

Minutes of Millfields User Group AGM held on 28th March 2015

Present:

Helen Morris, Ian Rathbone, Claire Kelly, Harry Hewat, Bhavesh Hindocha, Carrie Rutherford, Gill Harris, Georgie Brown (Parks Development Officer) Norman Jacobs (author of Pie n Mash and Prefabs)Holly Lewis (We Made That, paddling pool designers)

The AGM consisted of a walkabout in Millfields followed by a brief meeting in the Rangers Hut.

Green Flag status. Georgie has submitted a Management Plan after consultation with MUG. This is part of obtaining the Green Flag award for Millfields. Judges will visit the site soon to give their feedback. Once the status has been awarded, the Management Plan will be updated annually.

New Wildflower meadow now planted by volunteers following a meeting with Sam Parry and Michael Dixon. It is in South Millfields alongside Chatsworth Road. More areas of turf that could be cleared to plant seeds if Parks could help with grass clearing/ turf disposal. Georgie to follow this up.

South Play. Helen reported that 336 mainly positive responses to the South Play survey. Georgie informed us that the Council would be considering our proposals, hopefully getting broad agreement to go ahead. The focus will be on sustainable natural play. Groundwork likely to be asked to submit designs.

Park Improvement works

Newly designed entrances and park furniture to be put in place in early summer.

Railings from Hillstowe St to National Grid (NG) site being removed in the next few weeks, with the exception of the space currently being used by Freerange Urban Kids. Remedial works to be paid for by NG.

Ian Rathbone informed us that the £37k annual payment by NG will go directly into parks maintenance.

Basketball Court Ian Rathbone and Ian Holland visited this recently. Lines have been marked out wrongly and by bricks, so correcting it is costly and there is no money available from the Council to do this. 40k cost of complete refurbishment.

The Lodge Currently lived in by Guardians. Planning permission condition is that it must be used for a purpose ancillary to the Park. Various arts groups have asked to take over the space but have been turned down. This was queried by committee members who felt that community arts projects could have a park focus. Clare asked that the committee be able to see the written conditions for letting.

Magnet Site. Planning permission being sought by developers to build 48 flats, 4.5 storeys high. This would tower over Leagrave and Hillstowe Street. Parks have objected as so unsuitable for the area. Ian Rathbone informed us that if any development is allowed to take place, the new community infrastructure levy is controlled by councillors as well as the council.

The meeting crossed Leabridge Road noting the lack of access to North Millfields from the bus stop.

North Millfields Wildflower meadow was planted 2 years ago but not maintained. It will be redone this year and soil scraped back. Carrie raised the question of why money was available here but not for scraping back soil in South Millfields.

Park path across North Millfields from Chatsworth Road being retarmacked. The level will be raised and have grass slopes on either side – less mud and cheaper.

Paddling Pool Holly explained their plans . 50k budget – not enough to remove the concrete so looking at retaining the structure and doing remedial works to improve it. These could include a planting bed in the centre, rubberized edge, using different colours. There was general agreement with their ideas.

The committee members present strongly urged them to include ping pong table and a chess board, possibly just outside the pool are on the playground side.

The meeting briefly met at the Rangers Hut for elections.

New committee to consist of Bhavesh, Harry, Helen, Carrie, Gill, Ian and hopefully Louisa, Barry and Will.

If there are vacancies, committee to fulfil them as it sees fit. This is to be confirmed at the next open meeting.

Many thanks were voted to Emma who all agreed has done a fantastic job as Chair for the past 7 years.

Many thanks too to Claire as Treasurer and for all her time campaigning on behalf of park users, including getting notice boards installed.

And also to Pinny for all her work on the committee and on South Play.

All were very welcome to return at any time

It was decided to leave committee meetings open to all.

Harry to do a doodle poll for next meeting where elections will be held.

Finally, Norman spoke about his new book Pie n Mash and Prefabs. He had given a very interesting talk at the Tree Circle in 2014 about his childhood in the prefabs on South Millfields. The book is now published and available from Amazon and Pages of Hackney on Lower Clapton Road.