

## Hedgemoor Needs Friends Meeting Minutes

**Date: - 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

**Attendance: 28 people**

**BANES Parks Team: Paul Pearce, Jane Robson & Jeremy Dymond**

- 1. Introduction:** Paul Pearce – thanks for coming etc.
- 2. Jeremy Dymond:** The aim of the evening is not to unpick what needs to be done in the park but to establish how we can best communicate. This evening is more around creating a group and the next steps will be to work out what needs to be done.

Jane Robson: Hedgemoor is the only large park without Friends. We can view with professional eyes but we need input from those people who love and use the park. There are two options

- I. A Friends group** – An autonomous group who put in time and energy and decide when to meet, establish views about the park and then share with the Council. Friends and residents can provide local info about the Park. Friends can do planting and other improvements. Friends can be eyes and ears. Friends of Bloomfield Park meet and do a litter pick then go to the pub – so very sociable too. There are various ways in which Friends can meet up and share their love of the park. In that scenario, Friends may become incorporated [constituted] and then interact with the Council.
- II. A Hedgemoor Park Forum** - As in Keynsham Memorial Park, there are different users and two representatives from each group meet with Jane once a quarter to discuss what's happening in the park and to provide some input. Forums – Parks run it, and organise the meeting. They might be represented by Residents Associations, transition and pub landlords.

To do our job properly we need your help. **Jane** - Parks professionals have developed management plans but it's good to have ongoing communication.

A Friends group has just set itself up in Moorlands.

If there is a third option then please share with us.

**Jeremy** asked the group 'What do you all think?'

### **3. Questions from the audience**

Q - What is the history of the Management of the park?

Answer (from Jane Robson): When Simon Memory left, there was a vacuum, Jane stepped in and has written a first draft management plan. Jane has done research on the history and the management plan is based on the Green Flag Award.

Green Flag criteria include 'Is the park welcoming?' 'How does it interpret history etc.?' Landscape management. Are we following conservation principles? And what are the associations? E.g. get the railings painted and replace the bins and benches.

What Jane needs is input into her work from Friends.

The Gazebo shelter is being repaired now and the bandstand.

Q - I welcome that you've finally asked us? Are Friends seen as a fundraising opportunity for the Council?

Answer (Jane ) - Friends of Bloomfield fundraised. You do as much as you can. It's more of a link.

Jeremy: We don't have the resource we used to but we are not looking for volunteers to do our job for us, friends may add extra value but we will continue to look after it as best we can.

Jane: at Bloomfield the group made a collection to improve biodiversity. We could do something similar in Hedgemoor.

Q – How big are boards? [Information boards]

Jane: The history of landslide could be added.

Jeremy: And some photos etc.

Q – Can the Management plan be published?

A – The team explained that the best way to get input into the management plan would be through a public presentation. This will be done as part of the next meeting.

Q – I'd prefer the park to be used for arranging bandstand concerts. I didn't like weddings.

Jane explained that events help parks to operate financially.

Q – When was the last band concert?

Jane: A long time ago.

Jeremy: The broad variety of membership a group has can help decide and make happen what is really popular.

Q – I have lived next to Hedgemoor Park since I was 9 years old. The Park already has Friends; the issue that I've been dealing with is the cleanliness and safety. (She then showed a picture of overflowing bins)

Answer (Jane) – It's not been that bad has it? We've moved the bin to help deal with this.

Q – More fly-tipping, domestic waste, I reported it and received a reply that it was unidentified waste when there was a letter in it with an address on.

Jane – Send it to me and I can take it forward.

Q – Is the council dealing with drug dealing and rotten food?

Jane – Issues such as drug dealing are police worthy – please report them.

Q – I Reported the drug issue to the police but no response.

A – The cutting of vegetation low was done to improve the natural surveillance.

Jeremy: We can work closely with the police and do what we can in terms of the Management Plan.

Q – Tipping & waste is still a problem.

Jane: Option of renewing bin. She can talk to colleagues and cleansing.

Jeremy: If we have a Friends Group and we're in dialogue with the community we can chase reports to other areas of the Council.

Q – Patrick A Jones: I think a forum would work best to start with, to understand what the Council's plans are and what's possible.

Chairperson of Vegmead: A Forum would be good. Keen to build contacts.

How will the forum work?

Forum – Jane could run the forum until an autonomous group wants to set itself up.

Jeremy explained the autonomous nature of a Friends group compared to a Forum and the downside of a forum that there is less access to tap into community funds.

Q – Remit – Does Parks have the responsibility for path through the middle [the Drumway]?

Jane – No.

Q - Do Parks have responsibility for Camden Crescent?

Jane:– its local authority owned but there's no public access to protected landslip.

Q - 2 trees have come down, can the council explain why they were removed?

Jane: We had a court order imposed on us by an adjacent landowner. The other came down in the wind.

Jeremy: Trees are close to our hearts. The Parks Team don't remove trees without good reason.

Q – If hypothetically a group of residents wanted a tree removed, could there be a dialogue?

Jeremy: Yes it would be considered and we will give an answer and reasons.

Q – Does the proposal to start a Friends Group include Camden Wilderness Group?

Jeremy: No, not at this stage. Let's keep it simple for now and consider things like that later.

Question about the Forum – would residents be represented on a forum?

Jane: There is a third way. All present could be members and invite Police, Ward Councillors etc.

Next time the meeting would be more parks management focussed.

Q – Has anyone represented Vegmead?

A – The Vegmead Chair is here.

Q – Is there someone from the Parks department in the park every day?

Justin Broadwith, Local Resident & Parks Grounds Team: No, but there are maintenance staff in there at least once a week.

Q - Have you stopped locking the gates? How many people are dog walkers?

Jeremy: Yes, there are no longer the resources to lock the gates every day; and yes a quick straw poll demonstrated that dog walkers are represented.

Jeremy: Straw poll - Do people want a Forum?

A majority agreed 'yes'

Q – Why not both a Friends Group and a Forum?

Comment – Representatives are needed to help create a Friends group at the beginning.

Jeremy: For the next meeting why not talk through the Management implications.

Can we post as a pdf? Jane: It would be better to talk through the Management Plan at the next meeting.

Jeremy: We are keen to get your contact details so that we can invite to the next meeting; forms at the back to add them.

Comment – Please post posters around the park as well.

A – Agreed.

Jeremy: Thank you all for coming.