

BRIGHTON & HOVE GREEN SPACES FORUM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & OPEN FORUM

Wednesday 30th January from 5.30pm

Friends Meeting House, Ship Street, Brighton

Attendees:-

Beacon Hill Nature Reserve	Bernadette Skinner
Brighton Archaeological group	John Funnell
B & H City in Bloom	Denise Taylor
B & H Friends of the Earth	Chris Todd
B & H Wildlife Forum	John Patmore
FO Brunswick Square	Fiona Bower
Brunswick Town in Bloom	Juliette Hunting
FO Craven Woods	Alan Cooke
CPRE	Kia Trainor
FO Davis Park	Charlie Parker
FO Hove Park	Alan Moon
Living Coast, Biosphere Ptship + (The Patch)	Rich Howorth
FO Montpelier & Clifton	Jim Gowans
FO Norfolk Square	Damian Magee
FO Norfolk Square	Julie
FO Norfolk Square	Rob
FO Norfolk Square	Julia De Silva
FO Palmeira and Adelaide	George Dean
Plot 22	Emma Houldsworth
FO Preston Park	Maggie Hanes
FO Queens Park	Chris Lowe
Volunteer Ranger	Vivienne Barton
Volunteer Ranger	Simon Wrigley
FO Regency Square	Neil Rosborough
FO St. Ann's Well	Melanie Davis
FO St. Peter's Churchyard	Cliff Munn
FO Saltdean Green Spaces	Cathy Gallagher
FO Sheepcote Valley	Jane Hawkins
FO Sheepcote Valley	Sue Stubbings
FO Stoneham Park	Catherine Michie
FO Stanford and Cleveland	Debbie Pryer
FO Stanford and Cleveland	Maureen Boynton
FO Stanmer Preservation Society	Sue Craig
FO Surrenden Field	Sue Shanks
The Level Forum	Maureen Winder
FO Three Cornered Copse	Kevin Potter
FO Three Cornered Copse	Helen Potter
FO TWEAK +Westdene Green	Michael Letton
FO TWEAK	Marcus Oldfield

Brighton University students – Georgina, Anthony, Max, Alex.

Apologies:-

Robert Stephenson, **The Roundhill Society** Trisha Gaskill Watkins, **Brunswick in Bloom**, Rosie Linford. **The Food Partnership** Hugh Woodhouse **Vol.Ranger** Sue Johnson **FO Hove Lagoon**, Karen Rigby-Faux

Greenhavens. Steve Peters, **The Level.** Jason Fisher **FO Beacon Hill,** Peter Spence **Albion Hill Community Garden,** Pete West – **B & H Way.**

Summary:-

5.30 Refreshments – Meeting 6 – 7.45pm:

1. Welcome & Apologies
2. Chairman's 2018 Report
3. Treasurer's 2018 Report
4. AGM Election of Officers – Electing members for 2019

OPEN FORUM AND NETWORKING

5. Introduction and Objectives – Final year students from Brighton University.
6. Introduction of groups – successes and challenges.

7. Open Forum Questions:-

- a. What would your group like from the Forum – what can it do better ?
- b. What sort of relationship do we need with the Council to benefit green spaces volunteer groups?
- c. Would bi-annual Forum get-togethers be of value? – other suggestions
- d. Do you feel part of a community by being part of The Forum – is there value in it ?

8. Any other Business and Close

Detailed notes:-

1. Welcome by Chair Cliff Munn

2. Chairman's 2018 Report. Membership has increased to 80 groups. There is an upgraded website where groups can upload events. Rich Howorth of Living Coast , (The Forum is now a formal partner) was pivotal in the launch of the Forum - He is leaving his post to join Natural England running a national conservation programme. The Forum had citywide success by promoting of RHS "It's Your Neighbourhood" competitions. The Forum is organising a Spring Seminar on March 6th encouraging bio-diversity in green spaces with talks from Prof. Dave Goulson, School of Life Sciences, University of Sussex and Steve Peters award winning gardener at The Level, which is a pesticide free zone.

3. Treasurer's 2018 Report.- Income and Expenditure. - Applied for and was approved a Communities Fund grant.

4. Election of Officers.

The following nominations were officially endorsed by being seconded with a show of hands.

Chair – Cliff Munn Volunteer Ranger, Treasurer Alan Moon Chair FO Hove Park, Committee Member Melanie Davis Chair St. Ann's Well, Committee Member Vivienne Barton Volunteer Ranger,

Committee Member Neil Rosborough FO Regency Square. Denise Taylor is not re-standing in role of Secretary. There were no nominations for the role so she will act in an informal role to tide things over. The formalities were concluded.

OPEN FORUM & NETWORKING –

5. Introduction and Objectives

Four final year students from Brighton University were introduced and they explained the strategy of their feasibility study that they will be carrying out on behalf of The Forum. They will be contacting all groups on The Forum website in the near future with a survey they have created.. The Forum is appreciative that it has been chosen as part of their course, which will undoubtedly benefit groups working in green spaces.

6. Introductions of groups and updates of key achievements and challenges

Alan Moon FO Hove Park. Volunteer numbers are always a problem. The group continues to work with businesses and hold annual events. They are actively campaigning for improvements to the playground working towards much funding. They hold an Easter trail, gardening and litter picking events. They are working with local communities to organise an art festival this year.

Rich Howorth, Living Coast & William Clarke Park (The Patch) Has been working with the council running the Biosphere Project in the UNESCO Biosphere region. The Patch is a small park with a very active group with many wildlife group activities - using 106 development for laying tarmac and to renew green gym equipment. They run the very successful Patchfest. This year is the 150th anniversary of the Kemp Town railway which The Patch will be celebrating.

Rob Norfolk Square,

After issues with litter and anti-social behaviour an active gardening group was set up to brighten and clean up the neglected Square. They have fund raised with local businesses and funds which has helped stock the area with seasonal flowers and to attract wildlife, Have worked with Food Partnership to set up composting facilities and with the Council with whom they have a good relationship. However, they are struggling, carrying out 99% including bin cleaning of the but feel that very little comes back in return. As a success story feel they should get recognition and support.

Bernadette Skinner Beacon Hill Nature Reserve, Is on the committee for BHNR but also represents Ovingdean Residents and Preservation Society who are trying to green up the area but despite trying to negotiate contact with an arborologist they can't get them to agree do the utility searches. BS have organised an annual cleanup of the reserve and all Ovingdean footpaths for the past 22 years.. Have planted up the wood behind the church with a large quantity of free saplings. Organised a very successful Green Festival last summer emphasising plastic free Ovingdean and are the first area around to get plastic free status. Will be holding a follow-up smaller festival on the 22nd June this year.

Cathy Gallgaher FO Saltdean.Green Spaces CG is on the committee of Greenhavens, Network on the boundary of Lewes and is a collaboration of people that want to protect and to improve their local green spaces, enhancing their parks and opens spaces for people and wildlife. Saltdean Oval is the public park and the group are constantly fighting to preserve the green space. Feel it's encouraging to talk to other people who have the same issues particularly as they feel they don't get support from Cityparks

George Dean FO Palmeira and Adelaide – The group works closely with the council on work on the beds. The challenge is keeping it as a public amenity and to keep it attractive for the use of everybody. The group contribute to planting and have a good say in planting of the beds. A constant presence in the square seems to make the public behave makes the general public behave better.

John Patmore Brighton & Hove Wildlife Forum

Brighton & Hove's Wildlife Forum (BHWF.org.uk) operates in harmony with BHGS Forum, with a wildlife focus to its groups' interests. The most recent addition to BHWF was the Brighton Greenway friends group. 2018 was the second year of the House Sparrows project (www.bhsparrows.uk) which confirmed the numbers and locations of House Sparrow colonies. We all need to be aware of the threat to Local Nature Reserves (LNR) which are seen as building land by builders in collaborations with Council Development Projects team. This is a worrying change of policy for land south of the National Park boundary. It will be important now to ensure all suitable land is included on the City Plan as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS)"

Jane Hawking FO Sheepcote Valley. The eastern flank is in the national park the rest in landfill and has been restored over the years. The group has put in benches, they clear the park and the dew pond. The area is a destination passage for migrating birds, arable land on one side attracts much wildlife. They hold a butterfly walk every summer led by Paul Gorringe Cityparks Ranger and an early bird walk with Dave Boddington.

Sue Stubbings, Portslade Green Gym and Sheepcote Valley.

The Green Gym offer help to groups every Thursday morning This scheme aims to improve health and wellbeing with 'work out' in the open air through local, practical environmental or gardening work. They worked last week at Stanmer, Emmaus Beacon Hill, Waterhall. See website.
<<https://www.tcv.org.uk/greengym>>

John Funnel Brighton Archaeological group . The group dig in parks and find lots of interesting artefacts dating back to the stone age. Promoting the study of archaeology and local history the group has a very active "Field Group" which is happy to come to parks and open spaces to inspect geophysics and survey the area if there might be something interesting below the surface.

Kia Trainor CPRE Campaign to Protect Rural England is a small Sussex countryside charity that also crosses into urban issues. There is a local Brighton group which is newly forming and wants to focus on access to biodiversity, Also protecting green fields and spaces with urban fringe groups - equally wildlife preserves.

Maureen Winder from Level Communities Forum, A part of the park is currently associated with drug taking. The group want to increase engagement with the local community, and have organised many events, annual festivals, Christmas events. The group are hoping to expand to take over the buildings of the park to raise awareness of the history of the park. Aiming to have The Level as a focal part of the area. The relationship with the council is non communication. What does being an volunteer actually mean.? Volunteers can be attracted but the role needs to be professionalised to encourage more to get involved.

Chris Lowe FO Queens park, Working to with the RSPB Swift project for the second year.. There was a Conservation management plan in 2017 but no funding was available , Consulted in the summer and most wanted to work on the pond, The group leafleted scaffolding owners to get bird boxes installed. These have created ideal nesting opportunities.

Simon Wrigley, Volunteer Ranger. Works with “Neal’s nomads”. (Cityparks Ranger Neil Doyle) They get around to quite a lot of parks with requests from different groups. They carry out all sorts of tasks including steps, fencing spud bashing, clearing ponds. If any groups feel that they could use this facility contact park rangers. cityparks.volunteers@brighton-[hove.gov.uk](mailto:cityparks.volunteers@brighton-hove.gov.uk).

Juliette Hunting Brunswick Town in Bloom, This is an umbrella group for all the different groups within the Brunswick area,. Mostly working in their own area with donations and good will. Very dependent on the council for clearing up the area on annual judging days by South & South East in Bloom, Would like to thank them for the occasions when they’ve helped. **Concerned that the consultation for council’s Outdoor Events Strategy to 2024 had not been more widely publicised. Only one other group in the room knew about it and the survey is now closed.**

Alan Cooke FO Cragven Wood, is six acres of woodland on the west side of Whitehawk Hill and is the nearest piece of wild woodland to the city centre. The allotments are on a 45 degree hill. Over last 8 years volunteers have worked with Paul Gorringer Ranger to cut back sycamores. The group tends apple orchards, carry out coppicing painting, a couple of glades. The butterfly count has risen. Group is grateful to Green Gym, and Conservation Volunteers who help with the 600 native trees. Had to put in a lot of steps, with lottery grant

Sue Craig Stanmer Preservation Society is committed to improving, protecting and preserving the village of Stanmer and its environment. They have Bat walks and have been carrying out surveys and there is a worry that bats and toads are in decline. On Apple Day there wasn’t one wasp. They are concerned at the use of Glyphosate and the concern that the council are continuing to cover streets. in the weed killer.

Neil Rosborough FO Regency Square Is keen to learn how to tackle roots and composting in the garden which is above a car park on the seafront. The green part has been neglected and currently there is no planting group. The garden has a tunnel going down to the beach which the group hope to improve and are hoping to be one of the parks to have a public drinking fountain.

Fiona Bower FO Brunswick Sq and Terrace, - The square and terrace are part of a conservation area. Group applied for a grant from Rampion to improve the railings. Turned down because they were considered to be too posh. Over a year they surveyed the railings cast iron, put in money from Pebble Trust and from the council but it didn’t pay for it all. Also have been trying to get water connected via the fountain at the bottom of the square. Volunteers are disconsolate with the process.

Kevin Potter, Three Cornered Copse is a wedge of land behind Woodland Drive. Volunteers have recently dug in hedging whips to create a hedge in Dyke Road Avenue which were free. Plus have installed some hedging in George 1V Avenue as the smell of fumes from cars is quite strong, The group have completed wooden information boards. They tidy up regularly, keeping rubbish down but feel that the Ranger service is not adequate and are frustrated at the situation with the council.

Emma Houldsworth, Plot 22 is a charity established eight years ago and run by a community of volunteers with an allotment garden at Weald Allotments, The group share communal gardening and outdoor cooking opportunities for local residents, families and groups experiencing additional challenges. They have composting toilet facilities on site and all gardening tools and gloves are provided.

Chris Todd – FOE - Hollingbury and Burstead Woods faced a big problem as their tool shed was sold by the council, and the new owner cleared smaller bushes and trees. Talking on behalf of Brighton and Hove Way Association are organising a cycle ride for 2019 and it will be a great way to raise funds for your local green space.

Charlie Parker FO Davis Park, The group wanted to ensure the park was being used by the community but do suffer anti-social behaviour.

Sue Shanks Surrenden Field, formed last year, Have planted spring bulbs with the local Ranger Gary who has been very helpful with litter picks. Now have a butterfly bank attracting bees and butterflies.. Have also planted lilac trees.

Mike Letton FO TWEAK working in conjunction with Westdene Green . They have been given section 106 money and are now an active group. There were issues with information for Funding for Communities to create Pocket Parks from the council. Awaiting response as the deadline is now over and the opportunity has been missed.

Debbie Pryer FO Stanford and Cleveland ,This urban garden is part of a wide road which came about when local residents petitioned and the council allowed them to set up a garden in 2012. Raised beds were put in to grow flowers, fruit, vegetables and herbs for local residents. Currently they are southern region winners of Cultivation Street,, Gold winners of South & South East in Bloom and First in Brighton & Hove City in Bloom comSt.Peters Churchyard. have close links with preston parks and preston manor and wildlie area.

munity garden category.

Cliff Munn St.Peters Churchyard Have close links with Preston Park and Preston Manor and the walled garden. A wildlife area is to the north of the church. The group has cleared undergrowth and improved pathways to encourage more wildlife.

Jim Gowens Montpelier and Clifton Hill Ass. The group endeavour to protect the heritage of the area including the garden of St Nicholas church . Have recently been awarded £5000 from community fund of the Co-op which will fund hanging baskets in Vernon terrace to help celebrate the group's 50th anniversary .

Catherine Richie, FO Stoneham Park, The group belong to a densely used urban park. There is West Hove infants school in Portland Road and lots of nurseries using the park. Have been awarded £550 and are looking to create a gardening club. Meeting with Sarah Carlisle from Cityparks on 31st January.

Melanie St. Ann's Wells Garden.. The group organise lots of activities and festivals as well as the Big Garden Birdwatch with the next wildlife event being the Dawn Chorus walk in late April.. The group raise funds for park improvements.

End

7. Open Forum Questions

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- b. What sort of relationship do we need with the Council to benefit green spaces volunteer groups?
- c. Would bi-annual Forum get-togethers be of value? – other suggestions
- d. Do you feel part of a community by being part of The Forum – is there value in it ?

TO BE ANALYSED by The Forum.

Any other business

There was an overwhelming sense of frustration about lack of communication with the council. There was strong plea that The Forum should set up a formal liaison with parks. Maybe include a Community Liaison Officer. It is frustrating not to know about events that the council organise that affects community groups.

The technical aspects of running a group especially smaller groups and maintaining a web site is difficult. An advice page from the Forum on how they can maintain their own website would be useful.

Agreed that twice yearly meetings of The Forum was a good idea. Maybe split the meetings between smaller urban groups and larger outer-area groups. urban v fringe sites.

Can representations be made by the forum on issues of national importance such as the issue of green spaces. The threats, value etc. More campaigning around events and information about areas like Whitehawk and the wildlife threat.

The Forum have a link with the Archaeological Society which could be important for most groups. – ,

The value of channelling advice and sharing problems.

Different strategic channels to the council. , Whilst some groups have positive interaction with the council, generally felt that a better relationship was needed.

The Forum should act as a collective voice and take an intermediary roll with the council as a conduit for groups who can't get things done.

The Forum Facebook account needs to be more active. It is the place to go on social media for community groups.- Try Google groups.

Promoting Funding info to members, acting as a way of pooling issues.

Rich Howorth suggests contacting the call centre about specific things that you want registered. 01273 292929

The council asked us to pass on the information that a new Volunteer leadership course is being run by the council on 16th March. This is free and run by city rangers

cityparks.volunteers@brighton-hove.gov.uk