

National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces

Officer Meeting, 17 June 2017

at The Woodman PH, Birmingham



Present:

Dave Morris (Chair)	London GSEGN
Sarah Royal (CEO)	Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF)
Paul Todd	Keep Britain Tidy
Michelle Parker (Vice Chair)	Worthing Forum
Roland Bruce (Treasurer)	Bristol Parks Forum
Nigel Sharp (Sec.)	North West Parks Friends Forum (NWPFF)

Apologies

John Kerr	Edinburgh Forum
Robert Lee	Wirral Parks Forum; NWPFF

Minute	Action
1. Minutes of Previous Meeting (21/1/17) & Matters Arising	
<p>Following changes to the officers the need to amend the previous six bank signatories was noted and it was agreed four future signatories to comprise DM, SR, NS and RB – the latter as Treasurer and lead officer.</p> <p>Work to review and revise the NFPGS database and contacts is ongoing. SR agreed to circulate officers with the link to the MailChimp account again.</p>	<p>NS/SR SR</p>
2. Organisational Status & Structure / Action Plan Comment	
<p><u>Member survey</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback included limited comment on the possible name change. Key topics highlighted for further advice included: Funding, Sharing Expertise and Campaigning. In terms of approach there was support for 2 general member meetings annually alongside officer meetings. <p><u>Constitution</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A draft CIO constitution prepared by Carey (BOSF) was considered. Thanks to Carey and BOSF for their support. Officers agreed to finalise a draft to present at the next general members meeting. Items to review include: 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reference specific to ‘urban parks’ – this needs to be more inclusive (i.e. broader references to public green spaces). ○ Consider a shorter organisation name – with descriptive strapline. ○ Ensure an inclusive approach to membership renewals (i.e. transfer current details with member option of veto, or seek and include new contact details). ○ Trustees to be drawn from Officers. ○ Review figure for quorum. ○ DM to prepare summary of constitution. ○ Initial focus on England & Wales – need to consider any necessary modifications to satisfy Scotland & N. Ire. CIO conditions. ○ Greenspace Scotland could advise. ○ Need to identify potential N.Ire. contacts. PT to advise. <p>Further discussion on the progress towards the re-launch of NFPGS as a CIO continued under item 3. (see below).</p>	<p>DM</p> <p>PT</p>
<p>3. NFPGS Financial Sustainability</p>	
<p><u>Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (EFF)</u> EFF has yet to formally respond to the end of grant report. SR has also spoken with Laurence Scott (Grants Manager) who invited a stage one application for Social Investment Funding however, the NFPGS status and organisational structure must be resolved first. He suggested a Grants Plus bid could explore options in support of this process, although there has been no response to SR’s enquiry re. possible additional support to progress this.</p> <p><u>Big Lottery Fund (BLF)</u> PT confirmed KBT interest in developing a BLF Reaching Communities bid focussed on one region – North East England. The project would work with grass roots organisations and communities to establish a local network. This follows the meeting with DM/SR/NS in Manchester (15/2/17). It was agreed that ideally this proposal should reference the new NFPGS structure. The project would promote good practice and networking as a model to apply to other regions creating links to support a sustainable approach.</p> <p>PT indicated KBT aim to submit a bid late 2017 and suggested NFPGS could support with preparatory work in advance of the reform of its status and structure.</p> <p><u>Organisation Status (continued)</u> Discussion continued regarding the timetable to progress NFPGS towards CIO status which is considered fundamental to substantiate renewed funding bids.</p> <p>DM agreed to review the draft Constitution and invited further comment. He undertook to check exactly what additional information or development work is required to progress matters. MP agreed to seek comment from colleagues at another, local CIO, Transition Town Worthing.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>DM</p> <p>MP</p>

<p>It was agreed aim to resolve matters at a general meeting in early October – provisionally to comprise a single agenda item Officer meeting (am) followed by a general members meeting (pm) to approve final proposals and cover more general routine business.</p> <p><u>Groundwork Consortium</u> SR reported that following the circulation of a revised project briefing note there has been no further developments to progress this proposal.</p> <p><u>Sponsorship</u> PT outlined a KBT initiative selling Love Parks heart message boards (£35 each) with a £5 donation to NFPGS. The hearts promote a social media campaign to highlight the value of parks and green spaces. Around 60 had already been sold.</p> <p>SR / MP agreed to circulate a note/ tweet to members to promote this link and thanks were expressed to KBT for their continued support.</p> <p>DM noted additional links: with TiCL apps and trails and possibly with Health Parks. The latter proposed provision for Friends and community groups to have access to a free online survey however there is an impasse as the anticipated sponsorship to cover these costs has not yet been secured by Health Parks.</p> <p><u>Donations</u> DM added that another opportunity to facilitate contributions would be if a PayPal or similar link could be included on the website. A number of Park Friends and community groups have adopted this approach. (see item 4. below).</p>	<p>All</p> <p>SR/MP</p>
<p>4. NFPGS Co-ordination and Administration</p>	
<p><u>Website</u> DM reported that the previous web host had decided to close the domain and associated e-mail addresses, resulting in a need to recover the name and transfer material to an alternative site.</p> <p>DM suggested this is an opportunity to re-launch the website and has been approached by the company which prepared a similar site for the National Federation of Cemetery Friends. https://www.quotes.uk.com</p> <p>One off costs for web-design (£800) would be waived but there would be a monthly hosting charge of £40/month. Considered reasonable costs, it was unanimously agreed to accept the offer.</p> <p>Although the need to reinstate a web presence was agreed as a priority, the opportunity to use this platform to re-launch NFPGS with refreshed material was also noted and this should be an on-going item for action alongside social media.</p> <p><u>Partnerships</u> A draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between NFPGS and Fields in Trust (FiT) has been prepared based on the model adopted with KBT. It also includes NFPGS as a partner in the 'Have a Field Day' activity and the inclusion of a category in the annual FiT awards to acknowledge the</p>	<p>All</p>

contribution of Friends groups. New NFPGS members of FiT will be eligible for a 50% discount in their first year.

A similar agreement is planned with Groundwork to help raise NFPGS profile and help promote mutually beneficial activity and campaigns.

Volunteers

The need to recruit additional active volunteers – with role descriptions – was noted but remains an issue of capacity to consider at future general meetings.

5. Strengthening the Movement

Regional development

The need to maintain momentum developed through the EFF project is evident, with the initial impact of regional conferences subsiding. It was noted that further regional development could help address the recruitment of volunteers but capacity to research and progress through building the membership database and maintaining active contacts remains an issue.

NS reported that the North West Park friends Forum (NWPFF) has secured Awards for All funding to develop another programme of regional events and these should help to revive and develop membership in this area. He suggested the project could also inform a case study to share with other regional reps in due course.

New groups

The Sandwell Forum has been re-established and there has been further Forum development in Plymouth.

6. KBT Update

PT provided an update:

- Love Parks Week 2017 (14-23 July) is focussing on using social media to promote parks, groups and activity.
- The Love Parks heart notice boards provide opportunities for organisations and community group to post messages promoting themselves and their sites.
- Green Flag Award numbers are up 3-4%
- The North-South divide in applications/ awards continues to grow with a shift to the South.
- The Scheme continues to develop internationally with awards now in Spain, Sweden and Finland.
- The current GFA licence expires August 31st.

7. National Campaigning

Following the Communities and Local Government (CLG) select committee report on Parks (pub. 11/2/17) a formal Government response remains outstanding for the new administration.

Following the publication of the report NFPGS (DM) wrote to Andrew Percy MP – the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for

<p>Communities and Local Government) with responsibilities which included parks – offering to discuss opportunities for NFPGS become more engaged in delivering the CLG report recommendations. It was agreed to revise and send a similar letter to the new incumbent, once Mr Percy’s replacement is in post. PT advised that this is expected to be Jake Berry MP.</p> <p>Prior to the General Election DM also prepared and circulated an updated briefing letter for parks groups.</p> <p>DM has attended the AGM of the Tidy Britain All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG).</p> <p>Following the proposal of a MoU with FiT, NFPGS is now a partner supporting the ‘Have a Field Day’ activity which is also being supported by 38 Degrees to help promote a national event on 8 July.</p> <p>PT advised that the Parks Alliance will also be approaching the new parks minister. He noted the difficulty for both the Alliance and NFPGS to develop their role without resources to support dedicated staff and the necessary capacity to discharge their campaigning and advocacy role.</p> <p>The Parks Alliance and NFPGS (SR) will be attending the forthcoming conference ‘The Future of Public Parks: Policy, Practice and Research, part of a University of Leeds research project. (More details at: http://futureofparks.leeds.ac.uk).</p>	NS/DM
8. Other Activities - Major Events	
<p>DM attended the AGM of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends which represents around 100 groups and includes a paid subscription. More details at: https://www.cemeteryfriends.com</p> <p>SR will be speaking at the Future of Public Parks Conference (13/7/17).</p> <p>The Green Flag Awards regional events will be held 18-20 July and will feature Love Parks hearts on each table to help promote the initiative which will be supported by students posting on social media.</p>	
9. Any Other Business	
<p>MP referred to the National Cross System Group covering sustainability and health initiatives with potential opportunities to promote the positive role of parks. More details at: http://www.sduhealth.org.uk/about-us/who-we-work-with/cross-system-group-public.aspx .</p> <p>SR updated on BOSF work to mitigate the impact of cuts on the areas parks which include threats to the Ranger Service, loss of 9 park keepers and reductions in grounds maintenance. BOSF are lobbying and advising to ensure standards are sustained and has established a ‘Greener Birmingham Coalition’, engaging with wildlife trusts and others. SR agreed to share details as a model for possible adoption elsewhere.</p> <p>NS reported measures being adopted in Merseyside: in Liverpool the future management of 2 key city parks is being reviewed with approval for officers</p>	SR

to start a procurement process for new park 'operators'. Wirral MBC has undertaken a report on the 're-imagining of leisure and cultural services' which recommends the preparation of business case for three models for future service provision: in house, a charitable trust or a Community Interest Company.

In both these cases there has been serious concern locally at the lack of consultation with parks community groups and local stakeholders.

10. Date of next meeting

Provisionally late September / early October (dependent on progress to finalise the CIO application).