



Minutes for the Friends of Telegraph Hill Park Meeting, 26th September 2011

1. Attendees and apologies for absence

Meeting chaired by Oliver Wells
Minutes taken by Vicky Williams
Tamsin Bacchus
Paul Milnes
Sylvestra Le Touzel Teale
Martin Hyde, LBL
Paul Bell
Joan Millburn
Sophie Beswick (SPAG)
14 Local residents

Apologies for absence from Malcolm Bacchus, Jacqui Shimidzu, Stephen Carrick-Davies

2. Matters Arising

i. Security in Drakefell Road

A resident of Drakefell Road whose property backs onto the park, had previously raised the issue of an overgrown Russia vine which was making it impossible for her (and her neighbours) to plant spikey bushes at the end of her garden for security. Since the last meeting Glendale had removed the Russian vine and planted some small hawthorn saplings on the park side of their garden wall. She wished to restate the problem and draw attention to flaws that she saw in the strategy – that the 3 properties were still visible, a path along the wall was accessible and rubbish was accumulating and an environment of unease was being created for the residents.

Paul Bell re-iterated that the Council could not build a higher wall.

Martin Hyde stated that it was incumbent on residents to provide their own security. He agreed to meet separately with the resident to discuss the issue further. It was agreed that a temporary fence could be erected to protect the defensive planting until it became established, the Russian Vine would be cut once again so that residents could make their own improvements.

It was suggested that the park could apply to charities such as the Woodland Trust for additional saplings.

ii. Skatepark up-date

The Chair asked for an update and requested a full statement of accountability, liability and insurance cover for the skateboard area build.

Sophie Beswick addressed the meeting with a progress report. The meeting heard that SPAG has been successful in gaining another grant bringing their total to £91K for the project. Gravity had won the tender to design and build the skatepark and after meetings with the community, the final designs were ready and would be posted on the website and around the park. A Certificate of Lawful Development was expected to be issued shortly and then the building work could begin. It was expected that the build time would be 6 weeks during which a section of the park would need to be fenced off for safety reasons but attempts would be made to keep disruption for park users to a minimum.

The meeting was told that concerns regarding the stability of the grass bank had been addressed by the ordering of another report of the cross section of the bank.

Martin Hyde confirmed that there was a chain of responsibility for the installation and enough had been done to make sure that all reasonable cover was in place. The Council was responsible for the installation, Glendale had commissioned Gravity who were responsible for the build and had Full Liability Insurance (20 years on concrete, 10 years on the build) and Structural Soils had carried out the initial survey.

iii. Equiano Interpretation Board

Sandra Margolies gave an overview to the meeting.

A Steering Group had been set up to look at this. A revised version of the wording had been done containing some more information (copies were circulated)

Questions still remain with regard to the location of the board, size, text, process and funding. The meeting decided to delegate these issues to the Steering group and it was suggested that a mock up should be produced so that the various different versions could be looked at in situ.

iv. Trees

It was pointed out that there are 4 current 'projects' requiring trees and shrub planting:

1. the specific request for a replacement Ginkgo tree
2. Planting to soften the impact of the skatepark
3. Thorn bushes for the section of the park backing onto Drakefell Road
4. More trees planted in vacant plots.

It was thought that it would be possible to amalgamate these projects and that help could be sought from sources such as The Woodland Trust (free trees), Transition New Cross (offers of voluntary help) and Community Payback (youth offenders project).

No further progress had been made on replacing the Ginkgo tree but the meeting again felt that it would be a nice memorial for Jayne Bates. It was agreed that Paul would contact Jayne's husband to see whether he felt that a bench or a tree would be the most suitable memorial.

3. General update & maintenance (Lewisham/Glendale)

The Chair praised Glendale for their rapid response to the removal of graffiti, repairing shattered glass and getting the toilet repaired.

It was pointed out to the meeting that damage to the play equipment and picnic tables had been caused by arson not by the riots and that Glendale's response to the damage had been slow and the repairs carried out had not been satisfactory.

Glendale's response:

- i. Play Equipment – parts ordered, should be repaired by end of October.
- ii. Picnic Tables – Slabs to be replaced.
- iii. Tennis Courts – damage to nets and fencing to be repaired by end of October.
- iv. Drinking Fountain – will look again at problems with pressure.

Park security

The issue was raised that over the summer months the park gates had repeatedly been left unlocked overnight.

Glendale reported that due to the cuts in park keeper hours, and the longer summer daylight hours, it was not always possible for the park keeper to lock the gates before his home time as it was still daylight and people were still using the park. The Policy was to leave 1 gate open and then someone else would come back later in the evening and lock the remaining gate. This was not a problem during the winter months and this was the first summer with this new regime. Glendale said that they were prepared to be flexible with regard to the park keeper's hours and were keen to work with Friends groups to work out which hours would be the most suitable.

A concern was raised that, when the gates were being locked late at night, there was a danger that people could be unknowingly locked in the park.

It was requested that any incidents occurring in the park in the evenings should be reported to Martin Hyde and that a record of incidents should be kept so that a future comparison could be made.

A point was raised by another resident as to whether there was a record of incidents in the Upper Park which, by comparison, is left unlocked.

It was suggested that liaison should be made with the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

Park keeper performance

A concern was raised regarding the reluctance of the park keeper to engage with members of the public on issues of anti-social behaviour and breaking the park rules.

Martin agreed to speak to the park keeper and that training would be offered if needed.

It was generally agreed that a social norm of acceptable behaviour needed to be established and that people flouting the rules should be challenged, although incidents should in the first instance be reported to the park keeper.

Of particular concern seemed to be the issue of people (both adults and children) cycling in the park, often on the way to school. It was suggested that notes should be sent to local schools reminding people that is not allowed.

4. Other Issues discussed

Barbeques

A question was raised about whether there should be designated places for people to have barbeques in the park as patches of grass were being damaged as well as picnic tables and the bins being set alight when hot coals were being disposed of.

Suggestions: Paving slabs set in the grass to put them on, concrete bin for disposal.

No policy was put in place.

Noticeboard

Issue of a second noticeboard was raised again. Oliver to speak to Malcolm about it again.

Questions to be investigated: location, size and funding.

Shed in Generations Play Club area

It was noted that the shed is in a very bad state and urgently needs to be repaired.

Responsibility for this lies with Early Learning.

Neglected Boundary on Arbuthnot Road

One resident commented that the border on the Arbuthnot Road side of the Lower Park was looking rather neglected.

Nature Trail

It was suggested that a new nature trail leaflet could be created for the park to encourage young people and schools to use the park facilities.

'National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces' – ideas

Oliver attended this conference in September and had come back with many ideas for engaging with different groups of park users which could be discussed at future meetings.

Bark in the Park (for dog walkers) including free chipping, dog show, etc

Education – Park space link with the National Curriculum

Open Air Theatre

Film in the Park

Outdoor Gyms

Cooking and Physical activity

5. Any Other Business

Ceremonial Spade! Sylvestra had been looking after the engraved spade which was given to the park after the refurbishment. She now felt it was appropriate to find it a new home. The meeting agreed that Malcolm and Tamsin Bacchus should be the spade's new guardians.

Date of next meeting: Monday 12th December