**Sunderland Green Spaces Forum**

**Notes from a meeting held on 16/5/17 at the Chester's pub**

**Present**

Clare Wayman, Grow Sunderland

Jackie Wayman, Friends of Backhouse Park

Mary Todnor, Friends of Backhouse Park

Paul Brickle, Grow Sunderland

Graeme Jobes, Transition Sunderland

Allan Rowell, Transition Sunderland

David Newrick, Sustainable Sunderland

Allan Spencer, Friends of Herrington Country Park

Ann Huntley, Friends of Herrington Country Park

David Sloan, Penshaw Community Allotment

Victor Cadaxa, Friends of Herrington Country Park

John Ellis, Friends of Rectory Park

Joyce Dixon, Friends of Rectory Park

Kathy Pickering, Hetton Lyons Country Park

Tim Wright, Friends of Barnes Park, Red Machine Allotment Association

Apologies

Karl Sabler, Friends of Doxford Park

Sue Atkinson, Friends of Barnes Park

Cllr. Rebecca Atkinson, Friends of Barnes Park

Margaret Smith, Friends of Herrington Country Park

Shirley Carr, ?

**1.Notes from the previous meeting**

These were agreed as a correct record following two amendments:

* Allan (Spencer), surname added
* Date of next meeting should read ‘Tuesday 16th May, 2017’

**2. Matters arising**

* Page 2 Role and function of a forum. The issue was raised as to what should be included, for example, playgrounds in or out? This had not been discussed at the previous meeting
* Other groups to contact. TW/AW had not actioned this. Clearly some members had passed on an invitation to this meeting to other groups in their own locality.
* The offer of a guided walk around Houghton Rectory Park was taken up and positive feedback received.

**3. Draft terms of reference**

Tim explained that the terms of reference were meant as a starting point for discussion. They were adapted from Bristol Parks Forum and may well have elements not relevant for Sunderland. Discussion focused on aims, membership and representation and governance sections. A number of suggested changes were suggested and agreed. However, it was felt the document could be made simpler and clearer. Changes suggested included:

1. Aims amend to
   * To offer ideas, knowledge and experience for the development of green space in (the) Sunderland (area).
   * To act as a source of independent advice on green space in (the) Sunderland (area).
   * To influence green space decision making, including resource allocation, at local, regional and national levels.
   * To encourage greater public use of public green space through more effective information provision and the active involvement of those who use the space.
2. Membership and representation

* Members (change of wording as follows) ‘*Membership of the forum will be for resident park or other groups with an interest in protecting/improving green space.*’
* Need further discussion on relationship with SCC both officers and members and the role of city wide organizations eg Civic Society, Durham Wildlife Trust, Groundwork.

1. Organisation (and style)

* Not discussed in detail

1. Support from SCC and Status

* Will require amendment/omission

**Action points**

Graeme offered to rewrite terms of reference, circulate for comment prior to next meeting.

Group members to return comments to Tim by Friday 23rd June.

**4. Next steps**

Not discussed aside from group members to continue to identify and inform other green space groups of the existence of this forum and invite them to attend.

**5. Open space**

* Friends of Herrington Country Park have produced their own park leaflet that is both on their website and printed.
* They also undertake an annual survey of those who use the park. Results are shared with SCC.
* In a post meeting note, Friends of HCP sent this example. The model boating group reported at a Friends open meeting, serious problems with wood decking (rotting planks and planks lifting) at the boat landing area. Subsequently raised this with the local Councillors, and the Cabinet member. He immediately emailed a senior officer pointing out that this was a health and safety issue. In less than a month, the decking had been entirely replaced, with no mid-decking joints. Although not perfect (drainage could be better) it is nevertheless a real improvement.
* Fiend of Backhouse Park had organized an Easter egg event. They have also undertaken community clean up events in the park.
* Allotments were mentioned, specifically how can we engage and involve more sites.

**6. Any other business**

* Mary highlighted playgrounds and the threat of closure many could face. Gentoo are the landlord for many of these parks now. They are encouraging estate involvement in the playgrounds offering tenants and residents training in ? parks inspection including health and safety.
* The campaigning group 38degrees are encouraging parks groups across the country to organize picnics in their local parks on Sunday 8th July 2017 as a way of raising awareness of the park and activities that may be happening.

**7. Date and time of next meeting**

Tuesday June 27th, 18.30-20.30, Chesters Pub, Chester Road