

# Red House Park Friends Group

## 6<sup>th</sup> June 2005

### Meeting Notes

Sarah Carter, Chair, opened the meeting at 7.15pm.

#### 1. Present

Sarah Carter, Chair	June Pountney
William Gunn, Vice-Chair	Jodie Heath
Jenny Hale, Secretary	Lyndsay Forbes
Kay Clash	Daniel Heath
Jason Cross	Carol Szymura
Jill Fisher	Dave French
Dawn & Glen Williams	Sue Axl
Jean Jones	Sandra Ash
Oliver Franklin	Denise Ash
Debbie Coyle	Phil Steckles
Ms J O'Shea	Ken Styler
Jamie Cowles, Urban Ranger Service	Brenda Styler
Helga Lutz, SMBC Urban Parks Manager	Sue Willetts
L Walton	John Payton

#### 2. Apologies

Cllr S Smith  
Selwyn Haywood  
Ian Carroll

Walter Barber  
Steve West, SMBC  
Tony Potter, SMBC Events Manager

#### 3. Fun Day

- Storyteller cancelled but a new one has been booked - cost £110.
- First Aid booked with St John Ambulance - £170 + VAT.
- KC confirmed that Scouts would let us use their marquee again.
- There will be 2 ice-cream vans on site – one from Vince's Ice-Cream and another from a new permit holder for Red House Park.
- TP has confirmed that he has booked 2 small rides for 5-7 year olds, a Bouncy Castle and Dome with free bouncy castle for smaller children, with the Friends getting 20% of takings.
- TP had suggested 4 attractions for older children but these were too costly (£1000 for the 4) and needed to be manned by us.
- Toilets – HL confirmed that her dept. would be funding 2 disabled toilet units. Had put in a bid to West Brom Town Team but they had refused due to Friends still having money remaining from last years funding.
- Jamie Cowles confirmed the broken bollard is not a problem for access to the site.
- Access/arrival time will be 8am to 10am. Should be no vehicle movement through the park after 10.30am.
- SC had requested walky-talkies.
- Problems with hosting the Five-a-Side Football competition. Tom Dwyer was unsure whether he would be able to organise it after all. JH to speak to Dartmouth High School.
- KC confirmed that we would have the use of scouts' marquee as last year.
- HL will arrange the new Play Area consultation for Fun Day.

- HL introduced Jamie Cowles, Urban Ranger Service, as Carole Calloway's replacement for helping the different park groups.
- DW is organising programmes for the day. Enough space on back for 8 sponsors to advertise @ £50 each. She has 5 so far, 2 possibles. Suggested selling them at 20p per programme. Printing costs £133 +VAT for 1000 or £230 +VAT for 5000. Needs map and timetable at least 1 week prior to event. Sponsors are Lloyds Chemists, Miller Homes, Co-op Travel, and Jerrard Man comm's. Timpsons given vouchers for Tombola. Members suggested having lucky numbers printed on programmes for prize draw to make people want to buy them – GW said this would cost extra £50 for printing and probably wouldn't be cost effective. DW conf that Miller Homes were sponsoring banner for main entrance and also wanted a stall for day. SC thanked Dawn and Glen for all their help.
- KC had started putting 'help' leaflets through doors of those who left details at last years Fun Day. Also need smaller posters – GW offered to print more. KC advised that posters she put up along Newton Road had been taken down – probably by Highways Agency. HL will speak to Agency for authorisation to display posters.
- KC has license for Car Boot. She wants adverts in local papers. KC to organise.
- Carol Szymura, from Barclays Bank, had been asked to sponsor Fun Day but because the Friends are not a registered charity Barclays are unable to help.
- John Payton, Scouts, confirmed: - he can offer 6 scouts to help out on day; has 1 tea urn for Friends to use (possibly one more) and will confirm later regarding the gas; will be able to provide enough burgers/hot-dogs to last the whole day.
- WG confirmed Face Painter was booked but Sea Cadets had not come back to him about display. SC conf that Sea Cadets were coming from Oldbury. SC also reminded WG that his son-in-law needed to confirm to JH by 17/6/05 if he wanted to bring bouncy castle.
- JJ is organising the Dog Show. Has come up with many different categories and will be making posters to advertise. DW suggested contacting Scott Veterinary Clinic for sponsorship. Other suggestions for sponsors were butchers and Paws'n'Thoughts. JJ needs rosettes and judges (Jodie Heath offered to help). JJ had also been in touch with 'Manic Mutts' to see if they could help in any way. For a donation from Friends they could organise the show and include displays/demo's as well. Area needs to be roped off, £1 per dog.
- JF had been in touch with HSBC (who supplied the moneyboxes and radios last year) but had no reply. Still need gifts for Tombola.
- Band concert will be 12pm to 2.30pm.
- Hamstead Homebrew will be arranging a banner themselves. DW asked for name of their supplier because hers and gone bust. JF and JCross both agreed to get quotes from their sources.
- HL confirmed that the event would be advertised by SMBC.
- SW has a contact at the Observer and offered to see what she could do about publicity.
- GW asked if Police would be supervising the Pages Lane entrance/exit. J Cowles advised that the Police charge for their services and if we try to do it ourselves we could be held liable.
- Letters to go to residents of Hill Lane, Pages Lane and Fairfield Avenue – 1 week before.
- There will be no charges for parking.
- List of names and duties for Fun Day circulated. A list of who will be doing what to be reported at next meeting.

#### 4. Next Meeting

- The next meeting will be held on **Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2005, 7.15pm** at Hill Lane. **This will be to discuss the Fun Day only.**

*Those who did not wish to remain for other park business were given the opportunity to leave the meeting.*

## 5. Any Other Business

- Gates – LF has told manufacturers that they must have the new gates fitted before Fun Day. There has been a delay due to an illness in the workforce.
- JH asked HL if the benches could also be installed in time for Fun Day. HL will co-ordinate with installation of gates to prevent any more thefts. Members confirmed that there were still lumps of concrete and metal posts sticking up out of the ground where the original benches were installed. This had been reported to SMBC on more than one occasion but still nothing has been done. JCross advised that youths were using the concrete as missiles in the park and to throw at residents' property. It was suggested that notice boards showing opening/closing times be put up when new gates are in place. JCowles said she would have an information stand at Fun Day.
- Lakes Project – JH reported that Lynn Foord had been seconded to another council section and will not be replaced. She will, however, at her own suggestion, be keeping a watching brief to check that work is going according to plan. Work will be done by landscape architects. HL confirmed that there is a project-planning meeting this week.
- JH had written to various dept's within SMBC regarding the security of the Red House but as yet had received no replies. HL advised that all windows would be secured with Perspex in the near future. The alarm was switched off because there have been so many false alarms in the past – the Police will not respond after three false alarms have been triggered in a row. HL advised that there would be a meeting between SMBC and the Police this week to discuss the situation. There was a joint operation between SMBC and the Police during half term to patrol Red House Park in an effort to stem problems, during which alcohol was confiscated.
- The Red House is currently vacant. BTCV vacated the premises last year but is still the current leaseholder. HL confirmed that her Dept is producing a report for Corporate Property Services in an attempt to get approval from them for the future use of the House (this will be produced in July). The report will put Corp Prop Services into a position to investigate.
- Jumpin' Jacks lease runs out next year (April 2006). JH had been told by Jumpin' Jacks that an extension of their lease would not be confirmed by SMBC and therefore, JJ's were not prepared to put any more money into renovation/renewal of equipment. HL pointed out that the decision on the lease and its length of expiry was up to Corp. Prop. Svcs.
- JH asked HL what the latest was with PCT taking on the House. HL said that PCT were no longer interested because the House was unsuitable for their needs. PCT could not negotiate a contract anyway because Corporate Property Services were not in a position to do so. JH pointed out that BTCV had moved out 1 year ago, PCT had then met with SMBC and SC for a tour of the House and the Friends had been told that PCT and SMBC were in negotiations for taking on the lease. We are now informed that Corp Prop Svcs were never in a position to do anything about the lease and are still not in a position to do anything about it, therefore a whole year has been wasted. HL confirmed that this was correct.
- KC wanted to know if we would be consulted on the future use of the House or simply left with the Council's decision.
- HL said that SMBC wants input from the Friends about use of house before completing draft report.
- KC wants draft report made public so that the local community can have a look and comment if necessary. SC suggested having a petition at Fun Day to save the House and keep it for the local community. SC repeated (as at previous meetings) that the House should be used for the community, with at least one room being permanently available to the Friends. Suggestions were: conference centre, café, civic ceremonies (see Haden Hill for ideas), also to give Friends a 12 month trial period at running it if a suitable alternative leaseholder could not be found. JF suggested that SMBC try looking to the long term future of the Red House, as it was their short sighted vision (namely not allowing for window protection until BTCV had left) that had caused the problem in the first place.
- WG advised that SMBC's Planning Dept have agreed to the demolishing of 56 Newton Rd, where another 15 dwellings will be erected. Money should therefore go to Red House Park via the B106 fund.

- Strong feelings made clear to HL from various members that the residents of Great Barr feel abandoned by SMBC. As Red House Park is on the outskirts of the borough there is no interest or money invested by SMBC, even though it is the nearest park to the Durham Estate which is designated an under privileged area. There are no signs outside the main entrance, it's not listed in the Events leaflet, and there's no information board to advise about the history, wildlife or different aspects of the park.
- JCowles stressed that the Urban Rangers do care about the park and take pride in it.
- SC asked for more bins yet again. The matter had been raised previously with SW but nothing had materialised. The bins we do have are not big enough and those on the football pitches and by the lakes are often left overflowing, especially during the football season.
- JCowles pointed out that there is a borough-wide problem at the moment with the dog waste bins being emptied out into the parks. HL advised that the SMBC employee responsible for emptying the dog bins left 6 weeks ago and to date has not been replaced.
- SC asked for the large oil drum bins to be delivered to the park for the Fun Day, as last year.
- No reply received about the tree surgery. HL will chase up the matter with Mark Satchwell.
- KC had been in contact with Lesley Loft from the Probation Service, who has offered the Friends help with work in the park, e.g. painting railings. HL informed the group that she had been in touch with them in the past and will contact them again to discuss.
- Cabe Space who deals with Green Space projects had contacted HL. They want to run a pilot scheme, which consults with 'local stakeholders' about how they want the local green space used. The consultation would come up with a national layout/methodology to use for the best way to engage with the public, to develop best practice and guidelines in getting the local community involved in Green Space projects. HL wanted to know if we agreed to take part. There may be the possibility of Cabe Space holding an event in the park as part of the scheme. There was a show of hands with a unanimous vote to go ahead.
- HL advised that there was also a Lottery launch in partnership with ITV1 offering the chance of £50k grants for community groups to develop and improve green spaces. Suggestions for use, if a grant was to be obtained, were changing rooms and toilets. HL will pass on information to SC ASAP.
- JJ raised the issue of the £18k given to Red House Park via the B106 fund from the Miners Club when they sold off some of their land for housing development 7 years ago. There is currently £11k remaining, which must be used within the next 3 years as part of the original agreement. HL suggested that the group consider agreeing to move the money to help fund the Lake Restoration Project. JJ said she had been advised that the money was specifically for the changing rooms and could not be used for anything else. HL said it would be difficult but could be done if Friends agreed. JH raised objection to the idea as it was yet another example of SMBC getting out of finding funding for Red House Park, that the money was allocated for the changing rooms and once it was gone there was nothing left to renovate them. Funding for the lakes should be found from alternative sources. GW pointed out that there was great mistrust of SMBC due to the extensive amount of housing developments in the immediate area and the lack of money spent on the park. He requested to see the figures relating to spending on RHP and money in the B106 fund. HL agreed to bring the relevant figures to the first meeting held after the Fun Day. DA pointed out that the money spent on the play area for 8-16 year old was wasted as the equipment was wholly inadequate and dangerous. SC once again asked that the Friends be consulted with the new Toddler Play Area.