

Friends of Marple Memorial Park (AGM)
Monday 11th April 2011
Marple Library

Present: Micaela Wood, Bob Wilson, Adrian Ellis, Terry Wood, Jonathan Long, Mark Whittaker.

1.0 Apologies: Patrick O'Herlihy.

1.1 Minutes of the last meeting: Agreed.

2.0 Annual General Meeting

2.1 Chairman's Report

Adrian thanked everyone for their support of the park over the last year and gave a report on the group's achievements during 2010:

- Long-term improvements to the park's main entrance have continued with:
 - Clearing and replanting of the cinema beds.
 - Removal of the log bench to the Breathing Places Area for insect habitats.
 - A new "Welcome to Memorial Park" Carver interpretation panel and notice board has been designed and is due for delivery and installation soon.
 - Replacement of the old waste bin (plus two others in the park).
 - Task day work to the shrub beds near to the entrance.
- Painting of the Bowling Green buildings with materials provided by the council was started - completion is planned for later this year.
- The group attended Marple Carnival with a stall and tombola to raise funds.
- Tree Sculptures, Breathing Places Sculpture, Stocks and Boules Court benches and Jim Heald bench were treated.
- War Memorial "ironmongery" was painted.
- The French Boules Court display panel was replaced after vandalism.
- A French Boules Tournament was held between local groups that was won by Marple Civic Society. Kay Dee Hair & Beauty sponsored the trophy.
- 1,000 Purple Crocus bulbs provided by the Rotary Club and 1,000 provided by the group were planted behind the library with help from the Beaver Scouts. A sign explaining that this was to promote the campaign to vaccinate children in India was also installed.
- The group supported the "Gig in the Park" event as part of the Marple Festival.
- A bench survey report has been prepared to assist in developing plans for refurbishment of the commemorative park benches.
- The group received a runner up prize in the Pride of Marple Awards 2010 Environmental Champion category.
- The park and the tree sculpture also received silver awards in the Civic Society's 2010 Design Awards in Urban Landscape and Public Art categories.
- The group has adopted five of the ornamental flowerbeds and encouraged the Beaver Scouts and Rainbows to adopt two others, receiving a stay of execution against them being grassed over.

- A wreath was laid on Remembrance Day on behalf of the group and the "Red Duster" flag was flown during Merchant Navy Week.
- The group has held a task day every month except for December.
- Pupils from Marple Hall School joined in during a number of task days.
- There has been a significant upturn in volunteers in the last couple of months.
- Christmas lunch was held (in January) at the Hare & Hounds, Mill Brow for the second year running and proved very popular once again.

2.2 Treasurer's Report

The McInnes Partnership has audited the Friends' accounts for the year 1st January to 31st December 2010, and a certified income and expenditure sheet was distributed with the meeting agenda. This is the 6th year the McInnes Partnership has provided this service free of charge and the group are very grateful for this.

Our income during 2010 was £2,098, taking the total money raised since the group began to £25,945 - this doesn't include funding from Stockport Council or Living Spaces for the two play areas or the basketball fence from commuted sums. It is just the money raised directly by the group and passed through our own account.

The highlights in the year have been:

- £1,000 from the District Partnership and £500 from Paul Howard Menswear towards the entrance display panel.
- £313 raised by the tombola at Marple Carnival.
- £170 from Ring o' Bells Quiz Nights.
- £100 from Marple Carnival Committee.

In the year we spent £1,373, taking our total spending on the park to £21,780. Once again, this does not include Play Areas or basketball fence.

The biggest outgoings in the year were:

- £790 on the French Boules display panel.
- £437 on tools.
- £76 on maintenance materials.

At the end of the year we had £4,166 in the bank with £2,140 of that committed to the new notice board and Carver display, leaving a working balance of £2,026.

Since the turn of the year we have received:

- £185 donation from Ian Hilton.
- £57 from Ring o' Bells Quiz Nights
- £600 from Marple Area Committee towards the flowerbeds.

This gives us a current bank balance of £5,008.

We have made a further commitment of £1,537 for plants for the ornamental beds, which leaves a working balance of £1,331 at present.

There is also a delivery charge to pay for the new display panel that will have to be covered by these funds but the value is currently unknown.

2.3 Election of Officials

2.3.1 Chairman

Adrian advised that he was happy to continue acting as Chairman. There were no other candidates and this was agreed by all present.

2.3.2 Treasurer / Minutes Secretary

Mark advised that he was happy to continue as treasurer. There were no other candidates and this was agreed by all present. Mark will also continue to write minutes and letters on behalf of the group.

2.3.3 Secretary / Social Secretary

Micaela advised that she was happy to continue as Secretary and Social Secretary. There were no other candidates and this was agreed by all present.

2.3.5 Committee

In accordance with the requirements of the constitution, the following members were confirmed as committee members:

Adrian Ellis
Patrick O'Herlihy
Bob Wilson
Micaela Wood
Terry Wood
Gill Whittaker
Mark Whittaker

Patrick was unable to attend the AGM but confirmed in advance that he would like to remain on the committee. This was agreed by all present.

With the election of officials completed the AGM was declared closed and the meeting continued with normal business.

3.0 Matters Arising.

3.1 Improvements to the Park Entrance

Carver Commemoration

Mark advised that Shelley Signs have said that the display would be delivered this week but they had not yet confirmed the date.

(Post meeting note: display was delivered to Brabyns Depot Friday 15 April 2011)

Adrian and Bob will arrange for the old notice board to be removed for storage / refurbishment this week. *(Post meeting note: old board now removed.)*

A date of Friday 13th May was provisionally agreed for the installation of the display. *(Post meeting note: a new date now needs to be agreed, as Mark cannot attend 13th).*

Drainage Improvements

Jonathan will endeavour to get the drainage improvements added to the council's work list, and if he is successful it could possibly be done in the next few weeks.

3.2 Ornamental Flowerbeds

Delivery of plants and shrubs

At present Jonathan cannot advise a confirmed delivery date for the plants. He will do so as soon as possible and the group are hoping that they can be delivered before the next task day on 30 April to allow volunteers to plant them.

Funding Progress

£600 has now been received from Marple Area Committee towards the plants.

Beavers and Rainbows have both made applications to Marple Area Committee too but the outcome is not currently known.

Stockport Homes have confirmed that the application made to them for £1,000 and supported by Queen's Court residents will be considered in two to three months time.

Beavers and Rainbow groups' involvement in saving of the flowerbeds was reported in local newspapers recently and may have contributed towards the improved volunteer attendance at the March task day.

Micaela advised that a lady from Marple and Mellor U3A had spoken to her about making a donation towards the beds and she had passed on Mark's contact details.

3.3 Park Benches

Preservatives and Sanding Materials

Jonathan and Adrian confirmed that the council would supply preservatives and sanding materials for refurbishment of the park benches. Terry will advise full details of the preferred preservative that can be obtained from Chelford Farm Suppliers and requested rolls of 60 and 80 grade sanding materials.

Security Allen Key

A security Allen key is needed to remove the slats from some of the benches.
(Post meeting note: Adrian has located one of these and now given it to Bob.)

Daytime Visits by David Lewis Centre Task Group

Terry explained his proposals to bring the special needs group he works with at the David Lewis Centre on field trips to the park to help with the refurbishing of park's benches. Visits would generally be on Tuesdays during the daytime.

Jonathan advised that this would be acceptable providing the work areas were isolated from the general public with suitable barriers, tape and signs and risk assessments (RAs) were properly undertaken and signed. Terry will liaise with Adrian and Bob to ensure that these requirements are satisfied and issue RAs directly or through Mark.

Refurbishment of bench near to main entrance

Terry would like to refurbish one of the benches on the Co-Op side of the main driveway to the park, as this is currently in an unusable condition and is detrimental to the appearance of the main park entrance. A site visit was conducted which confirmed that it is not a "Parks & Recreation" bench. Jonathan and Adrian agreed to investigate who within the council would need to give permission for the refurbishment of this bench to be carried out.

Replacement of bench near Junior Play Area

The family who had previously been in touch about a commemorative bench have now confirmed that they would like to replace the bench between the Park Cottage and the Junior Play area that is past its best.

Mark has sent links to Broxap and Streetmaster web sites for the family to consider what sort of bench they would like and advised them that it would be possible to save the VAT by ordering via the Friends Group and the council. A response is awaited.

3.4 Picnic Benches

There has been further correspondence about the council's preferences and requirements for picnic benches in the park. Gareth at Playground Maintenance would still prefer the Streetmaster benches at a cost of between £500 and £700.

Mark advised that the group are not prepared to pay these kinds of prices when Terry is able to supply softwood picnic benches, of a similar style to the ones already installed in the park, through the David Lewis Centre (DLC) for only £80 each.

Gareth has advised that if the DLC benches are to be used they will need design drawings, specification, installation drawings, a two-year guarantee and availability of spare parts. The DLC will also need to become a council approved supplier.

Terry has spoken to his DLC managers and they have agreed that he can try to satisfy the council's requirements for documentation and have approved a two-year guarantee on the benches. Terry will submit the drawings once they are ready.

A site visit was conducted after the meeting and it was agreed that there was room for two benches on the grassed area inside the infants play area and this will be the first objective if Terry is successful in obtaining approval.

3.4 Treatment of Sculptures and Wooden Features

Patrick made a great job of sanding and treating the infants play area sign during the last task day and also used up a full tin of preservative on the tree sculptures. Terry agreed to obtain another two tins on behalf of the group.

Next items to tackle are the stocks and Breathing Places bird box.

Now that the new financial year is underway Adrian will be able to arrange for the repair and re-installation of the acorn sculpture that was removed from its base.

3.5 Painting of Bowling Green Buildings

It is intended to continue where we left off last year during the April task day if weather permits. The Bowling Club has been advised.

3.6 Task Days

Previous Task Day - 26 March 2011

An excellent turnout with around a dozen volunteers, including a good number of new ones. This enabled lots of work to be completed on the large shrub beds, raking of wind-fallen twigs and branches from the grass and a tidy up of the Sensory Garden.

Several of the new volunteers left their email addresses so that they could be notified about future task days and it is hoped that they will return to help again.

Next Task Day – 30 April 2011

Plans include painting of the bowling green buildings if the weather is ok and planting of the ornamental flowerbeds if the plants and shrubs are delivered in time.

Free parking for the specified vehicles has been requested and the task day email has been sent out. It is possible that attendance will be lower as it is a bank holiday weekend and many volunteers may be away.

3.7 Vision of Marple

Bandstand

The Brass Bands of Marple have responded to the request for their input on a possible project with Marple Civic Society to seek funds for a bandstand in the park. The bands have advised that they are strongly against such a project being undertaken at the present time. Following a review of the detailed response the group agreed to take onboard this feedback and focus efforts on the possible skate park improvements.

Skate Park

Mark asked Jonathan if he would follow up the request for the landscape team to get involved in development of plans and ideas for the skate park now that the end of the financial year had passed and the Playbuilder workload should be diminished.

Jonathan suggested that it might be also worth contacting Cheadle and Marple College for their possible input to this project.

The intention is to get together with the Marple Civic Society (MCS) again towards the end of April or early May to discuss how we can begin moving this project forward. *(Post meeting note: MCS have advised that they are meeting with the Council and Cllr. Sue Ingham to discuss the skate park on Tuesday 19 April and have requested an idea of the costs involved. Mark has provided estimated figures for this purpose.)*

3.8 Park Toilets

The latest response from Cllr. Martin Candler on the closure of the public toilets was received on 7 April and is as follows: "The toilets in the Memorial Park will not be closing in the near future. The council is still working on finding replacements as I described to you earlier. If anything becomes clear on the matter I will let you know."

In view of the ongoing uncertainty about the toilets remaining open long-term the group felt it might be of benefit to write formally to express our concerns about the potential closure. Mark will write a letter to Cllr. Candler and David Brayshay on behalf of the group and also ask other local organisations to confirm their views on this in writing too. *(Post meeting note: letter sent 16 April 2011.)*

3.9 Park Cottage

The bands have now signed the lease and held an open day last Saturday to show the public how the cottage looks now and to display their plans for the improvements.

Work to secure and improve the cottage entrance is expected to start soon.

A fund-raising "Royal Wedding" Cruise on the Bell has been arranged for 29 April.

4.0 Funding

Status of Funds

Covered under Treasurer's Report in section 2.1 this month.

Mark advised that there was one additional item to mention under this topic. An elderly gentleman made contact with him in the park during the February task day and advised that he could not help physically in the park due to arthritis so he wanted to help financially. The gentleman has subsequently arranged a standing order for a regular payment to be made into the Friends' bank account each month.

The group were delighted at this gesture of support, which once again demonstrates how highly local people value their community park.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 Foods and Drink Day – 17 September 2011

Marple Festival organisers have confirmed that we will be able to have a stall at the Food and Drink Day on 17 September, so it was agreed to make this our main tombola fund-raising focus for this year.

5.2 Marple Carnival

It was agreed not to have a stall at Marple Carnival this year, as several members were also now involved with organising the Carnival, which made committing to both activities difficult for them. Mark will now confirm to the Carnival Committee that we will be pleased to provide display material that would have been used on our own stall for display in their charities tent.

5.3 Cleaning of War Memorial

The War Memorial is very green with algae again and Mark has asked Dave Burrows to have a look at this and see if it can be re-cleaned. This was a couple of weeks ago so he will follow it up with Dave again.

5.4 Gardening Gloves

Micaela raised the issue of providing gardening gloves for use during the task days. Mark advised that Gill had recently purchased several pairs of large and medium sizes that had been reduced in price at the Co-Op.

6.0 Date of next Meeting

Monday 9th May 2011 at 6pm in Marple Library.

Future meeting dates in 2011:

09 May
13 June
11 July
08 August
12 September
10 October
14 November
12 December