

FARNHAM PARK COMMITTEE

MINUTES: 29 SEPTEMBER 2014

		Mon 3 February 2014	Wed 19 March 2014	Mon 9 June 2014	Mon 29 Sept 2014
MEETING NUMBER		#1	#2	#3	#4
TIME		18:30 – 20:30	18:30 – 20:30	18:30 – 20:30	18:30 – 20:30
LOCATION		W1T 4QJ	W1T 4QJ	W1T 4QJ	W1T 4QJ
Chairing: John Walmsley JW		YES	YES	YES	YES
Jon Marsh, Independent JM		APOLOGY	NO	YES, PHONE	APOLOGY
Simon Kirkland, Board SK		APOLOGY	YES, PHONE	YES, PHONE	APOLOGY
Fiona Thorley, BSF FT		YES, PHONE	YES, PHONE	YES	NO (Stella attended instead)
Gerry Perez, Board & BBF GP		YES	YES, PHONE	YES, PHONE	YES, BY PHONE
John Boyd, Joint CEO JB		YES	YES	YES	YES
Jenny Fromer, Joint CEO JF		YES	APOLOGY	YES	YES
Will Lintern, National Development Manager WL		YES	YES	YES	YES
Bob Fromer, Secretary BF		YES	YES	YES	YES
GUESTS / ATTENDING SA		NONE	NONE	Stella Ackrell BSF President	Stella Ackrell BY PHONE
Minutes		Bob Fromer	Bob Fromer	Bob Fromer	Bob Fromer

MINUTES – 29 SEPTEMBER 2014

4.1 Opening

a Apologies.

Apologies were received from Simon Kirkland, Jon Marsh and Fiona Thorley, the latter deferring to Stella Ackrell who attended on behalf of the BSF.

b Items for Any Other Business.

There were none.

4.2 Approval of Minutes from the last meeting.

a What items should be omitted from the Minutes of the meeting of 9 June to be published on the intranet?

Decisions were made and agreed on the items to be redacted from the Minutes.

4.3 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting of 9 June not elsewhere on the agenda.

The question of how Farnham Park fits in with the development aspirations of the Federations had been raised at the 9 June meeting, and Gerry Perez, representing the BBF, had asked to reserve the BBF's position until the end of the season. This topic was taken up again during this meeting (see below).

4.4 Development Work at Farnham Park in 2014

a Update on progress and activities carried out by Farnham Park Baseball and Softball Club (formerly Chalfont Phoenix) since taking up residence on site.

A draft report on development activities carried out at Farnham Park (FP) in 2013-14, currently in final proof stage, was reviewed by the meeting. It has been designed as a public-facing report, aimed at South Bucks District Council (SBDC), local media and the communities around Farnham Park as well as at members of the baseball and softball community. SBDC is keen that more local media attention is given to the site.

The report quantifies the number of participants of various kinds that have used FP since it opened in June 2013, lists events and activities that have taken place there and provides photos and quotes from participants and organisers.

A number of suggestions for adding to the report were made by members at the meeting:

- ⤴ GP suggested adding the number of games played at the facility in 2013-14 plus BSUK website and Facebook addresses, plus an invitation to sponsor activity at the facility, advertise there or book pitches.
- ⤴ JW suggested adding FP's address on the report cover as not everyone knows where it is, changing some wording on the cover ("secondary school children"

instead of “13-15 year olds) and showing more players in the cover montage.

The club formerly known as Chalfont Softball Club has taken up residence on site during September 2014 and is now the Farnham Park Softball and Baseball Club (FPSBC). The club will be a development hub in future for all three formats of our sports, working closely with BSUK.

b Development programmes and activities planned for 2015.

JB reported that similar development activities to those shown in the report will be carried out at FP in 2015, but with a focus on the new SEGRO Slowpitch League for teams from the Slough Trading Estate, establishing a Play Ball! League on site and focusing youth programming at 14-year-olds and up.

4.5 Updates – 2014 season

a SBDC Update.

BSUK has enjoyed a good relationship this year with SBDC Trust Manager Mark Young, who has a responsibility to make FP profitable and is bringing a professional approach to the task. Issues have arisen, however, over rubbish, changing and toilet facilities, security, keeping the park in a fit state for all users and SBDC's desire to enhance publicity and promotion for the site.

SBDC would like to make more of our presence on-site, through invitations to key people to attend major events held there and more consistent contact with local media. They are prepared to help us with marketing the site.

b Phase 2 Development.

See 3.6 below.

c Bookings and relationships with other leaseholders on site.

The intention, on the part of both ourselves and SBDC, was to embed our six guaranteed whole-site weekends into the leases of the other clubs on site, but this is apparently not legally possible. So it leaves us back in the situation of having to make the necessary arrangements individually with all or most of the clubs on site for each date.

At this point, JW suggested that a map showing leaseholder areas at Farnham Park would be helpful, and this was produced.

The intention is to write to all the leaseholder clubs and then meet with them in the near future to set arrangements for next season, so we know what we can offer to potential users.

d Maintenance/game-day work on site in 2014.

During the first year of FP's operation, in 2013, teams that used the site were asked to do some game-day maintenance, which was not universally popular. This year, John Lehmann has been on site to do this, which has been generally effective but expensive – not just to pay John, but to pay other helpers as well. However, the feedback on John's work has been positive and we probably do need someone on site to fulfil this role.

4.6 Phase 2 Developments and Ongoing Strategic Use

a Update on the plans for Phase 2 development.

Following the YNBCs in 2013, it was clear that there was a need for a second dedicated baseball field at FP. This has evolved into a plan to create another baseball/softball combination field on the plateau above the current baseball field, but also to create a clubhouse facility in the “bungalow” adjacent to where the new field will go, creating the possibility for crucial revenue streams beyond those available from field hire. The “bungalow” will need significant renovation work to bring this about, but when finished will have a spacious downstairs kitchen that can serve into a bar area or to a back garden facing the new field.

When Phase 2 development at FP is completed, it will have delivered many of the objectives set out in BSUK's Facilities Strategy for 2010-17.

SBDC's Policy Advisory Group (PAG) has approved the Phase 2 development, and there has been no pushback from the Council on the loss of football playing space it will entail. The Plan will go next to the SBDC Cabinet and then the full Council, but while these stages will be more formal they should also be easier to get through. If the project is approved, it should be ready for the 2016 season, and because the first tranche of facilities money from Sport England for the current cycle has to be spent by 31 March 2015, JB has proposed that BSUK move forward to the planning and design stage on an “at-risk” basis (the risk would be fairly small).

The lease that would eventually include all fields plus the “bungalow/clubhouse”, will be around £19,500 per year (as opposed to £10,700 currently).

BSUK does not have enough funds to build the new combination field to full specifications or to carry out renovations on the “bungalow”, so additional funding will need to be found. At this point, we are probably £30,000-£40,000 short for both the field and the clubhouse.

There was some discussion about whether the infield on the new softball field, which could be in the right-field corner of the new baseball field, should be skinned, cut-outs or grass. The consensus was that it should be skinned; although another possibility to be explored is to play baseball and softball on the same field and to locate that field adjacent to the “bungalow/clubhouse”.

Full details of the proposal for Phase 2 at Farnham Park, along with current and planned facility developments in Milton Keynes and Manchester, are set out in a document circulated before the meeting: “Facilities Investment Plan 2014-17”, which has also been circulated to the BSUK Board and to the Finance and Development subcommittees. The document includes costs and time frames for developments in all three locations.

A Project Board consisting of JB, JF, Jon Marsh and Mac Clonan will be constituted to manage Phase 2 developments at FP.

b How do the BBF and BSF Boards feel that FP fits with their development aspirations?

This question was addressed by the BSF at the FPC meeting on 9 June, but the BBF reserved its position. On this occasion, GP stated that the facilities, which this year hosted the NBCs and YNBCs, GBASS weekends, the Little League Qualifiers and some national team practices, were clearly important to the BBF, and they would hope to coordinate GB and youth events in future so all diamonds could be used. But he also argued that the services that come with field hire or that BSUK could provide separately needed to be better defined and needed to be agreed – along with dates for 2015 – as early in the new year as possible.

JB accepted that there had been some issues with service this year, and with broken maintenance equipment, and some misunderstanding over the provision of a mound for the YNBCs, but pointed out that the BBF only confirmed the use of Farnham for the YNBCs at a late stage. There was general agreement that these types of issues can be solved with advance planning and clearer definitions of roles and responsibilities.

GP asked what kind of development work for baseball would be carried out by the new resident club at Farnham Park, which up to now has been only a slowpitch softball club. WL explained that the FPSBC would have a responsibility for developing all three formats. The plan is for the club to enter a team in the BBF competition structure by 2016 and to have an NBL team by around 2020.

One of the issues raised by this kind of club is joint membership of the BBF and BSF, which the Federations will need to consider.

4.7 Bookings and Arrangements

a Review 2014 booking arrangements.

The booking process that was put in place this year made things easier, but according to JB it could still be tightened up. FP operated at around 70% of capacity in 2014, not far off initial projections.

There were no rain-outs, so no revenue was lost on that score, and only one day of a GBASS weekend was badly affected by weather.

b Review actual and projected bookings for 2015.

There should be a similar pattern of bookings in 2015, plus a couple of additional BSUK events and more development programming arising from FPSBC and the SEGRO League.

c Plans for six “all-site” weekends guaranteed for 2015.

See 3.5(c) above. The six “all-site” dates will need to be identified as soon as possible so the necessary arrangements can be made with the other FP leaseholders, and Federation requests also need to be developed and programmed in at an early date.

d Update on services that can be provided to events at Farnham Park.

The services and event support that comes with field hire and/or that can be provided additionally by BSUK will need to be reviewed.

JB told the meeting that we need to get a better handle on event management requirements related to bookings. This year, money had to be thrown at problems as they arose, including at vital maintenance equipment that had been bought second-hand. This kind of expenditure can't continue.

4.8 Financials

a [Review budget v actuals so far in relation to 2014 bookings.](#)

A Budget v Actuals summary through the end of September 2014 was circulated before the meeting. On operating costs to date, there is a deficit of £2,088 as against a projected deficit of £1,200. In addition, £12,500 was spent on site management as against a projection of £12,000 and £7,500 was spent on development at FP as against a projected £10,000. There were some additional costs detailed in the B v A.

b [Update on Capital Spend from Sport England grant.](#)

This is detailed in the document "Facilities Investment Plan 2014-17".

c [Update on Buy and Build List, including portable mounds.](#)

This item was not discussed.

d [Update on additional containers and storage requests at Farnham Park.](#)

There are now two additional containers on site, but these need to be re-organised before a request for storage space from the BSF, GBFL and GB Softball can be met. Phil Masters has submitted a quote for building cages and shelving in one or more containers.

4.9 Review Action List from previous meetings.

Most actions from previous meetings have now been closed. Those still open plus new actions arising from this meeting are shown below.

Relevant documents on the Intranet:

- ⤴ Agenda for meeting of 29 September + Action Points/Decisions from previous meetings.
- ⤴ Minutes from meeting of 9 June.
- ⤴ Farnham Park Budget v Actuals September 2014.
- ⤴ Facilities Investment Plan 2014-17.
- ⤴ Farnham Park Activities Report 2013-14.

It was requested that relevant documents for FPC meetings should be circulated further in advance of meetings than was the case on this occasion.

Date for Next Meeting:

No date has been set, but the next meeting will probably be in early January 2015 to consider booking requests for the 2015 season. FPC members will be notified of a date as soon as possible.