

## Friends of Palewell Common & Fields

### Minutes of Committee Meeting 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014 6.30 p.m held at 63 Vicarage Road

**Present:** David Evans (Chair), Andy Sutch (Treasurer), Jessica Rettie (Deputy Chair), Dhun Kenny, Rikki Marks, Bernard Adams, Justine Nagaur, John Hockley, Angela Howorth.

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** Jacqui Pattison
- 2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2014:** The Minutes were approved.
- 3. Matters Arising – including AGM on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2014:**

**Membership:** DK informed the committee that 53 members have renewed membership and approximately 20 have not, she suggested that we approach the Nursery and that we do a leaflet drop in very local roads possibly in early September.

JN suggested highlighting the advantages of being a member.

AS recommended listing all past members and including them and also encouraging the Cricket Club members to join.

RM suggested that the 'Cricket Club' should become a member.

DE will draft a marketing leaflet/letter and circulate to the Committee

JN will put the text on her blog

AS said that PayPal is a possibility, he and JN will discuss possibilities.

JH will distribute Membership forms to the Boules group.

DE said that the AGM went well, 25 people attended. It was agreed that a draft of the Minutes should go on the website together with the Accounts.

- 4. Financial Update:** AS reported that the current balance is £2,617. Of the £450 held for the Boules group £234.88 had been spent.
- 5. Bouncy Castle/Fun Day/Relationship with Pistachios Café:**

DE informed the Committee that he had had a meeting with Aysin (the Leasholder of Pistachios Café) and Anthony who runs the café. DE explained to them that the Friends were not keen on the commercialisation of the Common but were happy to listen to and discuss proposals the café might have, if they want to propose something it should be done with reasonable notice. They had not given the Friends enough notice of the proposed Fun Day which in the end Richmond cancelled.

Anthony asked about doing a 2/3 day event and asked about having donkey rides on the common. JH asked how often this might happen, DE said possibly twice a year. DE said that he thought that the Friends would oppose a 3 day event and were unlikely to support a two day event. The Committee were concerned that such an event prevents the use of the Common by local residents and are not keen on large commercialised events.

BA was keen that The Friends should help Pistachios – perhaps something linked to food. Smaller events would be possible.

DE commented that on the tour of Parks he had been on everybody wanted a café but that those who have them do have a variety of problems.

JR suggested The Friends might do an End of Summer drinks party and invite the café to provide the food. DE and JR will discuss this.

#### **6. Boules Update and Discussion:**

The Chairman invited John Hockley to update the Committee. (JH said he was a long time resident having lived in East Sheen for 45 years).

JH said that the Boules had become very successful the current two terrains can handle twelve players but there are generally sixteen and they therefore need to be a third larger, he cannot see that this addition would affect the community in any way. DE asked if regular weekly demand requires a larger pitch. JH confirmed that they do need a third terrain, this has been supported by U3A and MESS.

AS said that the local Sports Council would support this and gave the example of a pool in a Royal Park. One of the conditions of the permission for the Hampton pool was that it should be restored to its previous condition if no longer used. AS said there is a case for encouraging people to play.

JH confirmed that the Boules Group had written to David Alister who said he needed to know that the Friends of Palewell Common agree to any change.

DK said that the objection is to erecting a structure on common ground.

JH said that it required the removal of turf and a firm base to be put in but no actual construction, it would be for recreational use which was usual on common land.

DK asked how often do sixteen people turn up? JH said generally every Sunday.

JH said that U3A, a group of older people used it regularly.

JN commented that a youth group would be a good addition.

DE had previously been reluctant to push it to a decision that might risk splitting the committee but he was keen to see if we could now identify a proposal which would command broad support. Perhaps we could avoid any question of precedent if it was accepted subject to a condition that it should be reinstated if there were no longer a demand for the use of the extra terrain. In that way we would avoid a permanent development, since if it were no longer in use the third terrain would be removed and reinstated to its natural condition. A number of members supported this approach.

The Chairman asked the Committee to vote. Seven members supported the proposal, one member voted against and one member abstained. The Chairman concluded that by a majority vote the Committee approved the proposal to extend the boules pitch subject to the condition that the common is reinstated if not required and used by the Boules group and that it should not be considered as a precedent for any permanent development on the Common.

The Chairman asked that the Boules group report back to the committee on the details of the actual development plan and that there should be a site visit. He said that he would write to David Alister to seek formal approval from Richmond Council.

JN asked if the Boules group would arrange sessions to encourage local residents to join in and perhaps in the future arrange competitions for local roads.

**7. Glendale: Pitch & Putt & Nature's Gym – Volunteer Days:**

The Committee noted that Glendale had promised to do a number of things to sort out the state of the Pitch & Putt course and that none of these necessary improvements had been done. The Committee felt that we should speak to David Alister at Richmond Council and voice our real concern that nothing was being implemented to improve the course and that the facility was poor and not the valued local facility that had been provided by the previous franchise holders. The loss of a resident golf pro was of particular concern.

Nature's Gym: DE thanked JR for bringing a number of her office staff for a volunteer day on Palewell Common. It had been a great success and the volunteers had worked in the woodland and cleared pathways and had particularly worked hard to cut down fallen trees and tidy up the damage that had been caused. JR said that they had greatly enjoyed the day and being involved.

The committee agreed that we should try to get local businesses involved. JR will explore local businesses who might have an interest in volunteering.

DE is keen to create a nature walk through the woodland.

DK said that Des Smith could provide a lectern which would give visitors relevant information.

RM said that the Council need to do the necessary work which used to be done in clearing the main paths through the woods.

DK said that there are at least six dead trees.

RM informed the committee that the August volunteer date had been cancelled.

**8. Other Sports: Cricket & Tennis:**

**Cricket:** AS said that all was fine and that Sheen Cricket Club was happy with the arrangement. There were a couple of issues, particularly storage, they would like to look at storing a sightscreen. Middlesex also want a second square as there will be a shortage of pitches when Imperial College, which has been sold, is no longer available. They might put a synthetic strip/square which in the long term would benefit the local school. We should repeat our support for a synthetic strip.

**Tennis:** AS is not happy with Will to Win, the big issue is that there are only two courts in use on Palewell. They have done work on other sites but it was agreed that the condition of the courts on Palewell Common is very poor.

**9. Report on visit to other Parks:** DE reported on an organised visit to other parks in the Borough. He brought them to Palewell, walked around and was asked about problems.

DE was most impressed with Kneller Park on the River Crane. It has had an enormous amount of work done, in the woods there is an outdoor class room. It had had a café but it went bust. Investment in the park has been ongoing for 10/15 years. There is a big rectangle flower garden and wood sculptures planted in the ground.

St. Margarets Playing Ground also on the River Crane, their problem is that the building is too small.

Murray Park in Whitton: very big but bare and open, no café and were interested to learn about this.

South Kew Recreation Ground: A big playing field with a very big clubhouse, they have a café but have problems with the contractor.

DE's conclusion was that we were reasonably positive and not doing badly.

#### **10. Any Other Business:**

RM informed the Committee that all the posts and rails around the original pond and near the dog free area are to be taken down.

AS showed the Committee 'Live it Up' a magazine promoting local Parks.

It was agreed that a meeting be held in early September to discuss and plan an event. AH said that DE had suggested using Doodle to arrange and agree a date. To be followed up.

The Meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.