. Bulb Planting – 21st October 2006

MJ was delighted to report that the bulb planting morning had been really successful attracting around 30 volunteers who managed to plant 4,000 bulbs (daffodils, bluebells and snowdrops) on the Fields. MJ thanked Lara Al-Jabi from Glendale for organising the event and bringing gloves, forks and other equipment to enable the planting to take place.

7. Treasurers Report

The Treasurer's report had already been given during the AGM.

8. Any Other Business

Harriet Jenkins (HJ) explained a new fund to which the Group could apply. "Park It" was a fund designed to support/facilitate voluntary and community groups to organising an event to highlight and raise the profile of its particular park/open space. Funding of up to £5,000 was available for an event taking place between May and August next year. The fund would only support 1 event per region, London and 8 other UK regions, so it was a highly competitive scheme. The closing date was 31st October and HJ asked the Group if that was something it wanted her to pursue. This was agreed and HJ agreed to submit the application.

KB to contact Lewisham Life about the User Group to get a regular listing in the magazine.

SC reported that there were many trees within the Fields which had leaf and trunk diseases and may need to be removed. FA confirmed that Lewisham Council are responsible for the trees and she would liaise with the relevant department to try and organise an inspection. It was suggested that a tree replacement programme could be a good proposal for the Breathing Spaces application.

Ray Ashley and Sydney Couldridge (SC) attended the Annual Parks & Conference on the 14th October.

SC raised two particular concerns with the Constitution regarding length of service of Committee members and proportion of the Committee present to enable the AGM to take place. After some discussion and a majority vote, it was agreed that the Constitution should be amended. The rule “Once elected, members may only be elected for two further consecutive years and then must retire from the Committee”, has been dropped. The Constitution now states:

5.3 The members of the Committee shall be elected for a period of twelve months from the AGM and will need to be re-elected at the following AGM.

8.4 At least 10 members and half the Committee must be present in order for the AGM to take place. In the event of the AGM not taking place, a new date must be set by the Committee and a re-notification of the new date must be circulated by the Secretary in addition to a note explaining that the original AGM did not take place due to lack of members.

The amended constitution would be posted on the website.

9. Dates of the Future Meetings

KB agreed to circulate dates for the next year to all members via email.

MISSION STATEMENT

Blythe Hill Fields User Group (BHFUG) exists to represent everyone living around or using Blythe Hill Fields. Our purpose is to achieve sustainable improvements and facilities in this vital resource for the benefit of the whole community. We aim to promote the increased use and enjoyment of this essential open space.