

Red House Park Friends Group

17th October 2005

Meeting Notes

Sarah Carter, Chair, opened the meeting at 7.00 p.m.

1. Present

Sarah Carter, Chair William Gunn, Vice-Chair Kay Clash Jason Cross Dawn & Glen Williams Jean Jones Ray Wheatley Helga Lutz, SMBC Urban Parks Manager Angela & Matthew Hall Stephanie Page Cllr Tony Ward Selwyn Hayward Mandy Matthews Carol Szymura Guy Hale	Marie Morris Chris Hampson Dorris Dodge Beryl McGibbon Camilla Gorton Ken Sutton Jackie Ward Sonia Vaughan Christine Horton Craig Priddy Sue Willetts Paul Moore Garry Berry Tina Yardley Julie Vaughan Diana Graham
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2. Apologies

Jenny Hale, Secretary
Jill Fisher
Margaret Macklin

She Chorley
Cllr Mary Wilson
Tony Lewis

3. Volunteers

The Chair asked everyone present to add their name to the list forming a directory of addresses and phone numbers. Everyone was also asked to state how they would be prepared to help within the organisation, especially in preparation of the forthcoming **Fun Day** which was announced would be held on **July 2nd 2006**.

The Chair related relevant phone numbers to those present and explained, in particular, the importance of the ASBO number. It was mentioned that the more calls made by residents would put us in better stead by the authorities. The numbers given out were as follows:

Rangers	552 4214	07850013777
Bins	525 9014	
Police	0845 113 5000	
ASBO	0845 359 7500	
Mr A Lewis (Website)	331 5615	

4. Shared Views

The Chair warmly welcomed Julie and Diane from Jesson and Oakwood Park to share their views on MUGA's. They related how the MUGA in their area had drastically reduced crime and had brought the young community together as a whole. The young community had taken ownership and there had been no vandalism of the site.

5. Flooding

A number of residents expressed their concern in respect of the flooding at the main park entrance (Newton Road) and a photo displaying the problem was shown. This has been recognised as an ongoing concern, which has never been addressed properly by SMBC to eradicate. Helga Lutz has taken this on board and will communicate with us at the next meeting regarding outcome.

6. MUGA

HL related details of the MUGA. She advised that recently some 13 MUGA's had been installed throughout the borough. She showed pictures of the MUGA itself and explained the facilities on offer, which included basketball, netball, football and cricket. She advised of the position best suited for the MUGA - next to the tarmac / old play area site and explained why: - if the tarmac area had been used then additional costs would have been incurred in the removal of old surface. The tarmac area has also been identified as a possible site for skateboarding in the future. The new location for the MUGA would also take into account the incline and the surrounding trees and shrubbery of which we were assured would be properly maintained so as not to overhang. Also, minimum disturbance and pruning to this shrubbery would be prudent. It was expected that the topographical survey would be completed by December/ January after which it would go out to tender. Construction, weather permitting, was expected to take 6 to 8 weeks. The project should be completed by the end of March 2006. The colour was requested to be changed from purple to green so as to be more environmentally friendly. This was agreed. It was felt by all that as there were no lights for the MUGA, which would have incurred more cost, it would prove a good deterrent and encourage young people to go home rather than hang around the park.

A member asked whether the tennis courts were to remain. The answer was yes. (See 'Any Other Business')

7. New Toddler Play Area

HL explained that the consultation was now complete and the proposals were for a multi-unit comprising of swings, roundabout, spring seesaw and stepping pods, providing that there were sufficient funds for the landscape architects to portray this. If there were insufficient funding it was agreed that the stepping pods were of the least importance. It was expected that this would go out to tender January/February 2006. Pictures of the proposed play area were shown and an identified location was proposed next to the junior area, as the access for parents with different aged children would be made easier. The question of visibility was raised and it was announced that the shrubbery area would be decreased to accommodate but no trees at present. If this were to change the group would be consulted first. Trees in the immediate vicinity are cherry trees, which it felt, could readily be replaced if necessary.

A member, after seeing the proposed design photos asked if the area could be made more disabled user friendly, and also whether the design could be adjusted to minimise vandalism. The first point was addressed by taking a vote of members present:

Original design (a survey completed by the children) 12 votes.
Amended design (further consideration to disabled) 12 votes.

The matter was discussed again and the results were as follow; Original 17 votes, Amended 11 votes. So it was decided to proceed likewise. This was a decision originally made by the CHILDREN.

8. Lakes Restoration Project

Work started in September this year. The Chair had received several complaints from residents (none of whom were at the meeting) regarding the felling of the trees around the top lake. She explained that only 6 willow trees had been felled, they were either dead, dangerous, or had been deemed necessary for access.

The amount of silt taken from the top lake was some 2000 cubic metres – far in excess of the 1200 cubic metres estimated as a result of recent tests. It was expressed by HL that such tests were always difficult to gage. This raised the question – why was what seemed unnecessary funds spent on such tests if they were not conclusive? Could not the funds have been better utilised? The response was that it was part of the process and the tests were relevant. The silt is to be deposited on site and then grassed over. The amount of silt has meant that the de-silting of the lower pool will have to be put on hold due to lack of space and funding. It was asked if the silt could be used as compost and utilised by the local residents. It was explained that the silt needed to be drained first on the side of the bank, which still would not alleviate the space problem whilst this process was taking place. Around the edge of the Top Lake Iris's would be placed with further water plants to follow once these have been established. The silt banks were expected to be seeded in early spring.

It was brought to attention that the top lake was again empty – earlier last week it was noticed that it was half full. The question asked was has the seal at the end of the lake been broken? HL said she would investigate and report back at the next meeting.

Regarding the lower pool it was suggested that we should apply for funding at a later stage for the de-silting. In the meantime water safety measures were discussed, i.e., stones around the edges and partial black fencing.

It was brought to our attention that the contractors have experienced difficulties with stone throwing from students from Dartmouth High School. In consultation with the Head Teacher these issues have been addressed. However, it now appears that students have progressed to knocking down the security fencing. HL and the contractors are currently addressing the matter.

A request was made for notices/leaflets to be displayed to inform people inside the park of what was happening. It was stated that there was sufficient coverage in the form of press releases and leaflets, however HL said she would address this request by utilising the park notice boards.

9. Update On House

The Chair announced that there were a few ideas in the pipeline, however nothing definite, and at the moment she was unable to divulge any further information. She asked members to continue to promote the petition signing which could also be accessed online.

She asked that if anyone knew of any groups who might want to utilise the Red House to urge them to make contact.

A member asked about any covenants on the House. This matter has already been looked into and nothing has come to light. It was also mentioned about the 500-year-old Mulberry tree having a bearing on the matter.

The subject of bats was brought up. No further developments as yet.

10. Any Other Business

- Tennis courts – the funding application was unsuccessful.

- Pump House – three prices are required before we are able to make a decision. Options are to knock it down, move it, break it up. On reflection it would appear that breaking it up might be the most cost effective. Ongoing.
- Gates – it was felt that the gates should now be locked at night (Dusk 'til 7.30am). It was felt that prior notice should be given to park users, displayed on notice board and by the gates. HL to oversee.
- HL made a referral to item 7 in the minutes of 1/9/05 - 'tree surgery is classed as maintenance work and funding therefore, has to be found from the councils budget, not from B106 funds or the lakes restoration project fund.' HL advised that it can in fact be taken from the B106 fund but on this occasion the B106 fund has already been committed.

Meeting closed at 8.40pm.

11. Next Meeting

Next meeting has been scheduled for Monday 5th December 2005, Hill Lane at 7pm.