**Sunderland Green & Open Spaces (SGOS) Forum – notes from a meeting held on Tuesday April 9th, 2019, Library & Winter Gardens Cafe, Sunderland City Centre.**

**Present:** Kathy Pickering (HLCP); Graeme Jobes (A Space 2 Grow); Tim Wright (Friends of Barnes Park/Red Machine Allotment Association); Ashley Sutherland *(*Friends of Mowbray Park and Tunstall Hills Protection Group); Victor Cadaxa, (Friends of Herrington Country Park), Ann Huntley (Friends of Herrington Country Park), Jenny French (Friends of Herrington Country Park), David Newrick (Sustainable Sunderland),Becky Vickers (Groundwork NE & Cumbria), Gillan Gibson (CPRE)

**Apologies:** Kirsty Pollard (DWT), Graeme Anderson (G4media), Viviene Metcalfe (Sunderland City Council)

**1. Notes from previous meeting:**  Not discussed as last meeting was planning March’s aborted launch event.

**2. Matters Arising:** None

**3. Launch of SGOSF**

A press release had been sent to Sunderland Echo and photographs were taken prior to the meeting’s commencement.

SGOSF now have a website and facebook page. Details are: [https://www.sunderlandgosf.wordpress.com/](https://sunderlandgosf.wordpress.com/) <https://www.facebook.com/events/915945298600057/>

Group and organisations are encouraged to sign up in support.

**4. Ean McKellar, Chair and Secretary Newcastle Parks Forum.**

NPF has been in existence for a number of years and has tried from the outset to speak with one voice to Newcastle City Council. However, sometimes this has meant being a ‘thorn in their side’. It believes volunteers and their work should be celebrated not simply tolerated. They have had some success.

From 1/4/19, the Newcastle Parks & Allotments Trust (NPT) went live. Consisting of a chair and 12 trustees, the charity will manage parks and allotments on behalf of NCC. NCC retains responsibility for playing fields and other green spaces.

Ean felt the model being used was the wrong way up. He felt volunteers should be at the top, supported by the trust, with the former defining the role and function of parks and allotments. NCC have always argued that volunteers are never entirely representative of their communities.

There is an important role for Councillors on the group and they are difficult to ignore if they are involved. Similarily, volunteers are a central resource who have a range of skills, knowledge and experience. The National Trust, as the accountable body, have quite a directive role with volunteers. This may cause tension with those historically engaged with the Forum.

The model for the parks may be compromised by the need to income generate.

Questions

* How do you get members to join a Forum? (David Newrick). Communication is key, importance of targeting messages to different ‘segments’ of the population eg dog walkers, boot camps, anglers, hospital staff.
* Have you had much success in establishing friends groups in the city? (Victor Cadaxa). No!
* Importance of a vision, nothing stands still.

4. Open Space

* Herrington Country Park – Ann & Jenny. An event is being held on 1/6/19, 09.00-15.00 to promote the park. The Forum agreed to have a stall.
* David Newrick – highlighted the value of the Forum’s facebook page
* Victor Cadax – mentioned his attendance on behalf of the Forum, at the Washington Area VCS network where he heard about a new committee for Princess Anne park.
* Gillan Gibson. The Sunderland local plan is currently being examined in public and CPRE has been invited to the session chaired by a government appointed inspector. Sunderland and Darlington have both provided housing figures well over the top.
* Graeme Jobes – Space2Grow ran a successful bee keeping course. Youth strike for climate is happening in Sunderland. SCC have agreed a motion declaring a climate emergency. This should provide leverage into action on carbon.
* Kathy Pickering – a number of summer activities will be happening in the park. SIB funding has been obtained to renew a footbridge. A ‘ladies’ cycling group has started and Springboard runs a disabled cyclists group.
* Ashley Sutherland- Tunstall Hills Protection Group will undertake a litter pick on 17/4/19, 10-12.00, have organised a birdcall at 05.30 on 5/5/19 and in July, August and September fungal forays will occur. A successful application to the community chest has paid for a notice and the group’s twitter account is being resurrected.
* Friends of Mowbray Park – Live kitchen will be taking over the park.
* Becky Villiers – Work and activities continue at Groundwork managed Elba park.

**6. Any other business**

None

**7. Date, time & venue for meetings**

Date: Monday June 10th, 2019, 6-8pm,

Subject: Rangers – concept, training, implementation,

Karl Stabler, Conservation Management CIC & Friends of Doxford Park

Venue: The Stables, Meadow Nursey Lodge, Silksworth Lane, Doxford Park, SR3 2PE