

Friends of Marple Memorial Park (AGM)
Monday 16th April 2012
Marple Library

Present: Terry Wood, Micaela Wood, Mick Thompson, Lorraine Thompson, Adrian Ellis, Patrick O'Herlihy, Mark Whittaker.

1.0 Apologies: Joyce Reed.

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 2011:

- Improvements to the Park Entrance have continued with:
 - A new welcome notice board dedicated to the late Peter Bardsley, with map of the park, Carver family history and a display case for notices.
 - Reduction to the flooding at the entrance of the park.
- Ornamental Flowerbeds in the park were saved from grassing over. Funding was raised with the support of Marple Area Committee and Stockport Homes.
 - The Rainbows and the Beavers adopted two of the ornamental beds and also received funding to help them from Marple Area Committee.
 - Volunteers have done most of the planting and maintenance.
- A long-term project was started to replace and refurbish park benches with the help of the community to fund them where possible. We are fortunate that via Terry we have access to the David Lewis Centre charity workshop to help with this.

Successes so far include:

- An old concrete bench near to the Junior Play Area replaced with a new commemorative bench funded by a local family.
- Another bench near to the Junior Play Area was adopted by a local family and refurbished as a commemorative bench.
- The McFall family donated £150 for "Mac's Bench" to be refurbished. This money will fund refurbishment of many other benches in the park.
- A second old concrete bench near to the Bowling Green was replaced with a new commemorative bench funded by a local family.
- The Sensory Garden bench was refurbished on a Task Day.
- Marple Business Forum sponsored refurbishment of one of the large cast iron benches near to the Bowling Green. Work was done at the David Lewis Centre workshop and sandblasting done free of charge by local company Marple Blasting based at Wood Farm.
- Marple Senior Citizens Association has provided sponsorship for the remaining two cast iron benches and one of these is underway at the workshop now.

- A piece of Ash timber donated by Myers Tree Care has been turned into a backless bench seat using the old concrete stumps on the driveway into the park. Local volunteer Alan Proctor did most of this work.
- The group have purchased a belt sander and recently refurbished two more benches during task days and plan to do many more in the coming months.
- A picnic bench for the Infants Play Area has been purchased and will be fitted in the near future.
- A project to refurbish and extend the skate park has begun. This is a big challenge and with around £75k of funding needed is going to take considerable time and effort to achieve. The group is working with Marple Civic Society, Marple Hall School, local skaters and SMBC on this project. So far:
 - A consultation process has been completed with skate park users.
 - A design brief was developed and issued to 5 contractors.
 - Bids were received and a shortlist of 2 potential contractors agreed.
 - Further consultation has taken place.
 - A clear funding strategy needs to be developed.
- A new project in collaboration with Marple College to refurbish the flowerbed in front of the library to commemorate the Queens Diamond Jubilee is underway.
 - Plants have been ordered through the council (delivery details awaited).
 - A notice board on the wall of the library has been refurbished and is being used to keep people informed about the project.
 - Fund raising has been going very well but more money is still needed.
 - Grant applications have been submitted to Marple Area Committee and Stockport Homes. Area Committee is expected to make a decision soon and Stockport Homes will decide on 21 May.
 - The council has recently identified that the Jubilee Project needs planning permission. A planning application has been submitted but due to the timescales involved we may need special help from the council and local councillors to achieve it. It must be remembered that we are working to improve a council facility on council land and the council need to help us do it right, not put obstacles in our way.
- The Bowling Green buildings were painted.
- A successful campaign was waged to keep the park toilets open.
- The War Memorial was repaired after being vandalised.
- The group held another French Boules tournament for local community groups.
- The group attended Marple Food and Drink Festival with their Tombola stall.
- Task days have been held every month for the whole year including December and the number of volunteers has increased significantly in this time.
- We are moving to 2 task days per month for the spring and summer seasons.

2.2 Treasurer's Report

Mark advised that the McInnes Partnership has audited the Friends' accounts for the year 1st January to 31st December 2011, and a certified income and expenditure sheet for the year was attached to the agenda. The McInnes Partnership has provided this service free of charge for 7 years, for which we are very grateful.

Income during 2011 was £6,871, taking the total money raised since the group began to £32,816 - this doesn't include the 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 account.

The highlights in the year have been:

- £1,000 from Stockport Homes and £600 from Marple Area Committee to help us save the ornamental flowerbeds.
- £813 from the Kay family & £660 from the Yarwood family for new benches.
- £1,000 from The Marple Website and £600 from the Macnair Trust for the Diamond Jubilee Project.
- £564 from the tombola at the Food and Drink Day.
- £300 from Marple Business Forum, £250 from the Tait family and £150 from the McFall family for refurbishment of benches.
- £512 from Ring o' Bells Quiz Nights.
- £185 donated by Ian Hilton.

In the year we spent £5,049, taking our total spending on the park to £26,828. The biggest outgoings were:

- £2,240 on the Carver display panel and notice board.
- £1,537 on plants for the ornamental flowerbeds.
- £660 on the Yarwood family bench.
- £330 on the Tait family bench plus the Picnic Table for the Infants Play Area.

At the end of the year we had a bank balance of £5,988 with £3,738 of that committed to various projects, giving us a working balance of £2,250.

Since the turn of the year our income has been £2,485 and expenditure £1,488.

Income highlights this year are:

- £500 from Marple Local History Society, £500 from Marple Civic Society, £300 from the College and £250 quiz prize towards the Jubilee Project.
- £800 from Marple Senior Citizens for bench refurbishments.

Income since the last meeting is £40 from F. Martin (photos from the Virtual Tour) and the £800 from Senior Citizens.

Expenditure highlights this year are:

- £813 for Kay family bench.
- £250 for bench refurbishments
- £170 Planning Application for Jubilee Project

In addition to the above, expenditure since the last meeting is £4.65 to Alan Proctor for screws, £40.94 for belt sander, £3.16 for paint scrapers, £12.80 for 20 paint brushes, £1.68 for garden wire and £17.91 for 6 trowels and 3 weed removal tools.

This gives us a bank balance of £6,985 with committed funds of:

- £4,975 on the Diamond Jubilee Project.
- £800 on Bowling Green seat refurbishment.

Leaving a working balance of £2,010 at present.

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 and act as the key contact.

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

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

3.0 Matters Arising.

3.1 Park Benches

Two Benches NW of Bowling Green (No. 4 & 5 on survey)

A contribution of £800 for the refurbishment of these two benches has been received from Marple Senior Citizens Association. Mark has written to thank them.

The first of the benches has been shipped to the David Lewis Centre workshop and the replacement hardwood for both has been ordered at a cost of £364.80 including VAT.

It was agreed that Terry would invoice £250 per bench on completion to give the David Lewis Centre Charity a small profit for the excellent service provided.

Mark will make arrangements for the plaques, which will cost around £40 each.

It was agreed to target the first bench for completion early to mid-May 2012.

Refurbishment of other benches

A belt sander has been purchased from Argos at a cost of £40.94 including delivery. The new sander was used by Patrick and Mick during the end of March task day, when two benches overlooking the Bowling Green were sanded and treated. This was very successful and the benches look excellent.

The Sensory Garden bench that was refurbished a few weeks ago by the group has been subject to graffiti using a felt pen. The backless bench on the driveway fitted by Alan Proctor has also been sprayed with orange paint. Terry re-sanded and re-treated both benches during the 14 April task day and they are both looking good again.

Bob advised that one of the slats on the Sensory bench is loose at one end. Terry will take a look at this after the meeting.

Patrick would like to obtain a cordless screwdriver bit that fits the benches that use the Stainless Steel security fixings. Mark will dig out the contact details of the bench manufacturer so that we can find out the details of the tool needed.

Patrick also suggested removing slats from benches in advance of a task day and storing them in the lock-up so that they were dried out in advance of the task day. This was felt to be a very good idea as the work could be done undercover even if it was raining during the task day itself.

3.2 Picnic Bench made by the David Lewis Centre

Adrian advised that he hoped to install the bench within the next two weeks.
(Post meeting note: The picnic bench is now installed.)

3.3 Diamond Jubilee Project

Costs

As identified last month apart from the addition of £170 for planning permission fee:

Phase 1 – work hoped to complete by the Jubilee Bank Holiday in June: £5,945.
This includes planning fees, landscape works, sculpture, plants and notice board.

Phase 2 – a display panel explaining the project by end of 2012: £880.

Additional Option – a bespoke metal bench depicting achievements and technological changes during 60 years of the Queen’s reign: £1,650.

Costs include 10% contingency allowance.

Funding Status

A cheque for £100 has been received from Marple Business Forum, taking total funding currently available to £4,275.

A grant application has been made to Marple Area Committee and a decision on this is expected soon. A grant application has also been made to Stockport Homes that will be reviewed by a Customer Panel on 19 April. This will be followed by a Community Event at St. Luke’s on 21 May 2012 and we should learn the outcome soon after.

An application has also been made to Marple Carnival Committee asking them to consider the Diamond Jubilee Project for their major project grant this year.

Funding needed:

To secure Phase 1:	£1,670
Phase 2:	£880
Phase 1 and Phase 2:	£2,550
Including optional bench:	£4,200

Progress on Planning Application

Obtaining Planning Permission for this Community Project is proving difficult:

Patrick submitted the original application on 22 March.

On 28 March the planners advised that the application was inadequate, could not be validated and requested detailed drawings and a Design Access Statement.

Mark prepared drawings and DAS that were submitted electronically on 7 April.

Mark then phoned the planning department on 13 April to see if everything was satisfactory and learnt that they had still not processed it due to a backlog of submissions received over the bank holiday.

Mark also had a very disappointing discussion about the project with Planning Officer Suzanne Broomhead that was very unhelpful. Mark asked if there were element of the project that we could proceed with at low risk but responses were so negative that it would be unwise to do so. Ms. Broomhead also advised that there was no evidence that the council support this project being carried out on their land, that they were concerned that the sculpture would be used as a "climbing frame" and that the Parks and Recreation Team would need to carry out a Safety Audit on the design.

The situation is understood to be:

Once our application is accepted there will be a minimum consultation period of 4 weeks. If there are 4 or more objections during the consultation then the application will be referred to Area Committee. If a local councillor calls it up it will also go to Area Committee. Due to the local elections the next Area Committee meeting is not until 6 June 2012, which is after the Jubilee Bank holiday.

If there are no objections then the planners may decide using their delegated powers, which would give a decision in late May (assuming our application is validated soon).

It is therefore clear that the target to complete phase 1 of the project by the Jubilee weekend is no longer achievable and leaves us with a number of options:

- To abandon the project and return funding received.
- To proceed with some or all elements at risk and hope that permission is granted.
- To wait for the planning process to take its course and accept that none of the works will be completed before the Jubilee weekend.

These options were discussed at length and it was decided to wait for the planning process to run its course before proceeding. However, it was also agreed to engage our local councillors and ask them if they could help address the planning issues, so Mark will write to them asking for their help and support.

(Post meeting note: On 16 April the Planning Officers wrote to advise that our application was still inadequate and could not be validated because they needed to know the height of the lectern display panel and the dimensions of the optional bench that were shown in the DAS. This information was submitted to them electronically on 17 April but we are still waiting to learn if the application has been validated.)

Other progress

Bramhall Paving Services, the contractor who will carry out the landscape works, has submitted a Work Method Statement that Jonathan Long says is acceptable.

Mark has reviewed the design with Bramhall Paving and Wayne Chaisty and both are happy with the detail design as submitted for planning approval.

There have been developments today on the order for plants that we thought had been placed at the end of February and a number of emails have been exchanged between Rebecca at the College and Jonathan Long at the council. It appears that the council placed the order late and some of the items on the original quotation are no longer available. It is not clear how much of a problem this will be yet and Mark will speak to Jonathan and Rebecca to find out.

Associated Tasks

Joyce has now planted the square bed to the side of the library with wildflower plugs and wildflower seeds have also been sown.

The paving has been sprayed with weed killer.

(Post meeting note: Gill has ordered 20 Iberis, 20 Aquilegia, 20 Lupins and 20 Lavender medium plugs for planting in the gravel strip in the car park for £20.98. She also has a Clematis to go against the toilet block wall.)

3.4 Infants Play Area Fence

We were joined by "Community Outreach" during our first mid-month task day on Saturday 14 April and they helped us to sand and scrape the Infants Play Area fence. This went very well, the kids worked hard and we got around three quarters of the fence prepared. It is planned to jet-wash the fence during the next couple of task days to ensure it is ready for painting as part of "Marple Spring Clean" on 20 May.

Mark and Patrick met with the Spring Clean organisers on 19 March and it is hoped that significant numbers of people will help during the Spring Clean day.

Mark and Adrian have also met with Gareth Davies of Playground Maintenance and confirmed that he is supportive of us doing this task. Unfortunately Gareth has said that the council cannot afford to pay for the paint, which is disappointing. However, he has offered to help by estimating the quantity of paint required and placing an order with an approved supplier for us. He has also said that he can provide grey primer at no cost. Mark has followed this up with a formal request for Gareth to provide the quantities and costs of supplying the paint so that it can be compared with what Alan the Paint comes up with. Patrick will follow up with Alan to get his prices too.

The proposed colours are pillar-box red over the existing dark red and blue elements of the fence and a creamy yellow similar to the existing colour for the rest. Terry advised that red was a notoriously difficult colour to obtain good coverage with, so this needs to be discussed with Gareth and Alan to see if it would be a problem.

Twenty 2" and 3" paintbrushes have been purchased and plastic milk cartons are being collected to use as paint kettles. Mark's employer has provided a range of PPE including eye protection and gloves that were used by the Community Outreach volunteers and are now available for all future task days.

3.5 Treatment of Sculptures

The Tree Sculpture has been jet-washed and is now ready for treatment. Hopefully this can be done during one of the forthcoming task days in April or May.

Adrian advised that the loose beechnut ground sculpture would be re-secured at the same time as the Picnic Bench is installed. *(Post meeting note: now completed.)*

3.6 Wildflowers for Breathing Places Area

Joyce and Gill completed sowing of the County Lane mix and the Annual Selection of seeds in the Reading Circle bed behind the library during the end of March task day.

Unfortunately Joyce is not well and could not attend the meeting to report progress but Bob advised that the seedlings are starting to show already and everyone is looking forward to a colourful display of wildflowers in the near future.

3.7 Skate Park

A community consultation led by Skater Lewis Abbott and Community Parks Officer Richard Booker took place in Marple Library and on the Skate Park on 22 March 2012.

The big challenge remains to find a way to obtain around £75,000 of funding to enable the project to move forward. Unfortunately, due to the recent demands of the Diamond Jubilee Project, there has been no time to focus on how to do this yet.

3.8 Park Cottage

The "Grand Trolley Dash" Raffle organised by Marple Bands raised £1,380 towards the Band Room Project. There is no news on the sale of the bands' land behind the Edge.

3.9 Task Days

Previous Task Days

Saturday 31 March & 14 April 2012

Lots of good work done during the last two task days including Wildflowers planted and seeds sown, ornamental beds weeded, two benches refurbished, tree sculpture jet-washed, infants play area fence prepared for painting, graffiti removed from Sensory Garden bench and driveway bench and Council Offices beds tidied.

Next Task Days – 28 April and 12 May 2012

It is hoped to focus on getting the Infants Play Area fence ready for painting before the Marple Spring Clean but there will be plenty of other tasks too, including treating sculptures, refurbishing benches, weeding and planting.

Mark will send out the parking request for specified vehicles and the task day emails.

Future Task Day Dates for 2012

28 April; 12 May; 20 May (Marple Spring Clean) 26 May; 9 June; 30 June; 14 July; 28 July; 11 August; 25 August; 8 September; 29 September; 27 October; 24 November; 29 December.

4.0 Funding - Status of Funds

Refer to Treasurer's Report earlier in these minutes.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 Puddle at main entrance

The council have installed a new drainage soak-away at the main entrance to the park and as far as it goes this is working well. Unfortunately part of the path does not fall

to the drain and a smaller but unsightly puddle is still forming when it rains. Adrian will mention this to Jonathan to see if anything can be done about it.

Bob also advised that he had tried to raise the new drainage grid to check on cleaning it out in the future and it would not open. Adrian will mention this too.

5.2 Notice Board

The manufacturer's representative has visited the park with Mark to take a look at the leaking display case in the notice board at the main entrance. He advised that he would investigate replacing the door seal, which appears to no longer be sealing the case at the top on one side. Water is lying on top of the door and Mark believes that the seal was keeping it out of the case up until the end of December but since then it has been damaged by frost. A response is still awaited from the supplier.

5.3 Scout Hut

Micaela has spoken to her son Richard, who is involved with the Scouts, about them painting their hut and would still like to pursue this. *(Post meeting note: Micaela also spoke to some Scout Leaders in the park after the meeting and they suggested writing to Mike Spreckley to ask if this would be possible.)*

6.0 Date of next Meeting

In view of the number of task days scheduled during the next few months when it would be possible to discuss projects informally, it was agreed that the next scheduled meeting in the library would be held on:

Monday 9 July 2012 at 6pm in Marple Library.

Future meeting dates booked in 2012:

9 July, 13 August, 10 September, 8 October, 12 November, 10 December.