

Friends of Streatham Common, Public Meeting on 13th Nov 2013

Youth Facilities on Streatham Common

Attendance and Apologies

31 people attended the meeting held by the Friends of Streatham Common at Immanuel & St Andrew Primary School on 13th November 2013.

10 letters of apology were received.

Introduction

Richard Payne, the Chair of the Friends of Streatham Common gave an overview of the work of the Friends over the last year, and some themes for the coming year including the establishment of a local co-operative to take on some aspects management of the common (Streatham Common Co-operative or SCCoop), further improvements in the Rookery following the successful Heritage Lottery Fund bid and taking forward more youth facilities.

An overview of Lambeth's recent and planned investment in youth facilities 2011-2015 in parks was presented (listed below) as a basis for ideas and highlighting the need for Streatham Common to have plans ready to be able to attract funding.

Under 5's play area (Slade Gardens), New tennis courts (Larkhall Park), New playground (Wyck Gardens), Tennis & Netball (Archbishops Pk), New playground (Brockwell Park), New waterplay (Brockwell Park), New practice nets (Brockwell Park), Outdoor Gym (Hatfield Green), Outdoor Gym (Hillside Gardens Pk), Table Tennis (Kennington Park), Sports Fields (Kennington Park), Playground (Lambeth Walk), Football Pitch (Larkhall Park), Changing Rooms (Brockwell Park), Changing Rooms (Clapham Cmn), New Playground (Clapham Common), Outdoor Gym (Clapham Common), Netball Courts (Clapham Common), Basket Ball Court (Clapham Common), Floodlights (Myatt's Field), Fitness Equipment (Slade Gardens), Skate park (Norwood Park), Waterplay (Paradise Park), Reseeding fields (Stockport Rd), Play provision (Vauxhall Pleasure).

Ideas Generation

The meeting then split into three groups tasks with coming up with the key ideas and giving the schemes some sort of priority.

Group 1

The key ideas presented by this group were:

- Redevelopment of the play area at the bottom of the common to include a new playground, and better toilets (including baby changing room), sports changing rooms, new water play area and a small café with trees to shield the area from the rest of the common.
- More lighting was also requested at the playground and along the paths on the common, and more seating on the common.
- The café at the top of the common could be reworked to include community space.
- A skate park could be created where the existing paddling pool is and facilities for older children nearby. BMX park could be considered at the top of the common.
- Smaller projects that were an outdoor gym and outdoor table tennis tables.

Group 2

The key ideas presented by this group were:

- Redevelopment of the play area at the bottom of the common, including adaptation of the paddling pool
- The provision of a basket ball court (subject to finding somewhere suitable to put it)
- New changing rooms and toilets and redo pitches (levelling and draining)
- A new café by the playground
- A new visitor centre and overhaul of the top café
- Smaller projects were replacing and refurbishing existing playground equipment with table tennis (if larger project not achieved), and reviewing security & safety (e.g. lack of side gate)
- New signs – bringing the common facilities together
- Woodland activities – e.g. maze, wooden trim trail etc.
- Expanding the area of the children's playground

Group 3

- Turning the disused paddling pool into a skate park
- Redevelopment of the playground at the bottom of the common – a bigger playground, changing rooms and perhaps a youth centre. Using the existing buildings as an education centre. Providing more bins.
- Use existing woods and nature for forest school and school parks engagement
- A BMX track or other cycle track near the top of the common
- Developing the top paddling pool into a new water play area
- Research groups to assess needs

Agreeing Key Themes

The meeting reconvened after a break. Councillor Sally Prentice spoke to the meeting and took questions from the floor about the parks programme, investment available and how other groups

have achieved their investment. Sally spoke about the council developing a sports strategy to lever in external funding and looking at how the council might generate extra income in parks.

The meeting then discussed the key themes from the groups. There was a broad agreement that more youth facilities were needed and unanimity about the need to redevelop the playground at the bottom of the common. There was less clear agreement about where to site which facilities and exactly what plans should be taken forward.

There was agreement that one water facility was enough on the common and the unused paddling pool should be redeveloped to provide different provision, but it was not clear whether the lower pool or upper pool should become a water play area, and which should be changed to provide an alternative provision.

It became clear after further discussion that there were two themes for development which were really one large project:

Bottom of the Common: Redevelopment of the playground and buildings and disused paddling pool to a new playground, possible water play or skate park, provide better toilets, changing rooms, a café, along with improvements to the drainage to enable better use of sports pitches.

Top of the Common: Redevelopment of the Paddling Pool to either a skate park or other provision or water play area if bottom pool not used for this purpose, developing the Café to include community and visitor facilities and provision of sensitive facilities in the woodland.

Conclusions and next steps

The meeting agreed that further research and consultation was required. This should include:

- Artists impressions created as a basis for further consultation
- Observing current usage
- Consultations with schools and youth groups
- Understanding the needs of older children
- Consultations at existing events, and fun days

A number of people from the meeting came forward to volunteer to join a working group to explore these ideas further and try to progress the research, consultation and plans.