

## The Blackheath Village Society

### Meeting: 19<sup>th</sup> November 2013 The Old Post Office, adjourned and reconvened 26.11.2013, Theobalds

#### Minutes

Chairman: Alistair Taylor

Secretary: Christina Hartshorn

Present: Steve Brockwell, Paul Brodie, Dave Grisley, Hamish Whiteman, Hon. Peter Herbert, Nick Morris, Peter Maggs, Terry Powles

1. Apologies: Alan Barlow, Nick Harrison, Penny Kirkwood
2. Minutes of Annual General Meeting received from Hamish Whiteman (Acting Secretary)  
**Action: Minutes to be circulated for approval CH**
3. Blackheath Common Management Plan. Senior Ranger David Olliver, Waverley Borough Council (WBC) [and colleague, tree officer, Arno Spaarkogel] gave members a copy of the Environmental Stewardship Agreement concluded between Waverley Borough Council and Natural England(NE) (25.10.2013), plus a single copy of the Application for BVS records. He updated the committee on the work proposed within the Plan and timings of the consultation period. In summary:
  - A proposal was submitted in May to Natural England for a High Level Stewardship grant for the management of Blackheath Common. This grant (£100,000 over 10 years) was approved by NE in October 2013 with a proviso that a Felling License was sought from the Forestry Commission (FC) by 1.11.2013.
  - The tight timescale imposed by FC has meant that WBC has not been able to work to its usual consultation schedule. However, the recent publication of the Felling Plan means that consultation can now begin. AS confirmed that WBC was not seeking to impose any specific solutions, but to work together with groups who have an interest in the Heath.
  - An initial FC consultation deadline of Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> November is now able to be extended to end January 2013. WBC is pleased with this as they are now able to negotiate/consult with local people.
  - DO confirmed this would be a genuine consultation; ultimately signed off by NE.
  - The collaboration between NE and WBC will be for 10 years.

- The clear fells are specifically chosen to create open areas to link parcels of heath together, mitigating against the fragmentation and 'woodedness' of Blackheath Common. NE currently views Blackheath Common as, 'unfavourable, recovering.'
- Clear fell does not mean every tree in a designated area is felled.
- WBC have 5 years to complete the felling (earliest start winter 2014/15)
- A Consultant will start work on the draft ten year management plan in the spring/summer of 2014 and this draft plan will undergo a consultation process and review.

In response to questioning, DO confirmed that this plan was not, 'a ruse to extend car parks', and that defences would be created to deter fly tipping and other unwanted access issues across the common.

Peter Herbert reminded the Committee that there is a permanent injunction against travellers on Blackheath Common.

It was further noted that the 'Village Vision', originally created by Sarah Henderson WBC Ranger, and now a work-in-progress document developed over the past four years by the BVS could be useful in informing the management plan. P. Maggs (Parish Councillor) reported that he has tabled the HLS on the Agenda of the next PC meeting of January 9<sup>th</sup> 2014.

#### **AGREED**

- **BVS to prepare and circulate via village email tomorrow a note to quash any fears of a 'Friday deadline', and to state that WBC will be issuing a Consultation Plan shortly (within the week). This to be the single communication with residents in order to give a consistent message.**
- **WBC to send a letter outlining the consultation to residents.**
- **WBC also to consult with Wonersh, Shamley Green and Blackheath PC.**

DO and AS then left the meeting.

4. Village Hall. Terry Powles (Blackheath Village Hall Committee) reported that a problem with the Hall roof had been satisfactorily sorted out, bookings remained constant and finances on target. Overall there were no issues for the BVS committee to note.

TP then left the meeting.

5. Parish Council Co-option. Before this item was considered, PM initiated a discussion which expressed concerns about the transparency of committee procedures and the means available for dialogue between the Blackheath Village Society – namely residents, and its committee. Committee members regretted that although it had been a longstanding action point, it had not yet been able to post notifications of the Committee Meetings dates, agendas and minutes on the village web site and agreed that it should urgently undertake to do so. This would give residents an opportunity

both to review forthcoming items, and also to raise other matters/issues with the Secretary for inclusion as agenda items.

After a short discussion, AT reminded the Committee that he had previously intimated that he wished to step down from his position as Chair and felt this was the appropriate time to do so. He no longer wished to serve on the BVS Committee and left the meeting. CH assumed the Chair.

6. Village Christmas Party. The date of Saturday December 14<sup>th</sup> was confirmed and PB offered to organise it, in lieu of AT. DG also gave an offer of help. A further agreement to ask attendees to supplement party fare by bringing along a plate of food.

**AGREED. PB to circulate invitation to residents.**

CH proposed that the meeting should now be adjourned, and reconvened asap to complete the Agenda. DG offered Theobalds as the venue.

The meeting was thus adjourned at 10pm.

### **November 26<sup>th</sup> 2013, Meeting resumed.**

Christina Hartshorn: Secretary, acting as Meeting Chair

Apologies: Penny Kirkwood,

Present: Alan Barlow, Steve Brockwell, Paul Brodie, Dave Grisley, Nick Harrison, Hon. Peter Herbert, Nick Morris, Hamish Whiteman.

7. Review of past events. HW reported that the village BBQ had once again been held at the cricket ground on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2013 and with excellent weather had been extremely successful. A small surplus (£166) from the event had been added to the BVS account. The November bonfire, not an official BVS event had not been held as there had been no available venue.

**AGREED. To discuss support of BVS and possible venues/joint event at the next committee meeting.**

8. Treasurer's Report. AB presented a financial summary. AB reported that the current financial position is very healthy and that after taking into account sums set aside for a contingency, BVS running costs, the War Memorial Fund and village projects, he recommended that a sum of £7,000 should be made available for disbursement to local good causes. The committee accepted this recommendation and it was agreed that the donations sub-committee (which had not met for several years) should be reconvened to review applications from local groups for grants, and make recommendations to the full committee in accordance with previous practice. The committee further considered that the membership of the donations subcommittee

should be reviewed to reflect the composition of the village and to ensure that the committee consisted only of those without close interests in other village organisations.

**AGREED.**

- **HW to chair and convene the donations sub-committee**
- **HW would invite Chris Curran and Simone Dill to sit on the donations sub-committee in place of Paul Cope and Richard Williams. If they accepted these invitations, the donations sub-committee would accordingly consist of HW, DG, Mia Dunkley, Chris Curran and Simone Dill.**
- **Applications for grants for consideration by the donations sub-committee would be invited by a deadline of 31 January 2013; HW would draft an email for circulation to the village to this effect.**
- **The donations sub-committee would thereafter meet and make recommendations to the full committee.**
- **Next committee meeting to receive and consider the sub-committee's recommendations**
- **Immediate recompense to SB for Volunteer Heath Group expenses was approved (£500)**
- **An immediate donation to Four Villages Day Centre was also approved (£150)**

9. May Fair. Date confirmed, May 5<sup>th</sup> 2014. This will be the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first fair in its present form. A full discussion to be held at the next committee meeting.

10. Centenary of World War 1. AB reported that the Village Archive Group were planning to hold an exhibition in the Village Hall to commemorate the start of WW1. It was also the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WW2 D-Day Landings. It was suggested that BVS mark this latter anniversary, possibly by the erection of a Memorial Plaque in recognition of the Canadian troops stationed on Blackheath Common prior to D-Day.

**AGREED. DG to attend the next meeting of the Archive Group.**

11. Villagers Pub. PB reported that the Appeal by the Wellington Pub Group against the application to have the Villagers listed as an Asset of Community Value was unsuccessful. PB attended the hearing at WBC (6.11.2013) and spoke in defence of the BVS application. CH, PH and Peter Maggs also attended. A verbal decision was given on the day, with a formal letter declaring the decision to follow. PB reported that he had not yet received this letter. There is a further level to the appeals procedure; this appeal must be made within 28 days of the initial decision.

**AGREED. PB to monitor any further development.**

12. Broadband. It was noted that the new box was in place at the crossroads, but there was no knowledge of when the work would be completed.

13. Any Other Business.

- Receipt of email from a resident regarding tree felling.

**AGREED. CH and NH to respond and meet with the resident. .**

- Co-option of Parish Councillor to BVS Committee.

**AGREED. To hold over further discussions to next committee meeting.**

**CH to inform Chair of Parish Council of this delay.**

- Nick Morris had previously indicated that he wished to resign from the committee at the end of this meeting. Nick was warmly thanked by everyone for all his endeavours on the committee.
- Vacant Chair of BVS Committee. CH was asked by the committee and agreed to act as Chair until the next AGM. HW agreed to take over as acting secretary until the next AGM.

**AGREED. CH to write to AT thanking him for his enthusiasm and hard work as Chairman of the BVS committee.**

**CH and HW to liaise with AT concerning drafting of note to residents informing them of changes on the BVS Committee.**

14. Date, Time and Venue of next meeting. February 25<sup>th</sup> 8pm 2014 Blackheath Cricket Club Pavilion.