



MEMBERS OPEN FORUM MEETING NOTES

21ST October 2019 – Brighthelm, North Road, Brighton – From 5.30pm

Attendees:

Roger Amerina - B&H Heritage Commission
Vivienne Barton - BHGSF Committee
Elsbeth Broady - Brighton Greenway
Michael Creedy - Brighton Peace Environment
Julia Da Silva - Norfolk Square
Melanie Davis - BHGSF Committee
Dominic Furlong - Roundhill Green Spaces
Fiona Garsmeur - BHCC Parks Project Officer
Trisha Gaskell-Watkins - B&H City in Bloom
Stuart Grainger - Palmeira & Adelaide
Suzanne Hinton - Regency Square Area Society
Richard Howard - The Level Forum
Rich Howorth - William Clarke Park / The Patch
Juliette Hunting – Lansdowne Area Residents Association
Luke Jones - The Tree Council
Penelope Kenny - FO Craven Vale
Helen Starr-Keddle – B&H Food Partnership
Gregg King - Palmeira & Adelaide Garden Fund
Alan Moon - BHGSF Committee
Cliff Munn - Chair BHGSF
James Newmarsh - B&H Wildlife Forum
Marcus Oldfield - Surrenden Field
Jane Power - Roundhill Green Spaces
Deborah Pryer - Stanford & Cleveland Community Garden
Peter Ranson - FO Bedford Square
Karen Rigby-Faux - Greenhavens Network
Mary Sansom - Withdean Park
Bernadette Skinner - FO Beacon Hill + Ovingdean Residents & Preservation Society
Anna Smith - FO Davis Park
Peter Spence - Albion Community Gardens
Denise Taylor - BHGSF committee
Gill Taylor - Hollingbury & Burstead Woods
Judith Taylor - Palmeira & Adelaide Garden Fund
Michelle Thomason - B&H Organic Gardening Group
Chris Tredgold – St Peter’s Churchyard Volunteers Preston Park
Gill Wales – Regency Square Gardening Group
Ani Watson - Regency Square Area Society
Maureen Winder – The Level Community Forum

Apologies:

Margaret Haynes - St.Peter's Churchyard
Catherine Melhuish - Surrenden Field
Claire Millett-Hopkins - Woodingdean Wilderness
John Funnell - B&H Archaeological Society

Groups represented:

St Peters Churchyard Volunteers
Regency Square Area Society
B&H Organic Gardening Group (BHOGG)
Palmeira & Adelaide Garden Fund
Hollingbury & Burstead Woods
Albion Community Gardens
FO Davis Park
FO Beacon Hill
FO Withdean Park
Greenhavens Network
FO Bedford Square
Stanford & Cleveland Community Garden
FO Surrenden Field
B&H Wildlife Forum
B&H Food Partnership
FO Craven Vale
The Tree Council
William Clarke Park (The Patch)
Lansdowne Area Residents Ass. (LARA)
B&H City in Bloom
BHCC CityParks
Roundhill Green Spaces
FO Norfolk Square
Brighton Peace Environment
Brighton Greenway
B&H Heritage Commission
Ovingdean Residents & Preservation Society

Summary / Agenda:

5.30pm - Chairperson. Welcome, introductions, update and objectives.
5.40pm - Helen Starr-Keddle, Brighton Food Partnership: What green spaces groups can do to help Brighton become a GOLD Sustainable Food City.
6.00pm - Luke Jones, local Tree Warden. Changing Brighton's landscape: increasing the tree canopy in Brighton and Hove.
6.15pm - Members experiences shared – some brief presentations on what has worked well for member groups this year and what remains challenging/unfinished.
6.30pm - Break for tea/coffee and cakes
7.00pm - Group discussion, networking and feedback.
7.30pm - Summary & Close

Detailed Notes:

Introduction & Objectives

All were welcomed to the meeting the main objective of which was for green space volunteers to share experiences. New groups were welcomed as well as groups that previously hadn't attended a members meeting. The Forum now has 91 member groups. Guests were welcomed including Karen Rigby-Faux (Greenhavens Network) and speakers Helen Starr-Keddle (B&H Food Partnership) and Luke Jones (The Tree Council).

Brighton & Hove Food Partnership

Helen Starr-Keddle presented on their objective of making B&H a 'Gold Sustainable Food City'.

Helen is a development worker for the B&H Food Partnership which provides an information hub for groups and individuals growing food in a sustainable manner. Having achieved Silver standard in 2015, the partnership are leading the B&H campaign 'Going for Gold' standard as a sustainable city. This encompasses an array of initiatives, from encouraging the planting of fruit and nut trees and hedgerows and berries to composting, especially in the city centre.

There is some great supporting information providing detail on what you can do (both as an individual and a group) to take action in support of the campaign for increased sustainability. See more at the Gold Sustainable Food City site at <https://bhfood.org.uk/goldbid/>

Members were asked to look and share on social media to support the Gold project.

Helen also talked about the 'Changing chalk' initiative – this is an initiative to fund the conservation of rare chalk landscapes and wildflowers across several locations. More information can be seen at <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/projects/the-changing-chalk-partnership>

She also over viewed the 'Green Wellbeing Alliance' which is a collaboration of local organisations that provide therapeutic outdoor activities where participants improve their wellbeing and health while connecting with nature and other people. More information can be seen at <https://bhfood.org.uk/directory-hub/green-wellbeing-alliance/>

Anyone wanting to find out more about the B&H Food Partnership, or wishing to be added to their email list, should EMail them at info@bhfood.org.uk

There were a number of questions from the floor, including about the old orchard at Stanmer Park and city centre composting.

Luke Jones – The Tree Council - local tree warden

In recent history 46% of world's trees been destroyed! Luke spoke about the Tree Council objectives of getting more tree coverage across and inside city. This to help carbon neutrality, clean air, homes for animals, restoring habitats etc by planting trees now.

In his role as tree warden, Luke invests time in finding appropriate space and support for planting trees. They have ambitious plans to plant around 15,000 trees in the next year and have found a local landlord farmer who's agreed to these numbers.

A good local example of the work done by Luke can be seen at Woodbourne Meadow near Ditchling Road. After obtaining all the appropriate permissions, around 500 trees were planted and are doing well. He made the point that it is relatively easy to get trees to plant (eg from 'Special Branch' in Stanmer) it is finding appropriate sites and gaining permissions that are the challenge. Trees are best planted as whips.

Luke took a number of questions, including the importance of agreeing any planting with appropriate authorities (eg CityParks Rangers). Coppicing was discussed, this is done in managed woodlands (eg the Hazel coppice area of Stanmer woods) and can be good for wildlife.

The severe cutting of hedges with the city was discussed, it appears this is for cost reasons. The hedges and small trees are being cut though beyond the point from which they can recover. CM requested any examples of this be Emailed to the Forum, if enough information can be gathered the Forum will raise with the City Council.

The need for a city wide strategy for tree planting and management was also discussed, together with the 'Plant Your Postcode' initiative. The good news is that a new 'B&H Tree Strategy' has just been published in draft form and will be out for public consultation in the New Year (see later item).

More information on the B&H 'Plant Your Postcode' initiative can be found at <https://plantyourpostcode.org/>

More information on The Tree Council and Tree Wardens can be found at <https://www.treecouncil.org.uk/>

Member's experiences shared

Gill Wales - Regency Square Gardening Group

Gill is in the process of setting up a new volunteer gardening group for Regency Square (hopefully extending later into Clarence & Russell Squares). Regency square has a very high footfall but the gardens have suffered from a lack of care and planting. The site has a number of practical challenges, including a soil depth of less than a metre (being over an underground car park). Following recent visits by CityParks Ranger Volunteers, Gill and a number of other residents joined in the work. Gill herself has now attended the CityParks Volunteer Leadership training course and the group are on the cusp of being able to work independently in the square.

The process of setting up the new group has been slow, but the learning from the training has helped clarify all that's needed to start gardening. Gill has had to overcome a number of local issues, she has 6 volunteers so far and is looking to run the first session very soon. From the meeting, Gill made contact with Norfolk Square, Bedford Square & Palmeira Square groups and is looking forward to some shared learning.

Rich Howorth – Friends of William Clarke Park ‘The Patch’

Rich told the meeting of the success the group had achieved with the running of events. These have helped raise funds for the provision of things like a summer portaloo, green gym equipment and some wonderful mural paintings reminding the community of the Kemptown branch railway line that used to occupy the site. The group have also installed a chalk wildflower bank.

Rich explained that the success of their events was really down to the enthusiasm and commitment of its core members. Events were publicised using both traditional (eg leafleting the local area) and more modern (social media) methods. The Patch suffers similar challenges to other sites, with drug use, vandalism and anti-social behaviour. The space though is hugely valued by the community which helps contain these challenges.

More information about ‘The Patch’ can be found on their website at <http://www.williamclarkepark.org/>

Gill Taylor – Hollingbury & Burstead Wood

Gill told the meeting of some of the success the group had had with the management and re-planting of the woods. The group have successfully planted and are managing large numbers of new trees, they are happy to help other groups wanting to do the same. More information about the work the group have done can be seen on their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofHollingburyandBursteadWoodsinBrighton>

Group Discussion – Key Points Summary

CityParks Ranger Volunteers

This group meet every Friday under the watchful eye of CityParks Ranger Neil Doyle. Every week they undertake different tasks on different sites across the City. They are willing to assist Green Space volunteer groups with specific tasks they have that need 6 to 8 people for a day. If you want to join the group, or have a task you think they might be able to help with, they can be contacted at cityparks.volunteers@brighton-hove.gov.uk

National Federation of Parks & Green Spaces (NFPGS) & the Parks Charter

The NFPGS held their Southern Regional conference here in Brighton on 21st September. Alongside other organisations, they are championing a new ‘Charter for Parks’ which aims to raise the priority put on the management of parks and green spaces. Specifically they have an objective of making Parks a statutory service that Councils have to deliver to a high standard. For more information on the ‘Charter for Parks’ see <https://parkscharter.org.uk/> . For more info on the NFPGS, see their website at <https://natfedparks.org.uk>

B&H Plant Your Postcode (PYP)

The B&H PYP initiative has the primary aim of increasing the tree canopy across the City. It is implementing an easy to use mechanism for Friends of, and other community groups to identify, raise funds and get the necessary permissions to plant more trees (ie street and open space trees). The initiative is closely supported by the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE).

For more information on B&H PYP and to express interest. See their website at <https://plantyourpostcode.org/>

The New B&H Tree Strategy

The long awaited tree strategy for the City has now been published in draft format. It is a long document worthy of close scrutiny and will be out for public consultation soon. It details the future strategy for trees across the city and in its current form has significant implications for the future of street trees in situations where pavements are narrow.

The draft tree strategy can be viewed at [https://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000823/M00009507/AI00075618/\\$20190930111810_020276_0066604_BHCCTreeStrategyworkingdraft9.docxA.ps.pdf](https://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000823/M00009507/AI00075618/$20190930111810_020276_0066604_BHCCTreeStrategyworkingdraft9.docxA.ps.pdf)

Green Space Volunteer Leadership Training

The next volunteer leadership training course will be run by CityParks Ranger Emma Keane on 3rd November. Anyone interested in attending this course (or one in the future) should write to Emma at Emma.Keane@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Use of Forum Events Calendar to publicise your event!

It is very easy for any green space group to upload details of Events they are holding or News items they have onto the Forum's events calendar and newsboard at <http://bhgreenspaceforum.org.uk>

To add Events, click on 'Submit your event' and complete the form presented, you can also upload an image or poster associated with the event (must be a photo or 'jpg' type image). To add News items just click on 'Submit your news'.

To use this facility you will need to register on the website, but only once. Then it's just a case of logging in after clicking the submit event or news buttons. If you are not registered already, the site will prompt you on what steps to take.

Please do EMail the Forum at bhgsforum@gmail.com with any questions.

The meeting concluded at 7.30pm. All present were thanked for attending.