



The Friends of Croydon Road Recreation Ground

Meeting: AGM, 3rd December 2024
Venue: Azelia Hall, Beckenham

AGM Apologies

David Crozier
Anne Feehally
Sarah Phillips

AGM Attendees

Cllr Christine Harris (Kelsey and Eden Park Ward)
Nikki Iyayi (idverde Community Relationship Manager)
Chris Phillips
Terry Guntrip
John Backway
Dave Cook
Brenda Knight
Desmond Knight
Wendy Faulkner
Brian Blandford
Katie Sterling
Peter Fookes
Jonathan Guthrie

1.0 Minutes of the AGM 6.12.2023

1.1 These were approved. Prop: Dave Cook. Sec: Cllr Harris

2.0 Reports from the officers

2.1 Chairman's report

The Chairman thanked the officers and committee members for their continuing support to the Friends over the last year and to idverde's Community Relationship Manager Anita Zambaldo who left in July.

The Chairman welcomed Nikki Iyayi to the meeting as the new idverde Community Relationship Manager.

The main points were as follows:

New signage

The new signs were installed in July and many thanks were due to John Backway for coordinating the site survey and sign content. This was the culmination of a process

beginning with our successful application for the Platinum Jubilee Parks Fund. The signs include a lot of key information such as opening times and how to report matters.

Bandstand

The official opening of the bandstand with the mayor of Bromley took place on 17th May with a concert by the Beckenham Concert band. There have since been two subsequent musical events.

The committee has agreed in principal to target the first Sunday in every month starting in April 2025 for six months and invite expressions of interest from musicians. Invitations for expressions of interest will be posted on the signboards and website. The booking process had been 'road tested' on two occasions and it works but needs plenty of lead time.

A paper had been issued to Bromley Council's environment and community services policy development and scrutiny committee on 20.11.24 with a detailed review of the cost and repair programme for the bandstand. This indicated that the end of the defects liability period is 28th March 2025. The report indicates that there is a remaining project budget of £7,254 for any additional works items.

Former Cllr Peter Fookes praised all who had been involved in the fundraising for the bandstand.

The public toilets

David Braybrook, Bromley Council's Parks and Open Spaces Manager, had written to the chairman on 7th November setting out the latest position as follows:

Just to note in relation to the WCs:

- *My colleagues in the Council's Facilities Management team have been undertaking a feasibility study for two options: a) a refurbishment of the current toilets and b) looking at what it would cost to reuse the old WCs. I am still awaiting on the full costings to be provided, but as I said I have regular monthly meetings with them where this is one of the items on the agenda.*
- *The reason that I said that I cannot make any promises is that I do not know what the value of such works are. I also do not know the reasoning as to why the other toilets were closed in the first place and what the costs would be in reactivating them. Whilst I will of course look at reports once produced, there is currently no provision within existing Council budgets for works such as these, so that is why I said that I couldn't promise any particular course of action.*

Football pitches

Following discussions at committee meetings, the chairman contacted Bromley Council to see if Balgowan School would like to operate football from the pavilion and use the Recreation Ground football pitch.

David Braybrook commented as follows:

I am just responding in full about the use of pitches at Croydon Road Recreation Ground by the school.

We have had Football teams approach us previously, so one of them may be interested but they would as I say, need to be aware of the conditions that I have outlined below.

Whilst this is something that we can look into (as the pitches are on the Council's regime for pitch management) however please note that there are the following factors that would impact upon any decision that they make:

1. A licence to use the pitches would only be temporary as when we got to the point where we would be marketing the pavilion, we would want to offer both the pavilion and the pitches together in one package (albeit we can accept offers from those that don't make use of the pitch but we like to maximise the amount of offers we get).

2. The pitches have not been used for a number of years so we would need to ascertain whether any work needs to be done to make them suitable for play, which would need to be paid for.

3. A pitch licence would be required, for which the school would be required to meet any of the surveyor and legal fees for producing.

4. If required, any marking out of the pitches would need to be undertaken by the school at their expense - the pitch licences specifically state this albeit it they also say that they can be procured by Idverde if they have the capacity.

5. Continuous or heavy use could lead to requirements to reinstate the pitches of which items such as the repair and reinstatement of the centre spot would fall to the school under the pitch licence.

6. There is currently no goals or equipment to facilitate football on site - at other locations this would usually be provided by the Delegated Sports Manager and stored within a pavilion when not in use (which would not be able to happen in this instance as we are unsure how safe the pavilion is).

Commercial usage of the Recreation Ground

It was obvious to those present that the Funfair on 2nd November had generated huge sums for the operators. This Funfair has made no contribution to the Recreation Ground environment, and this is scandalous. The same could be said of the Souttown event. The chairman has spoken to Bromley Council's Portfolio Holder Cllr Will Rowlands who is exploring the possibility of a contingency charge.

Fireworks 2.11.24

Wendy and CP had attended as stewards and therefore a donation for the Friends (and other charitable groups) has been pledged by the Scouts.

Paddling pool

The chairman said that the paddling pool was occasionally out of order but very popular. It is a unique benefit of the park and following the restoration of the bandstand the paddling pool

would be the next focus of our fundraising. However, a feasibility study to repair or replace the pool as earlier suggested by Penny Read had not been received.

Bench action days

The chairman had asked Dave Cook to take care of bench action days for 2025. Dave had been in contact with Nikki Iyayi about this.

The plan is for volunteers to clear weeds, polish brasses, sand and redecorate ironwork and woodwork to the unrefurbished benches, which, following a survey in 2023, have been found to be in generally good condition.

Brian Blandford said Bromley Council should maintain the seats better than they do.

2.2 Treasurer's Report

2.2.1 The Chairman presented the attached accounts on behalf of the Acting treasurer for the year to 30th September 2024.

2.2.2 The accounts will be audited by Terry Guntrip. A vote to approve the accounts was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Terry Guntrip and the accounts were unanimously approved.

2.2.3 John Backway commented that the Friends should be re-imbursed for the band hire costs at the opening of the bandstand as this was a Bromley Council event.

2.3 Membership Secretary

John Backway submitted the following report to the meeting:

- Membership of the Friends of Croydon Road Recreation Ground (FoCRRG) currently stands at 59.
- Four new members were recruited during the year, but three members cancelled their membership, making a net increase of one compared to 2023.
- Income from membership fees totalled £225 during the year. Some fees are still due to be collected at the time of writing. By the end of the calendar year further fee income is expected.
- PayPal remains by far the most popular method of payment for membership, with 85% of members choosing to use a recurring PayPal subscription for FoCRRG membership. The remaining 15% is a mixture of cash and cheque.

It was suggested at the meeting that the Facebook group numbering 1700 or so are encouraged to join.

Katie Sterling suggested approaching parents of local nursery schools with a view to attracting more members. This prompted a discussion about what other activities we could undertake along these lines

2.4 Webmaster Report

Terry Guntrip submitted the following report to the meeting:

During the year The Friends' website has featured updates about the completion of the bandstand restoration project and the re-opening celebration by the Mayor of Bromley which featured a concert by Beckenham Concert Band and a David Bowie tribute group. Also, the website reported on the new signage and notice board installations to four of the entrances to the park which were supported by The London Borough of Bromley's Platinum Jubilee Parks Fund.

The website also advertised and reported on two bandstand performances which were organised in September and October by The Friends.

Our Facebook page has also been updated during the year with reports on the same news as above, along with extra photographs.

We have also advertised via the website and Facebook for any performers who are interested to appear at the bandstand in 2025 to get in touch with us.

The Facebook page has over 1700 followers many of whom consist of families checking on our page updates about the status of the paddling pool during the summer.

Two electronic newsletters were distributed during the year informing our membership about the above projects along with two further newsletters advertising our AGM date.

2.5 Events Coordinator

Brian Blandford and Wendy Faulkner will plan a public launch of the bandstand with a festival of music and other events, probably in June.

3.0 Election of officers

A request was made for any offers or nominations from the floor for any of the substantive posts on the committee. None were voiced, so voting proceeded thus:

Post	Nominee	Proposed	Seconded	Vote
Chair	Chris Phillips	John Backway	Brian Blandford	Unanimous
Acting Treasurer	Sarah Phillips	Chris Phillips	Cllr Christine Harris	Unanimous
Membership secretary	John Backway	Chris Phillips	Terry Guntrip	Unanimous
Webmaster	Terry Guntrip	Wendy Faulkner	John Backway	Unanimous
Events co-ordinators	Wendy Faulkner Brian Blandford	Dave Cook	Chris Phillips	Unanimous
Committee Members	Cllr Harris Dave Cook Katie Sterling	Chris Phillips	John Backway	Unanimous
Independent examiner	Terry Guntrip	Chris Phillips	Brian Blandford	Unanimous

4.0 Any other business

4.1 The chairman to circulate dates for committee meetings in 2025.

4.2 Cllr Harris said the café lease had been extended for 15 years without Councillors being consulted, and she had been told that this was obligatory in the circumstances.

4.3 There was a well-supported idea put forward by Katie Sterling that the football pitches could be converted to Padel. Stated in Wikipedia, as of 2023, according to the International Padel Federation (FIP) there are more than 25 million active players in more than 90 countries. Padel is worth about €2bn a year and growing fast. The chairman will ask David Braybrook if we could we consider being a launch partner of UK Padel.

4.4 There had been a comment from a resident about potential over recent clearance of border shrubbery. The chairman read out a statement by the idverde grounds maintenance team that stated:

The works to the shrubs are part of the planned programme and normal for this time of year on an occasional basis.

idverde are performing a cutback of shrub areas, removing the dead and dying shrubs as well as bramble which can negatively impact on the living, viable plants. The grounds maintenance teams have focussed on cutting back and lifting low hanging branches. This work also helps to better manage litter which can be difficult to effectively remove from dense vegetation; by clearing out dead growth operatives can access the areas properly for litter picking. The team have also cleared the fence line.

We did some similar work in a different part of the park last year which at the time was well received and seen as enhancing the safety and accessibility the park. Last year, idverde added some bug hotels to encourage wildlife on the site and intend to do the same on this side of the park also.

Our monitoring officer was on site this morning and was happy with the work. Mark Garthwaite, idverde's Operations Director is copied and has reviewed pictures of the work - he has asked his team to ensure that the bed edging is more defined which will help improve the appearance of the border.

There was a comment made at the meeting that clearance of shrubbery and hedges in the springtime as had happened near the bowling green was a threat to songbirds, and this was noted by Nikki Iyiyi.