

TILGATE FORUM

Thursday 24th January 2019.

The Chair, Richard Handy, welcomed members to the meeting with apologies from: Nick Hagon, Cllr. Carlos Castro, Chris Cowell, John Nower, [Cllr. Francis Guidera and County Councillor Duncan Crow]. 30 people, including guest speakers, attended the meeting.

The minutes from the meeting held on 22nd November were accepted as correct.

Matters arising:

Christmas lights on Tilgate Parade: RH gave the quotes he had received from SSE the electrical supplier for the extra supply pillar which would have to be erected. The total cost of lighting the tree would be upwards of £2,500. An alternative suggestion has been made to put lights along the balcony.

It was put to the vote and as a result no-one voted for the original idea, 18 were in favour of lighting the balcony, and 2 voted to drop the idea altogether.

Funding: RH explained that Crawley Borough Council would not be funding us in the future and we would have to find monies for hall hire, postage, printing, advertising etc.

Therefore we plan to apply for an Open Grant Fund from the council. To do this we have to amend the Constitution to include Equal Opportunities. The proposed wording for this was read out and the members agreed to the change so the change was carried.

Wellbeing: Our first speaker for the evening was Julie Clare from Crawley Wellbeing at K2 who gave a very interesting talk on the facilities offered to reduce the health inequalities in Crawley, and to promote health care. This is funded by Public Health England.

It includes Weight Management, Low Mood conditions, Nutrition, Exercise, Future Health, Alcohol reduction, Smoking, Pre diabetes course, Active Life referral after illness. Joining can be by Self referral or from your doctor.

Advisers make a plan with residents, and support them in making goals and changing their lifestyle. The Weight off Workshop of 12 weeks is very popular.

Julie told us “Any movement is better than none.” The Walks programme has grown, and a variety of courses is available throughout the day (free or low-cost) with a few in the evenings at various places in town. She left leaflets for us to take home to study.

Tai Chi: Our next speaker for the evening was Peter Parsons to talk and demonstrate Authentic Tai Chi.

He started the talk with “From the moment that I was ‘hooked’ I knew that Tai Chi would bring something very special into my life and in the years that followed there were many instances where being practised in Tai Chi gave me the edge. I have enjoyed the fitness that Tai Chi has given me, loved combining Tai Chi with my business skills and knowledge and gained much joy from teaching many people to derive the same benefits.”

Tai Chi is a continuous series of slow and progressive movements (called the “form”).

All the time he was talking Peter was demonstrating the movements and how they were helping the mind and body. You use your feet alternately as you move your weight to release them and step (ultimately glide!) through the moves, with your arms and hands taking shape and moving in unison with your body. Each movement sends energy almost imperceptibly through your body and into your shaped hands, leaving you feeling more alive, toned and refreshed. He explained it could take 18 months to learn a routine of movements lasting 14 minutes or so. Chi Kung breathing is used, and this can be very calming and therapeutic.

Higher Tai Chi levels - (here Peter produced fans and swords - a bit scary although he said they were not dangerous) he explained advanced Tai Chi is accompanied by single and double fans (double fans activating both sides of the brain), traditional Tai Chi long sword and broadsword as extensions of the body.

He quoted the benefits of Authentic Tai Chi as follows: Self control, Self confidence, Dynamic Mindfulness, and Cumulative benefits such as less stress, better balance, open mindfulness, less vulnerability.

Sadly, after this very exciting talk, there are no Authentic Tai Chi classes in Crawley. However other forms are available.

Tilgate Park update: As Nick Hagon was unavailable Karen Rham, Neighbourhood Services Manager for Crawley, gave us an update on the park.

The Christmas Event in the park was a new project, CBC had been let down by the company they had booked so decided to go ahead themselves. It was quite a huge learning curve and they have only just cleared it all away.

The lawns had also been cleared of the leaves, a massive job. The spring bulbs are coming through. Replanting is taking place in the Walled Garden also winter clearance of brambles, etc.

February half term will see the return of the inflatables.

Next Friends of Tilgate Park meeting will take place on Tuesday 5th March at 19.00 hours at The Barn. The Friends Committee needs helpers.

Nick Hagon has been given 18-24 months leave from managing the park to work on a project "Planning the Park for the Future". He will catalogue what is there now and what is planned for the next 10 years. This plan is to cover all the Park, including the Golf Course and the Nature Reserve as well.

Residents asked if the fishing platforms would be in this future plan, and if it was possible to have a buggy system for the disabled. Nick Hagon will be consulting residents: their views are important.

It was suggested that boards were put in the Walled Garden to show selected samples of shrubs, plants, trees and where they can be found in the Park.

The samples of shrubs Karen had brought along were - Daphne bholua 'Jacqueline Postill', flowering honeysuckle, Lonicera x fragrantissima, Sarcococca confusa and the autumn flowering cherry, Prunus x subhirtella 'Autumnalis Rosea'.

There was a debate about appropriate food for the birds, ducks and swans, and a request for clearer information about feeding. Perhaps the correct food could be sold in the shop in the Nature Centre.

[A query about updating the Chichester Road Playground was answered by Karen after the meeting: it is not on the current list for refurbishment as there are play areas with higher priority. The play area refurbishment programme is due for review next year.

A question about what the Friends of Tilgate Park do was referred to the Friends website <https://www.friendsoftilgatepark.co.uk>

The main aims of the Friends are listed as:

Maintain and protect Tilgate park;

Promote environmental improvement;

Practical conservation;

Encourage and support the community]

Future events: Don Garner then took the floor to ask members if they would like a social event such as a quiz night with a fish and chip supper. It would need to be prepaid. Suggestion of a 20 - 25 question quiz ending at 9pm to allow members to talk to each other informally, as it was noted that when the meeting closes currently members do tend to stay behind to talk to the Councillors and Committee members.

He also suggested we might celebrate St George's Day, perhaps joining with the Men's Shed to do this.

Updates from Councillors:

A report from Councillor Carlos Castro was read out by RH. With reference to complaints about speeding, mainly on Ashdown Drive:

" A report published by WSCC back in December asking for parking management plans to implement on-street parking controls for the whole of Crawley and this did not sit well with many residents and I would like to share my discontent with the report.....I continue to support the idea that a well thought-out one-way road system in many areas in our ward would see a viable way to ease parking and manage better flow of traffic.

I have been asked to save the George Hotel long lost sign. This is a sign that was built by a local resident and much attention has been generated to save the historical sign. I will continue to update you on this...

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude for the work by Men in Sheds Tilgate for converting a double-decker into a shelter to offer refuge to homeless people."

[Report from Councillor Francis Guidera received after the meeting:

"The pathway from Canterbury Rd to K2 had faulty lighting. After much fact finding WSCC have said they will fix next week.

I am aware of the garage break-ins happening all over the town and the ones that have happened in Tilgate recently. I bumped into a police officer last Saturday at 11 p.m. who was driving around the garages on a mission to catch people, so please let residents know that the police are actively operating in the area late at night, on the look out.

I am told by residents affected that the measures I had to push so hard to have put in place up at the park have had a very positive effect and the issue is much reduced. There is more to do.”]

[Councillor Duncan Crow added a note later:

“Livingstone Road will be fully resurfaced within the next three months subject to weather conditions.”]

The raffle was drawn and the meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

Dates for the diary

Next Forum meeting Thursday 21st March 7.30 pm

Volunteers for Tilgate Park Peace Garden: Saturdays 9th and 23rd February 10.30 am

Volunteers for Tilgate Park Heather Garden: Wednesdays 13th and 27th February 10 am

Contacts

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<https://crawley.westsussexwellbeing.org.uk/>

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