



Friends of Red House Park

General Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday 23rd February 2015
Venue: The Pavilion Red House Park Newton Road Great Barr, starting at 7.00pm

Chairs opening remarks:

BG confirmed that, despite the best efforts of the group, the proposed plans for development of the Red House and associated new build properties were approved by the Council at the recent planning meeting. BG extended his thanks to all involved in the opposition and in particular to Joe who represented the group at the meeting.

1. Attendance and Apologies for Absence

Bill Gunn (BG)	-	Chair
David Fisher (DF)	-	Vice Chair
Christine Horton (CH)	-	Treasurer
Lisa Ingram (LI)	-	Secretary
Sunish Patel (SP)	-	SMBC
Steve Melia (SM)	-	Councillor
David Hossell (DH)	-	Councillor on behalf of Shirley Hossell
Sonia Vaughn (SV)		
Sandra Lloyd (SL)		
Joe McNamara (JM)		
Ed O'Neal (EOn)		
Mark Sanders (MS)		
Graham Jones (GJ)		
Jennie Dhanjal (JD)		
Dipak Patel (DP)		

Apologies were received from Tony Ward and Shirley Hossell

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- Accepted as a true record

3. Matters arising from those minutes

- BG raised again the issue of a requirement for railings to be installed at the slope down to the edge of the top pond as there is a real risk that a child using a bike or scooter may lose control and fall into the pond. SM informed that he has safety officers coming into the park on 26th Feb to look at this issue.
- DF has received delivery of the Friends banner, all agreed that this looked very effective and should be installed to the railings outside the pavilion at the end of the meeting.

4. Reports

i. Chair

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the granting of planning permission for the new build development in the park the main points of which are captured below:

- There was a general worry that reduced car parking would have an effect on the local residents due to increased car parking and that accessibility to the park for the disabled may be affected.
- Additionally, some members expressed concern with the processes followed by the Council during the sale of the Hill Lane site in 2010 and its impact on the subsequent proposals for the Red House.
- The possibility of submitting a call to action or an appeal against the decision was discussed. SM and DH advised against this as they believe that due process has been followed. SM stated that an objection against the decisions could be filed to the ombudsman but these go in favour of the planning dept. in the vast majority of cases.
- Whilst it was acknowledged that this is an extremely emotive subject and that the current situation is not ideal, the group should look towards co-operation with the developer. DH and SM believe the developer to be open to this and there is a possibility that a donation could be made to the group as a goodwill gesture. It would also be beneficial to establish connections as we may have an input into aesthetic aspects of the development.
- The latest plans are available under ref **DC/14/57725**

ii. Secretary

- No update

iii. Treasurer

- No update.

iv. Council – Made by CH on behalf of SP

- SP introduced DP who has taken over the license for selling ice cream in the park.
- Matting and “No Dogs” signs have been installed in the tennis courts following a request from the regular users
- A funfair is due in the park the weekend after Easter. Local police and wardens will be informed with a view to increased presence and operators will be required to remove litter. DH queried the rectification of damage to grassed areas and SP confirmed that the operator is required to return the area to the state it was arrived on and that a £400 bond is retained to ensure this.

v. Police

- There was no police report.

5. Red House Park

i. Features of the Park

- The possibility of fencing off the Mulberry tree is on hold until the impact of the development is clearer.
- CH noted that the area to the rear of the rose beds where the bushes have been removed requires re-grassing. SP believes this was done originally but may require revisiting.
- Bench near the MUGA is sited on uneven ground leading to a dip where water accumulates in wet weather. SP will arrange for a slab to be installed in the Spring.

ii. Park Environment

- There is still an ambition to achieve Green Flag status within 3 years.
- DH informed the group that some recent changes to funding protocols may be beneficial to the group. Each area now has a named representative to assist with identifying possible funding streams and completing applications. Julie Webb will be the contact for the group and her contact details are to be passed to LI to invite Julie to our next meeting.
- In addition, help is available for lottery funding submissions from Imran Dean. Again, contact details are to be provided to LI.
- Some suggestions for uses of any funding included:
 - Installation of refurbished bus shelters to provide rain cover
 - Creation of an overspill car park
 - Installation of a pathway to improve disabled access from the Pages Lane gate
 - Additional bins
- BG raised the issue of litter build up around the lakes. SP stated that there is a team that visits the area monthly but he will make enquiries with Serco as to additional works.
- SV informed SP of 1 fallen and 1 compromised tree in the park. SP to arrange for someone to contact SV to confirm locations.

iii. Sports and Play Facilities

- DH updated that last financial year £13k per ward was made available to fund youth facilities. This could be used to provide some tennis and/or football coaching during school holidays and should be looked into with the assistance of Julie Webb.

vi. Park Diary

- Paws in the Park 2015 to take place 19th July
- Concern was expressed regarding access should the development have started by that date. JD suggested changing booking information to show entry and exit via Pages Lane gate. This will require careful marshalling and extra volunteers will be needed.
- The group are to make contact with the developer as soon as possible to discuss the impact on the event and put mitigation into place
- JD confirmed that agility team are booked and she is discussing the possibility of booking a cross country display team
- A fee of £50 for ice cream van was agreed with DP
- Bat Walk is to take place on Wednesday 9th September

6. Any Other Business

- DH informed that new Anti Social Behaviour legislation has now come into force which includes the introduction of community triggers. These can be implemented by members of the public and requires the Council to mobilise all departments as appropriate to resolve the issue. There is also a facility for the injured party to have an input to the punishment issued to anyone found guilty under a prosecution of this type. Further information is available at the following link http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200208/crime_prevention_and_emergencies/3155/the_community_trigger_-_request_a_review_on_reports_of_anti_social_behaviour
- The Neighbourhood Forum meetings have now become "In Your Neighbourhood" meetings. These will continue to be held at Yew Tree School
- DH offered to meet up with members of the group to do a walked review of the park. A date is to be agreed.
- Date for events meeting set as 23rd March

- Date of next general meeting altered to 13th April due to Easter holiday

Date of Next Events Meeting - 19.15 Monday 23rd March
Date of Next General Meeting - 19.00 Monday 13th April

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Ingram

Secretary FofRHP