



FRIENDS OF BLYTHE HILL FIELDS

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING 29 January 2015

Meeting held 29 January at 7.30 pm at the Honor Oak

Present : Nicholas Taylor, Chair and Joint Acting Secretary (NT), Hugh Brown Treasurer and Joint Acting Secretary (HB), Marcel Jenkins (MJ), Gavin Bolam, Alan Bailey, Sydney Couldridge, Cathy Ashley, Anne Scott, James Cross (JC), Ellie Rogers, Judith Hendley, Brigid Macleod, Fiona Gibb

Apologies : Zaria Greenhill, Jim Smith, Leo Stevens, Jo Knorpel, Austen Jones.

1. Welcome by the Chair : NT welcomed the improved attendance, including five new faces. He had written a rather strong letter on 10 January to the 362 people on the Friends' mailing list, making clear that Leo Stevens' resignation as Secretary and Jo Ireland's move out of London had put the 2015 Festival in jeopardy, unless people stirred themselves to volunteer for the work needed. The welcome arrival of Zaria Greenhill's baby meant that NT would have to deputise for her on People & Wildlife matters until she was ready to return.

2. Purpose of the Meeting : There was no agenda, except for two items :

(i) Blythe Hill Fields Festival 2015. NT said that we could agree to pass on it and hold the next Festival in 2016, but he felt it would be a pity to throw away the momentum built up since 2006 and to remain in the trough caused by 2014's fortuitous downpour of rain. Assuming that we did want to hold a Festival this year, he considered that, in view of the welcome influx of new members, the purpose of this meeting should be to do an introductory survey of what was required to organize it, so that members could decide what parts they wanted to play. A further deadlines [that meeting was arranged for 12 February 2015 - see item 5 below]. To that end NT circulated copies of HB's paper of the previous year, entitled Festival Plan 2014, which had been prepared jointly with MJ, who had 'downloaded' his accumulated experience as a successful Festival Organiser for most of the previous years. HB himself announced that, for reasons of pressure of work, he was not willing to be Festival Organiser for a second year. NT suggested that the role could instead be undertaken collectively by the Festival Sub-Committee, which had done an effective job after its launch early in 2014.

It was unanimously decided to hold a Festival in 2015, on the first Saturday in July as **usual, i.e. on July 4th**. This date would be a fortnight after the Hilly Fields Fayre and a week before Lewisham People's Day. It might clash with the Stillness School Fair.

(ii) Committee roles. There had been a void at the end of the AGM in November, with no Secretary and only an Acting Treasurer. Members could decide at the end of the meeting whether any positions could now be filled.

3. Blythe Hill Fields Festival 2015. NT, assisted by HB, guided the meeting exhaustively through Festival Plan 2014. There is no need to record the discussion, as it was overtaken a fortnight later by the much fuller discussion of all the same matters at the next meeting a fortnight later - see Minutes of General Meeting 12 February 2015, item 4.

4. Committee roles. JC volunteered to be Chair. Since that seemed to meet with general approval, NT offered to step down from Chair and take on the role of Secretary, but only until the next AGM. Although everyone else present seemed to think that was all that was necessary for an election, NT suggested that, in terms of transparency and constitutional propriety, these appointments should only be provisional, pending the membership being informed, followed by confirmation at the next meeting on 12 February. No decision was made on the role of Treasurer [subsequently MJ agreed to step back into this role, at least for the duration of the Festival].

5. Next Meeting. This was agreed for 12 February 2015 at 7.30 pm at the Honor Oak. This would be a General Meeting, as NT pointed out there were urgent items to discuss besides the Festival : the cuts in the Council's parks budget, the work of the Lewisham Parks Forum, the progress of the Friends' tree planting programme (watering due to start 15 March), the state of the signage in the Park, the contract for the Trim Trail (using the approved Lottery grant) and the need to keep Glendale's mowers away from the verges of the park.

MISSION STATEMENT

Friends of Blythe Hill Fields (FBHF) 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

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