**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF PARKS AND GREEN SPACES**

**Committee Meeting - 10 August 2013**

**BVSC Centre for Voluntary Action, Birmingham**

**Present**:

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| Sarah Royal (SR) – Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (NFPGS Chair + Midlands Rep)Tom Cranston – NFPGS Treasurer and NE England repDave Morris (DM) –London Green Spaces Friends Groups Network (NFPGS Vice-Chair, Campaigns Officer + SE England rep)Lynn Good (LG) – Stockport Greenspace ForumChristine Hession (CH) – NFPGS Secretary + NW England RepAnn Ault (AA) – Friends of Walsall Parks and Green SpacesLucy Fowler (LF) Simon Chapman (SC) Paul Todd (PT) – Keep Britain Tidy |
| **Apologies** |
| Colin Barson – Friends of Greenwood Community ForumRoland Bruce – Bristol Parks ForumRobert Lee – Wirral Parks Friends ForumDavid Garner (DG) – Liverpool Parks Forum |

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| 1 | Introductions made around the table for benefit of Paul Todd. |  |
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| 2 | **Minutes of Last Meeting from Conference** |  |
| 2.1 | Minutes distributed. Were there any mistakes or amendments? None.Minutes Accepted as a True Record |  |
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| 2.2 | **Matters Arising from Minutes** |  |
| 2.3 | Nothing which was not covered on agenda for meeting. |  |
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| 3 | **Review of North West Conference** |  |
| 3.1 | DM said conference was excellent and a model for future regional conferences. |  |
| 3.2 | Tom not received information from Nigel Sharpe (Liverpool) to put on website. | CH |
| 3.3 | SR would like contact details for the Central Park Speaker from Robert. | CH |
| 3.4 | Would like to extend international links. UK is top for community commitment and involvement with parks. David Garner has links with Denmark. |  |
| 3.5 | KBT has links with Australia and New Zealand and a project ongoing to extend the Green Flag Awards to Turkey, Denmark, Germany, and Holland in 2014.  |  |
| 3.6 | KBT will be holding an International Conference around Green Flag Award. This could be opportunity to showcase what we are doing. No date set but will be between Easter and September 2014. | All |
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| 4 | **Demise of Greenspace** |  |
| 4.1 | All committee very shocked. Basically happened because of loss of income, including from local governments, due to cut backs making expenditure exceed income. The Lottery grant had been awaited. |  |
| 4.2 | Simon Chapman and Lucy Fowler are both still interested in staying involved with Federation. Paul Bramhill is still promoting Green Spaces Fund with Groundwork. |  |
| 4.3 | If Federation becomes a charity, there is a lot to consider including worst case scenario which GreenSpace suffered. |  |
| 4.4 | Some local GreenSpace forums are still carrying on – London, West Midlands, South East, South West Scotland and Wales. DM said that London was now an autonomous charity. |  |
| 4.5 | The Fed did not get the national list of groups which was being worked on in conjunction with GreenSpace. |  |
| 4.6 | CH has produced a list of Friends Groups Forums and contact details which was distributed at meeting. This list needs to be checked by committee and added to/amended and returned to CH.  | CH / ALL |
| 4.7 | PT has national list of contacts which GreenSpace used. Lists need to be put together. | CH |
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| 5 | **Future** |  |
| 5.1 | We need to contact groups that are out there. CH had started a list of park groups in towns throughout the country. All lists need to be consolidated. | CH |
| 5.2 | LG said that in Stockport, one person kept the list of groups and all contact was through that member. Lists must be kept private. |  |
| 5.3 | The Greenspace Community Network was not just Friends and Forums. Anyone could register. |  |
| 5.4 | CH produced list of groups around the country which might be useful contacts for Federation. This was done for Conference. Details circulated to committee. | CH |
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| 6 | **Relations with KBT** |  |
| 6.1 | Months ago KBT purchased Love Parks Weeks from Administrators. Very tight time scale for this year but there are 400-500 events taking place. |  |
| 6.2 | There have been issues with parks putting information onto website but this is being sorted. |  |
| 6.3 | Big Lottery funding not received yet. It is in final discussions and is 99% certain but still not guaranteed. KBT have met with Big Lottery to discuss Love Parks Week. Will advise Federation when money comes through. |  |
| 6.4 | KBT see Federation as key partner. First steps when money is received is to get a Project Manager on board and put together a Steering Group. A rep from Federation will need to be on that steering group. |  |
| 6.5 | PT said he knew little about the Fed. DM had spoken to Richard (Paul’s colleague) and given him information. SR and DM will both send information. | SR / DM |
| 6.6 | DM said he had a copy of the GreenSpace Lottery Application and that it was a good application committed to supporting the development of Friends Forums and the NFPGS. He asked if it had re-worked for KBT. PT replied that it had not been re-worked and that the timescale for the money was 18 months from receipt of money. |  |
| 6.7 | Before 18 months is up need to decide how to carry Federation forward.  |  |
| 6.8 | Lottery bid was just for England. |  |
| 6.9 | We need to establish how we can be self-sustaining and independent whilst still working with other organisations. |  |
| 6.10 | We would liaise with Project Manager once appointed and Paul Todd. |  |
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| 7 | **Love Parks Week** |  |
| 7.1 | Looking for plan for year long campaign but still keeping one week focus. Have received a lot of national media coverage. SR asked if we could build on that coverage and get information about the Fed included. |  |
| 7.2 | Green Flag standards now tied in with Love Parks. Can Fed be included in applications to get contacts with parks. We need to get information about the Fed out to the park groups to encourage the development of further Friends Forums. |  |
| 7.3 | PT said that Data Protection is the difficulty. Future applications could have space for people to say if they don’t want information passed on to Fed. |  |
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| 8 | **Admin and MOU** |  |
| 8.1 | KBT will have an administration person in place. |  |
| 8.2 | DM asked if KBT want an ongoing partnership with Fed, and PT replied Yes. He said that Government funding for KBT finishes next year and that having that funding had previously tied their hands as there had been restrictions on campaigning. |  |
| 8.3 | Asked if name Green Flag is staying because some people confuse it with the Rescue service and Eco Schools. Public had been asked and they felt it should stay but word ‘Award’ is important. In future reference should be to Green Flag Award. |  |
| 8.4 | No money from Government for Green Flag Awards. It all comes from the application money. KBT looking for commercial sponsors once Government money finishes. |  |
| 8.5 | Green Flag Award Standard should be the base standard for all parks. The award can otherwise be divisive with Councils putting money into parks applying for Green Flag Award and neglecting other parks. Friends groups need to be involved with Green Flag Award and the Fed would like to be involved. |  |
| 8.6 | Award shown as minimum standards. Friends groups can measure own parks using the Green Flag Award standard. |  |
| 8.7 | Companies are getting more involved. Need to get a plan together for sponsorship.  |  |
| 8.8 | Alan Titchmarsh wrote an article about demise of GreenSpace for one of the national papers. Need to find article and try to get him on board. |  |
| 8.9 | KBT want to push parks using Secret Shopper list to go through own parks to identify new parks to join in and bring parks up to standard. |  |
| 8.10 | Need to set up an Advisory group for future. Small group of Users, Judges and Applicants. Fed included in this group. | KBT / Fed |
| 8.11 | Some training would be needed for Fed and we need to establish what training needed. Also some training needed for groups. There are 27 training events in bid. We need to look at what is needed because some of the items may not be relevant. This needs to be discussed again in future. |  |
| 8.12 | Fed had a MOU with GreenSpace. KBT will look at this and re-draft. | KBT |
| 8.13 | Several copies of the MOU are in existence. The one with logo on is the latest. SR will send to PT. | SR |
| 8.14 | Travel expenses will be paid by KBT. SR (as chair) needs expenses for attending meetings around the country. In some instances other members can attend if it is in their area but SR may need to be involved as well. DM (as campaigns officer) also attends and contributes to national events. |  |
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| 9 | **Parks Alliance** |  |
| 9.1 | Taking up issues with other organisations |  |
| 9.2 | DM and SR had been attending meetings of GreenLink coordinated by Greenspace and attended by reps from many other key national organisations, but we think this is now not being carried on. This is a shame as GreenLink was a very useful network and had recently adopted our proposal for a petition and was about to launch it.  |  |
| 9.3 | New organisation has been created by Horticulture Week and others called Parks Alliance. DM attended the first 2 meetings. Very little difference to GreenLink and seems certain to replace its role. Not constituted yet. Had two meetings in London with reps from similar organisations as GreenLink. DM says Friends groups are being recognised as central to the future promotion and campaigning efforts needed to put the needs of green spaces on the map. Government interest because of public involvement. DM signed up to join the PA Communications Group. They are setting up campaign on importance of parks and proper funding. Not heard from them for two months but think Constitution is being set up. Next meeting, possibly September. |  |
| 9.4 | DM circulated the Greenlink petition draft to those attending the Parks Alliance. This should be linked up to future campaigning involving KBT, Parks Alliance and Fed. Need to get this information out to lots of people. |  |
| 9.5 | DM called for the Parks Alliance to take on the petition, but this depends on future plans and decisions by the PA. SR wants us to put petition out to our contacts at the appropriate time.  |  |
| 9.6 | Sid Sullivan and Bob Iveson involved in Parks Alliance.  |  |
| 9.7 | Do we wait and see what Parks Alliance do? DM thinks this should go out as co-ordinated campaign. We need national coverage and ‘buy in’ for it. |  |
| 9.8 | KBT will be doing national publicity for launch of lottery project. Petition could be part of this, but it seems best to wait to see what the PA does. |  |
| 9.9 | We need national organisations to push it. |  |
| 9.10 | KBT thought about closing a key park or two for a day as a stunt on lines of – if you don’t do something regarding adequate funding for green spaces, this is what will happen. Could get Guinness Book of Records involved in some way. A London park would be best to get most coverage but needs reps from all over country. |  |
| 9.11 | We need to look beyond our own constituency, eg to Health, etc., if we are to get our message out. |  |
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| 10 | **National meetings** |  |
| 10.1 | We need to have a presence at key national events discussing green space. Need to be invited to such events which Friends Groups can’t otherwise afford to attend due to prohibitive entrance fees etc. |  |
| 10.2 | APSE charge a lot for their events but DM has written to them asking them to invite us to do presentations or just waive fees etc - they are looking at the idea. APSE is for local government mainly but now they have been informed about us and our key role. |  |
| 10.3 | If we attend we need to put our information out and make our voices heard. Simon suggested writing to a range of organisations saying we can do a presentation but need to attend. |  |
| 10.4 | KBT will ensure we can attend their events. Once lottery project running, KBT could write asking if we could be supported to attend other national events. |  |
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| 11 | Paul asked if we have applied to Trusts. SR replied that we are not a registered charity but it’s an option that we can start to consider. We could work through KBT until we get financial independence. KBT has fundraisers working for them and PT will speak to them |  |
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| **12** | **Co-optees** |  |
| 12.1 | It is set up in our Constitution that we can co-opt onto the committee. We do not want to lose the experience, knowledge and contacts which Lucy Fowler and Simon Chapman (formerly of Greenspace) have and want to co-opt them onto the committee. They are happy to do this as they want to stay involved.  |  |
| 12.2 | Lucy has already improved the website and could be involved with website. Title would be Website Admin. All in favour. |  |
| 12.3 | Simon would like to help set up the Fed as a self sustaining organisation. Title will be Organisation Sustainability Adviser. All in favour. |  |
| 12.4 | Suggested approaching Michelle Parker (also formerly of Greenspace) to co-opt her as Policy Adviser. | DM |
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| 13 | **Documents** |  |
| 13.1 | CH circulated a list of all papers and discussion documents, meeting notes, etc, which she has. These are all available to all members. If someone would like to take control of these that would be a help. They are in two, possibly three box files. |  |
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| 14 | **Finance** |  |
| 14.1 | TC circulated last year’s account, this year’s accounts and a bank statement. |  |
| 14.2 | Committee travel expenses – TC will liaise with KBT to set up system similar to the one we had with GreenSpace. Members all give TC expense claims for travel. TC sends to KBT who issue one cheque and send to our bank. TC then sends out cheques or pays into committee bank accounts. | TC / KBT |
| 14.3 | Using the above system means that there is movement in our bank account and it will not be closed by the bank. |  |
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| 15 | **Website** |  |
| 15.1 | Lucy will look at website and put on an updated statement. This can be taken out of last minutes. | LF |
| 15.2 | PT will send through KBT logo and links to anything useful. | PT |
| 15.3 | LG will send Nigel Sharp’s e-mail so she can contact him for report from Liverpool Conference. Note Nigel is from Liverpool MBC and on Liverpool Forum Committee | LG |
| 15.4 | Committee to send any documents useful to website via Lucy. |  |
| 15.5 | CH will contact Nigel Sharp and ask for photos of conference. | CH |
| 15.6 | TC will send new links to Lucy as these have been changed. | TC |
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| 16 | **Forward Plan** |  |
| 16.1 | Forward Plan needs amending to remove GreenSpace and add KBT. | DM |
| 16.2 | Action plan is working well. Needs amending to remove Greenspace and add KBT and dates changing. | DM |
| 16.3 | DM will send amended papers through to committee and new agreed documents will form part of AGM papers. | DM |
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| 17 | **Events** |  |
| 17.1 | Will attempt to hold one event a year, either regional or national. |  |
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| 18 | **Newsletter** |  |
| 18.1 | We need to try and put a newsletter together before the AGM which we could send out to all contacts – existing and potential new contacts as well as organisations. DM agreed to do a draft. | DM |
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| 19 | **National Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens** |  |
| 19.1 | DM has had meeting with this group who represent 1200 local community farms and gardens. They are due to be a partner with KBT in the promotion of Love Parks Week and wanted to know how the NFPGS and local Forums work as many of their members are interested in joining local Forums. DM had explained that Forums all work slightly differently and have varying membership criteria but there are opportunities for integration and partnerships. |  |
| 19.2 | DM asked if we should have a rep at the meetings. Committee not in favour. Could use a newsletter to keep them informed. |  |
| 19.3 | DM would like to keep a relationship with them ongoing and it was agreed to draft a proposed joint Memorandum of Understanding once we have agreed an MOU with KBT.  | DM |
| 19.4 | It was agreed that similar relationships and MOUs should be explored with other LPW partners (eg TCV and Groundwork) and other key national organisations. |  |
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| 20 | **Community First Partnership** |  |
| 20.1 | Ian Bagot from the above organisation has contacted SR. This partnership is funded by HLF and is producing a State of UK Parks Report. The aim is for a highly significant and well researched ‘snapshot’ of the condition of UK parks, which can be used by the green space sector as a driver for effective lobbying and campaigning for adequate funding and national policies. They have put together a Friends’ Questionnaire. A first draft was sent to SR for suggestions and SR will send this out to committee for comments. | SR |
| 20.2 | SR has asked that we get a copy of the results of the Questionnaire. |  |
| 20.3 | The Report is being commissioned by HLF who are worried about the Heritage Lottery money which has been put into Heritage Parks - HLF wants to find out the state of these and all parks, and ensure that HLF money is not being used as a substitute for adequate ongoing funding but to help drive up standards across the whole sector.  |  |
| 20.4 | SR would like any comments returned to her by 24th August. | All |
| 20.5 | KBT think this questionnaire needs to be done on a three yearly basis using the findings from this report as the baseline. |  |
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| 21 | **Community Networking Report – 2011 and 2003** |  |
| 21.1 | We need to find out what happened to these reports. |  |
| 21.2 | Lucy said these were reports done by her and that they should have gone to KBT. KBT will check. Lucy will check if she still has a copy. SR will check if she has downloaded a copy. | LF / SR / PT |
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| 22 | **Area Reports** |  |
| 22.1 | Several areas produced reports which are included with minutes. These included Birmingham, Stockport, Wirral, London and Bristol. |  |
| 22.2 | Ann Ault reported that the Walsall Forum are holding an AGM. They have now got a full committee and are organising another meeting for September. About 15 groups involved. |  |
| 22.3 | Tom Cranston reported that he had started the Sunderland Forum some years back with about 20 parks and that it had now died. He has tried to contact other groups and forums without any success. TC will deal with anything that comes up in the North East. |  |
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| 24 | **New groups forming** |  |
| 24.1 | Sefton Forum came to the Liverpool Conference. Sefton is an area of Merseyside in the north of Liverpool whilst Sefton Park is in south Liverpool and is just a park. |  |
| 24.2 | SR been in touch with Leeds which has set up a new Forum. CH also attended a meeting at Leeds Forum and explained about the Fed. Leeds want to join. |  |
| 24.3 | SR is sending CH the new contact at Leeds. | SR |
| 24.4 | Bury also has a forum and they also attended the Conference. CH is supposed to be going to speak to them when they contact her. |  |
| 24.5 | Wakefield has a forum but the man organising this is finding it difficult to get as much enthusiasm from the others. |  |
| 24.6 | Pendle Forum and Hyndburn Forum have both been in existence for quite some time and CH is in contact with them. |  |
| 24.7 | Preston Forum is doing well and keep in touch with CH. |  |
| 24,8 | DM reported that in London there were currently 15-16 active borough-wide Forums, and that were efforts to establish a new one in Lewisham. |  |
| 24.9 | He also reported he’d been informed of a newly-discovered Friends of Parks Forum in Tunbridge Wells (Kent), but had not managed to make contact yet. |  |
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| 25 | **Any Other Business** |  |
|  | None |  |
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| 26 | **Date of Next Meeting** |  |
| 26.1 | This will be the AGM and will be held in early November. We will be inviting new groups to attend and will set meeting room out Board Room style at BVSC Centre for Voluntary Action in Birmingham. |  |
| 26.2 | As well as Chairs Report, Treasurers Report and Campaigns Report, also need a report on Growth of Forums and Contacts (CH) | SR/TC/CH/DM |
| 26.3 | CH will send out details of AGM | CH |
| 26.4 | Each forum will have one vote. |  |
| 26.5 | AGM/Next Meeting Date will be 9th November 2013. Starting at 11.00 and running until 3.00. |  |
| 26.6 | Send invites out in early October. | CH |