Good evening everyone and welcome.

My name is Peter Dixon and for the present I am the temporary convenor of the incipient Friends of Carlisle Park.

May I welcome on your behalf ANDY SUCH who is the retiring Chair of the Friends of Palewell Common. I will be introducing Andy more formally in a moment.

Although this is not a formal meeting I have some 8 apologies – these are all from people who have expressed an interest in joining us and hope to do so for the 1st Annual General Meeting.

We are a group born in adversity! I am also told that this is not unusual, in fact I have been told quite a lot of things in the last couple of weeks!

There are I believe 3 main reasons why people are here tonight –

There are those who were frankly appalled at the cutting down of trees near to the Carlisle Road entrance,

Others who are concerned about the general condition of the park since the withdrawal of permanent staff, and finally

Those for whom the park being left open for 24hrs a day was a step too far – indeed we need to pay tribute to those who organized and gained signatures for the petition that has now gained us a brief moratorium on this matter. I hope that some who supported that petition will feel able to join us.

It seems that the Council has decided that the best way forward for many of their parks and open spaces, is to encourage the formation of Friends groups, and so for us with this preliminary meeting we can explore a little of that view.

A more formal AGM will take place in July and that meeting will constitute the Friends and elect Officers. This in turn will allow the council to dialogue with users of the park. Be under no illusions, the closing of the park each evening is still only a temporary measure; so without support the Friends will be unable to undertake any surveys on the park – the result being that the park will revert to remaining open. Equally individual dialogue is likely to go unheeded.

You will be pleased to know that the speaker at the AGM will be David Allister the Head of Parks. He will be present to give you the latest information and to answer questions. For the first 5 minutes of the AGM he will act as Chairman until the officers have been elected.

Turning to this evening, after Andy Such has spoken, we will try to have a question and answer session or at least carry over unanswerable questions to the formal AGM in July. I can now confirm that this will be held on Thrsday 4th July – however the pace is yet to be confirmed.

There are 5 copies of the proposed Constitution here, but I can email the document to anyone by request, it is also available for download on our website.

At the end of our meeting tonight, tea and coffee will be available, so please stay and fill in the attendance register; it helps us to keep in touch.

Especially valuable, and to save extra effort, is to have your e-mail address; and you have my assurance that this will always remain confidential. There are also nomination forms for the AGM. They can be brought on the night of the AGM. Please give some thought to subscriptions, they should be minimal, but will allow the committee to book a room for occasional meetings.

Enough from me – please welcome ANDY Such from the Friends of Palewell Common who has come to encourage us and tell us of the work done and achievements made by his Friends Group in South West London.