

TILGATE FORUM MEETING Minutes

Thursday 16 November 2017 7:30 – 9:15 Shackleton Road Community Centre

Chair: Richard Handy

The meeting was attended by 51 people in all; this number included CBC Councillors Carlos Castro and Francis Guidera, CBC Development Officer John Dale and Nick Hagon, Manager of Tilgate Park. These minutes are written in line with the agenda, although the actual running order was disrupted by technical issues.

1. Welcome and apologies

RH welcomed all. Apologies were received from Jean Parsons, Jean Elmer, John Nower and WSCC Councillor Duncan Crow. As usual the meeting was recorded to help with accuracy of the notes.

2. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

Following the AGM in September, the committee members elected discussed their roles and those re-elected will take up their previous roles whilst new committee member Don Garner will look at promotion of the Forum.

The minutes from the Forum meeting held on 14 September 2017 were accepted, and are on the Tilgate Community Forum website.

3. The History of Tilgate Park – illustrated talk from Nick Hagon, Park Manager, to celebrate Crawley's 70th birthday

NH gave an interesting talk about Tilgate Park and the Walled Garden, which originally formed part of the Tilgate Estate in Worth Forest. This estate dates back to the Norman Conquest. More recently the Estate was bought during the 1860s by merchant banker John Nix, who built Tilgate Mansion, and demolished a previous smaller country house. The Mansion was reached from one entrance near Three Bridges Station where Tilgate Lodge remains, and from another on the Brighton Road, where there was another lodge. The whole Estate extended south towards Slaugham – a total of 2,500 acres.

Members of the Nix family were keen horticulturists, very involved with the Royal Horticultural Society and links were made with Leonard Messel, also a keen horticulturist, at nearby Nymans. The development of the plant life at Tilgate was greatly assisted by one Ernest Wilson, plant hunter, who brought back many exotic and interesting species, some of which survive today. One such tree, the Tulip tree, is depicted in a photo in 1905 standing outside the Mansion and is still thriving today outside the family restaurant now occupying the site.

The Nix and Ashburner-Nix family owned the Estate up until the late 1930s when it was sold off in lots. During World War Two the Canadian Army had troops stationed in the park and left at least one shell as a reminder of their stay. After the war, an independent Horticultural Experimental Station was based in the Walled Garden, but eventually the ownership of the current park area passed to what was then Crawley Urban District Council in 1964. Sadly by then the Mansion was in disrepair and was demolished.

At one point the lakes were owned by Sir Malcolm Campbell who owned the Bluebird speedboat, and the main lake is often called Campbell's Lake. Apparently, Campbell did have a rowing boat on the lake, but did not carry out flotation trials here, as has been believed.

Work that started in the 1960s to restore the parkland has continued, and the Park is now 200 acres – 400 including the Golf Course. Many different groups enjoy the Park, including dog walkers, dragon boat racers, the Camelia Botnar Foundation service users in the Walled Garden to name but a few, all against a backdrop of spectacular trees and plants and scenery.

See below for future events in the Park under Announcements, section 8.

4. Anti-social or criminal behaviour? Laura Padgett and Katie Maclean from CBC Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Team and Police Officer Stephen West and colleague

LP explained that the ASB Team is closely involved in joint working with local Police Officers in the effort to support residents in Crawley regarding complaints against other residents. Examples of issues such as nuisance noise (dog barking or other), parking issues and nuisance behaviour were cited.

The Team operates a Duty system whereby each relevant new issue called in is allocated a caseworker, such as KL above. Items that are not appropriate for the Team to deal with can be passed on to the relevant agencies as necessary as the Team has many contacts with local services. Two addresses are required in order to take forward a complaint, one for the person with the complaint and one for the person apparently causing it. The aim is to resolve issues via informal mediation, but they can also try to resolve the problem without mediation while retaining anonymity. The caseworkers are neutral and will not take sides. The person causing the complaint may be issued with a Community Protection Warning.

As below the Team work to office hours but the Community Wardens work outside office hours and can be called as well, see contact details below, or the Police direct. Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) work until 11pm.

Members brought issues and questions for LP and KM. Again the issue of “boy racers” and loud music in the car park at Tilgate Park came up, and many hands were raised to show how many people are affected by this. It is vital that all instances of this are reported to the ASB team, or the non-emergency Sussex Police number – 101 – or reported to Operation Crackdown (run by Sussex Police). LP and KM planned to stay behind to discuss this issue with the members concerned.

Forum members can always contact their local CBC Councillors to discuss how best to take matters forwards. If members text instances to their local Councillors, the Councillors can then liaise with Police/other relevant agencies with the evidence of the problem. (See below, and the CBC website for the contact details of your Councillor.)

PCSO Stephen West and his colleague looked at the distinction between ASB and criminal offending and the following emerged from queries raised.

Disabled Parking spaces – it is not actually illegal for a non-disabled person to park in them and it seems that any driver with a disabled sticker is free to park in them. They do not “belong” to a specific person.

Parking across driveways – if your car is blocked in then that is a Police matter, but if you are blocked out by some-one parking across your drive or garage, it isn't.

Laybys do not generally have any dropped kerbs within them despite a need for one – one concerned resident was asked to talk to the local Councillors at the end of the meeting.

Parking on the pavement – inconsiderate parking is everywhere, and can be dangerous. The Police will treat each case on its merits. However, manpower and time are limited police resources.

If a badly parked car is implicated in causing an accident Police may take action. General advice is to call 101 if you are in doubt.

It was acknowledged that “car cruising” is an anti-social problem in Crawley as a whole, (especially in the large supermarket car parks), and although it is not illegal a long term strategy is planned. Police are now aware of this problem in the Golf Course and Tilgate Park, and stressed that it should be logged when it happens.

Contact details for the Anti-Social Behaviour Team

Email: asb@crawley.gov.uk

Call: 01293 438438 – office hours

Website: www.crawley.gov.uk/asb

Contact details for Community Wardens

0800 5875 888 – office hours for routine enquiries

07884 492324 – for emergencies 8am – 9.30pm seven days a week

Website: www.crawley.gov.uk - click on Community and Neighbourhoods where you will see a further link to Community Wardens

Contact number for Police (non-emergency) 101

Contact details for Councillors

Carlos Castro: 07584 330152. Email carlos.castro@crawley.gov.uk

Francis Guidera: 07581 566274. Email francis.guidera@crawley.gov.uk

5. Updates on Parking Committee and Golf Course

5.1 Councillor Peter Smith visited the Parking Committee and has advised the group to put their deliberations in writing. Two areas seem particularly problematic in Tilgate, namely congestion in the area around schools at drop off and collection time and congestion of the roads in the vicinity of Tilgate Park. WSCC Councillor Duncan Crow has been informed of the progress of the group and has been supportive. Final reports from the group will be shared with DC above and with the Road Space Audit.

5.2 The last full meeting of the residents' group concerning Glendale's tree-thinning work at the Golf Course has now taken place. The second phase of work was carried out sympathetically and the Local Nature Reserve (LNR) has been re-discovered in a corner of the land leased to Glendale. CBC has now put forward a five year plan for this in line with other LNRs in the town. Trees of special interest have been identified by residents and mapped to enable Glendale to respect them in any planned work. Glendale appears committed to community liaison prior to further work, and lines of communication have been established. As the Golf Course is actually situated in Furnace Green, the potential Furnace Green Community Forum would be able to include it, although Tilgate residents also use the land for walking etc., and will retain an interest in any developments.

6. Updates from local councillors

6.1 FG – FG has been meeting with the local Police and other agencies concerning anti-social behaviour at the Co-Op end of Tilgate Parade. They are all working together concerning the issues; there is much drug dealing going on under the radar in the vicinity,

although a local shopper would not know it.

A dog bin is planned near Holy Trinity Church, and Shackleton Road pavements have been replaced. The hard standing at the bus stop near the G.P. surgery on Ashdown Drive has now been enlarged to accommodate more passengers.

Desmond Anderson School – cars have been parked on the pavement blocking their use by parents with children – FG has spoken with residents concerning this nuisance.

6.2 CC – CC has been involved with issues from residents concerning housing, parking and anti-social behaviour. He also stated that CBC and WSCC should work together more in the interests of the residents.

£712.00 was raised from the charitable event for firefighters organised by The Black Tie Club earlier this year.

CC has been liaising with Gatwick Greenspace in a bid to identify a site for another play area in Tilgate and he remarked that it is extremely sad that already concern has been raised about the prospect of more anti-social behaviour in any new play area.

7. A.O.B.

7.1 FG suggested that Tilgate Community Forum apply to CBC for a grant to cover the cost of organising a Christmas tree with lights on Tilgate Parade, similar to efforts from other local Forums. This can possibly be looked at for next year.

7.2 Comment from one Forum member concerning Crawley in general and the recently completed refurbishment of Queen's Square in the town centre: "Why did CBC spend all that money on the Square only to put up a huge marquee on it?" (the large marquee housing the temporary ice rink).

8. Announcements

- Heather Garden Work Parties – 10.15am Wed 22 November, then Wed 13th December.
- Peace Garden Work Party – Saturday 25 November at 10.30am.
- Twilight Christmas Market in the Walled Garden in Tilgate Park on Friday 24th 5pm – 9pm and Saturday 25th November, from 3pm – 7pm. This year it will be held in the arena with a small entry charge.
- The next meeting of the Parking Committee will be on Monday 27 November 2017 at 5.30pm at the Holy Trinity Church foyer.
- Local Nature Reserve Volunteers – Weds 3 January and Weds 17 January 2018 (Rosamund Road entrance to the Park). Check with Gatwick Greenspace on 07788 101544 or 0777 1375254 on the day.
- "Employ Crawley" services for jobseekers and workers – see employcrawley online or visit the Hub at Crawley Library Monday to Thursday.

9. Next meetings

RH thanked all for attending and reminded everyone of the next meeting dates:

Forum meeting Thursday 25 January 2018, at the Community Centre in Shackleton Road, 7.30-9.15pm

For those members who would like to attend the next Committee Meeting, this is due to take place on **Thursday 14 December 2017 at 6pm** at the Community Centre above.

Tilgate Community Forum contact details:

Email: tilgateforum@gmail.com Website: www.tilgateforum.co.uk