

TILGATE FORUM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes

Thursday 13 September 2018. 7.30 – 9.15 Shackleton Road Community Centre

Acting Chair: Richard Handy

The meeting was attended by 38 people in all; this number included WSCC Councillor Duncan Crow, CBC Councillor Francis Guidera, CBC Development Officer John Dale and Nick Hagon, Manager at Tilgate Park.

1. Welcome and apologies RH welcomed all. Apologies were received from MP Henry Smith, John Nower and Chris Cowell. As previously, the meeting was recorded.

2. Minutes of previous meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes from the meeting held on 12 July 2018 were accepted. There were no matters arising although feedback was provided (see below) regarding Thomas Bennett.

3. Annual Report from Acting Chair RH

RH gave a rundown of the speakers attending and the issues covered in meetings since the last AGM, and also an update on the actions of MP Henry Smith concerning the proposed cuts at Thomas Bennett Community College. In short, following a meeting with staff delegates, parents and union officials, HS questioned the Secretary of State for Education on the merits of academy schools in difficulties reverting to state control, which produced the response that there were no plans in this direction. HS is pursuing this further with the Secretary above given the inadequacy of the full response received.

RH noted the consistent, valued input and support to the Forum from the local MP, HS above, and from both DC and FG above, and also Cllr. Castro, and their actions on behalf of residents to improve local living issues. RH related also the consistent and unfailing updates for members from NH about Tilgate Park.

RH gave feedback on the progress towards the installation of Christmas lights on Tilgate Parade, and sought a show of hands as to whether he should carry on to seek a quote for an electric pillar from SSE to enable this. Of the 27 who voted, 19 were in favour of this. There will be cost implications for any pillar, including extra insurance and a possible cost for electricity as well to take into consideration. One member queried whether the managers of the shops on Tilgate Parade would be able to help fund. JD will also seek advice from the Council's Town Centre manager, Alfredo Mendez.

RH described briefly what the committee members had been doing over the last year, and pointed out that three of the existing committee members (Sue Shropshire, Jennie Withall and Rev. Rob Edwards) were stepping down this evening. He thanked them for their work over the years, small gifts were given to them, and he handed over to JD to run the election for the next year's committee, explaining that the Secretary had received four new nominations which was very positive.

4. Nominations and voting for the new Steering Committee

JD read out the eight nominations and proposers and requested that members second them, also asking if anyone else wished to propose any further nominees. Members can also join the committee any time of year and become co-opted committee members.

All eight nominees were seconded as follows:

Richard Handy, proposed by Liam Richmond, was seconded by Jean Elmer
Jim Leggett, proposed by Sylvia Handy, was seconded by Sue Shropshire

Sylvia Handy, proposed by Jim Leggett, was seconded by Eileen Towes
Don Garner, proposed by Betty Garner, was seconded by Ron Spraget
Lindsay Thompson, proposed by Richard Handy, was seconded by Rev. Rob Edwards
Liam Richmond, proposed by Richard Handy, was seconded by Jennie Withall
Alan Drummond, proposed by Sylvia Handy, was seconded by Lindsay Thompson
Jean Elmer, proposed by Sylvia Handy, was seconded by Liam Richmond

JD concluded with confirming the eight new members of the Steering Committee for the forthcoming year, and a date was set for the next committee meeting to decide on roles for each committee member – 18 October 2018.

5. Crawley History and Crawley Museum – Andrea Dumbrell, Learning and Liaison Officer, Crawley Museum and a volunteer, Stella, Crawley Museum Society

Both speakers gave an interesting historical overview of the history of Crawley from prehistory up to the conception and development of Crawley as a new town in the late 1940s.

AD related that artefacts held by Crawley Museum and also features of the local landscape bear witness to ancient times; flint mines and tools (a flint tool was displayed), Bronze Age burial mounds, a Bronze Age sword, evidence of Iron Age metal working and several Iron Age forts dotted around the Crawley area are all testament to a long and varied history. Crawley is not just one new town either – developments in mediaeval times resulting in a ribbon settlement provided the basis for the current High Street; the Victorian era saw a boom in housing development and finally the New Towns Commission chose Crawley as one of the eight post war sites for developing satellite towns that had work, housing and countryside all in one location to which many Londoners migrated.

Concerning the museum itself, a move back into The Tree, the building it originated in many years ago, has been successfully accomplished. The Tree is itself a piece of history dating back to 1320. The museum also encompasses a second site – Ifield Mill, which was restored to working order and can also be visited on set occasions.

The museum is open from Wednesday to Sunday inclusive and residents can always ask a staff member to look for specific items that are not on display as there are many boxes of photos and items in storage. A box of photos of Tilgate was mentioned. AD herself is involved in working with the community, from pre-school upwards. A large number of volunteers help the three members of staff run the museum and Ifield Mill and more volunteers would be very welcome – stewards, for example, are volunteers and there are also tasks behind the scenes to help with. If you are interested see someone at the museum or get in touch. See below for contact details.

6. Crawley Horticultural Society (CHS) – Ron Spraget

RS explained that CHS began in 1952 with a garden shed and a plot of land. At one time, before garden centres became so prevalent, there were 2,000 members; currently members number 400. The CHS is based in Ifield Avenue and has a shop there on some Sunday mornings from 9.30am to 12pm, where CHS members can buy goods at a good discount.

CBC offered a plot in the Walled Garden to CHS and this has been devoted to seasonal planting of the sorts of plants that you would grow in your own garden. The plot also includes a lawn and shed and CHS members are there on most Friday mornings to be on hand to speak with visitors – do get in touch to confirm dates.

New members are always welcome and membership is not expensive (£4 per year) and the cost is quickly recouped with discounted purchases. See below for location and contact details.

7. Updates from Councillors

7.1 FG: Lights in Tilgate Park main car park – these are not shielded and the light scatters in all directions, including towards nearby local residents. This situation is to be resolved soon.

Anti-social behaviour in Tilgate Park main car park – FG visits this car park regularly and the dangerous antics he witnessed recently caused him to call the Police. FG is involved in efforts to get the car park locked at 12 midnight although there are issues of cost and practicalities to overcome.

FG has a concern about the Pease Pottage development/St Catherine's Hospice site. The 600 dwellings that are being built alongside the new Hospice building do not appear to have any local shopping facilities, health centre or schools planned. The nearest shopping area, apart from the nearby service station, is Tilgate shops. Residents at Pease Pottage looking for the shortest route to Tilgate shops from that area could be tempted to cut through Tilgate Park, with the consequent risk of further congestion and traffic for Tilgate residents and park visitors. This development is a Mid-Sussex plan, not a Crawley plan.

FG has talked to the Police about Police presence, and has been supporting the parents of children at Thomas Bennett Community College (see minutes of Forum held on 12 July 2018).

FG also attended the AGM of Friends of Tilgate Park. He finished by giving praise to Tilgate Community Forum and its efficient organisation.

FG took a query from a member concerning the persistent use of a disabled parking space by another vehicle.

7.2 DC: DC reported that the WSCC funding for housing support for homeless people, currently at £7 million, is having to be reduced. Although cuts are needed, DC will speak on the importance of keeping funding for resources such as Crawley Open House intact, and he may need to approach CBC to seek an increase in their financial support of this service.

8. Update on Tilgate Park – Nick Hagon

NH reported that due to the stress suffered by the trees during the prolonged hot weather over the summer, autumn has started early this year, as evidenced by the colourful armful of foliage that he brought with him. Two trees have had to be taken down as a result of fungus and tree death. Branches can also suddenly drop from oaks and beeches suffering stress.

The lawn is showing wear as a result of all the summer activities and will be again restored.

Work on pathways will take place in the next few months.

There is on-going work in The Americas enclosure.

Fencing repairs are planned, especially in the car park where drivers have bumped them.

Traffic cones were placed in Salisbury Road over one recent busy weekend and visitors were also directed to alternative parking in Gainsborough Road playing fields. However, it was good to see that many people walked or used public transport.

11 November - A special commemorative event marking the 100th anniversary of the end of World War 1 will take place: "WW1 Beacons of Light Tilgate Park". The beacon next to the main car park will be lit.

9. Announcements and Events

Tuesday 18.09.18 at 5.45pm – Litter picking with The Beavers, meet at the corner of Durham Close/Winchester Road

Saturday 22.09.18 at 10.30am – volunteers for Tilgate Park Peace Garden

Wednesday 26.09.18 at 10am – volunteers for Tilgate Park Heather Garden

Wednesday 7.11.18 at 11am and Saturday 10.11.18 at 11am – Tree walks in Tilgate Park (Meet at the cafe in the Walled Garden for gardening and tree walks.)

10. Raffle and Future Forum Meetings

10.1 Due to the mystery disappearance of the raffle tickets and the bright idea of a committee member (well done Don!), a ticket-free raffle was organised. Thanks to everyone for your patience.

10.2 Next Forum meetings

Thursday 22 November 2018 at the Community Centre in Shackleton Road, 7.30 – 9.15pm

Thursday 24 January 2019 – venue and time as above.

Contact details:

Tilgate Community Forum: Email contact point: tilgateforum@gmail.com

Website: www.tilgateforum.co.uk Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/tilgateforum/>

Henry Smith MP

Email: henry.smith.mp@parliament.uk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/HenrySmith4Crawley>

Phone: Crawley office: 01293 934 554; Westminster 020 7219 7043

Crawley Museum

Email: office@crawleymuseums.org

Website: <http://crawleymuseums.org/>

Phone: 01293 539088

Crawley Horticultural Society

Email: secretary@crawleyhorticulturalsociety.org.uk

Website: <http://crawleyhorticulturalsociety.org.uk/>

Location of hall/occasional shop:

Crawley Horticultural Society, Ifield Avenue, West Green, Crawley RH11 7AJ

Phone: 01293 535585 or 07546 770594