

Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting

Monday 20th August 2007

Marple Library

Present: Dave Burrows (Acting Chair), Bill Ardern, Chris Armitt, Peter Bardsley, Robert Wilson, Tony Donovan, Mark Whittaker.

1.0 Apologies: Micaela Wood, Rebecca Nedeljkovic, Jay Havoleana.

2.0 Minutes of the Last Meeting:

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

3.0 Matters Arising.

3.1 BBC Breathing Places Reading Area

Tree Work

Rebecca has advised that the tree work is now scheduled to start the first week in September. The delays are frustrating but this is now understood to be a firm date.

Landscape Work

The contractor will start as soon as the tree work is completed.

Sculpture

Andrew Frost has scheduled some time during December.

Interpretation Board

Rebecca has obtained a quotation of £915 from Armourseal for an interpretation board to match the existing ones. This confirms that our budget provision is adequate. The artwork and ordering of the board will be done later in the project.

Bird & Bat Boxes

Mark will check with Jay if she has had any success in trying to contact the Bat Conservation Trust or the RSPB High Peak Group to see if they would be able to come to a meeting to give advice on how best to encourage bats and birds to use the woodland area.

Hedge Packs

Scout leader Lisa Bintliff has ordered eight hedgerow packs from the Tree for All scheme for the Breathing Places perimeter and has confirmed that the Beavers Group will plant them. Delivery is due mid-November and it has been provisionally agreed to tie the planting in with the November Task Day. The area will need to be prepared in advance of the planting exercise.

Lisa has also asked the Scout Group leaders if they would like to take on the planting of a hedgerow along the perimeter near to the cinema and a response is awaited from them.

3.2 Teen Rotator

Gareth from Playground Maintenance will be meeting the contractor on site tomorrow and should then be able to provide a firm date by email.

(Post meeting note: Gareth has advised that a provisional start date of w/c 3 September is expected, subject to the weather.)

Posters have been added to the notice boards and the Teen Shelter explaining what will be going on.

3.3 Basketball Court

As part of the normal planning process neighbours of the park have been given 24 days to make observations about the proposals to erect a fence around two sides of the basketball court. A target date of 26 September has been set for a decision to be made on the application.

The replacement chain net has been fitted and we have one spare.

3.4 Beech Tree Sculpture

The main sculpture is now completed and Andrew Frost's invoice for £2,000 has been paid. Andrew is due to return during September to complete the ground sculptures.

Bob Wilson had done a good job of treating the sculpture and it has now received the recommended five coats of Danish Oil. Bob will speak to Andrew to ascertain the recommended maintenance regime and frequency of re-oiling when he returns to the park.

A photo-shoot was held with Councillor Shan Alexander last week and a press release published by Rebecca about the success of the sculpture.

Mark passed round a design for the plaque to be placed on one of the book covers, which was approved by those present. A price will now be obtained for this from the Trophy Store who made the plaques fitted to the Coronation Bench last year.

3.5 Lock 17 Flowerbed

Wayne Chaisty has said that he plans to install the replica lock gates on 7 September. Dave advised that the remaining landscaping and stonework would be completed by the end of September.

Mark will prepare a poster explaining that the display is soon to be installed and Dave will get copies laminated and put up near the site.

Mark & Dave will agree the orientation of the display with Cllr. Alexander on Saturday 25 August after the flag raising ceremony. *(Post meeting note: It has been agreed that the display will only be partially planted up by the Parks and Recreation Team so that a joint Task Day can be held by the Friends of the Park and Marple Locks Heritage Society on Saturday 29 September.)*

3.6 Replica Memorial Stone

Rebecca has obtained a price of £525.25 including VAT from a Monumental Mason for the replica stone and placed an order through the council. This means we will not have to pay the VAT and the actual cost to the Friends will be £447.

Mark passed around a copy of the design. This has been approved subject to the colour of the granite to be used being viewed and agreed. Mark will visit the supplier to do this once samples are available.

Tony Donovan (Facilities Manager) advised that he could probably arrange for the installation to be added to the maintenance and repair work to be carried out in the park in the near future.

3.7 Infants Play Area

A second meeting was held with Paul Battye from Playdale on 3 August. Paul presented a design scheme with options and variations based on the Friends brief to him a month earlier. The option preferred by the Friends, which includes a new playhouse, is priced at just under £39,000. Paul also provided an additional price of £2,614 for replacement of the three existing benches and play table.

Councillor Alexander, who attended the meeting with Playdale, is now reviewing budgets with David Brayshay to ascertain how much the council can contribute towards the funding needed. Cllr. Alexander expects to be able to advise the Friends how much is available before the end of August but it is unlikely that the council will be able to provide the full amount.

It is hoped that any shortfall after the council's contribution will be small enough to give the Friends a realistic opportunity to address the balance by funding raising and seeking donations and help from local organisations. Until amounts are known it is difficult to formulate a strategy or set targets, so efforts will continue on a piecemeal basis in the meantime.

Brabyns Preparatory School have confirmed that they would like to help raise funds for the play area equipment by holding a sponsored "bounce" after they return to school in September. The school will get in touch when the new term starts and they have asked if someone could come into the school to tell them about our plans.

Mark has already spoken generally with Micaela about visiting local schools and is hopeful that she will be prepared to do this. Bob agreed that he would be happy to support Micaela on visits to local schools.

3.8 Woodland Trust "Tree for All"

The application to the Woodland Trust for a £100 grant has been successful and a cheque should be received at the end of September.

Adrian has asked Jacky Budd to make the trees available for the 27 October Task Day, when the Tree Planting Event will be held.

Adrian and Mark have also reviewed suitable locations in the park and agreed on the area running alongside Garth Road and the wildlife area near to the cinema.

Publicity for the event now needs to get underway and Mark has asked the Woodland Trust for an information pack and permission to use their graphics on posters.

3.9 Task Days

Last Task Day – 28 July

Soiling up of the War Memorial beds was completed and the weeds removed again. Pruning of the shrubs around the infants play area was carried out and the YOT also pruned back the ivy at the rear of the toilet block.

It was highlighted to Dave Burrows that the council tools available for pruning were particularly poor and severely hampered the amount of work that could be done. A discussion took place about making a pool of decent quality tools available and Dave asked Bob to produce a list of what would be required for him to consider.

One of the participants in the Task Day was fined £30 because he exceeded the 2-hour car-parking limit without realising. Mark asked Dave to investigate if there was any way the Friends could be given free parking during task days when they were carrying out voluntary work.

Next Task Day – 25 August

The next task day will concentrate on the War Memorial area, the ornamental flowerbeds and the main pathways, as they need to look their best for the International Merchant Navy Day ceremony on 2nd September.

There will also be a flag raising ceremony at 11am with local councillors to celebrate the park's 2007/8 Green Flag Award.

Mark also asked Dave and Bob to review proposals for removing the stubborn weeds and planting up of the War Memorial beds to ensure that they are at their best for Remembrance Day in November.

3.10 Fundraising Activities

The next fundraising event will be the quiz night at the Ring o' Bells on Wednesday 22 August. Any funds received will be allocated to the Infants Play Area. There will be a second quiz on 26 September for the same cause.

Mark has enquired if the Mellor Dig would permit the Friends to run a tombola over the Open Days weekend but has been advised that their policy does not allow this kind of activity.

The organisers of Marple Food Festival on 22 September have advised that the Friends of the Park can have a stall and Mark is presently waiting for Craig Wright to confirm how much space can be made available for the Friends and the Iron Bridge Restoration Group together.

3.11 Notice Boards

The Friends have requested that the notice board at the main entrance be refurbished with new Perspex, new backing board and paint touch up at a cost of £50. Dave advised that the Playground Maintenance Dept. has scheduled the work for two weeks time.

3.12 Park Cottage Repairs

The Friends thanked Tony Donovan, Facilities Manager for coming to the meeting to talk about repairs to the former Park Keeper's Cottage.

Tony and Bob advised that there had been a break-in to the cottage recently, causing further damage to the flat roof and damage to the boarding on the doorway. Fortunately the outcome is not as serious as it might have been and Tony advised that the repairs to the flat roof and improvements to the security of the building would be undertaken very soon, although he could not yet confirm the date and would do so by email.

A discussion took place about the options available for putting the cottage into proper use again instead of allowing it to rot and decline. A park office that could be made available to local groups for meetings and activities was one proposal and the inclusion of a disabled toilet was also suggested.

Tony said that he might be able to contribute £10,000 towards the restoration of the cottage if a suitable use could be identified. Dave Burrows will discuss the current situation with David Brayshay again to ascertain the status of the 'Drop in Centre' proposals and the possibility of matching the funds that Tony may be able to offer for restoring it for proper use.

As well as the repairs to the cottage Tony will also be organising other maintenance and repair activities within the park and will conduct a walk-round with Dave tomorrow to identify painting and other tasks that needs to be done. *(Post Meeting Note: The Friends are keen that repainting of the Infants Play Area Fence is included on the schedule of work).*

3.13 Child Protection Policy / CRB Checks

Mark has followed up this matter with Iain Bate but still not received a reply.

3.14 T Shirts / Sweatshirts

The company suggested by Bill Arden and the Carnival Committee has provided a superb service and since the last meeting sample logos have been provided and 10 polo shirts ordered and delivered in time for the photo-shoot last week. The Friends would be delighted to recommend Elaine at Leisure Designs in High Lane, to anyone requiring clothing with embroidered logos.

3.14 Status of Funds

Current bank balance:	£10,169	
Committed Funds:	£9,248	
Breathing Places		£6,945
Tree Sculpture		£1,358
Memorial Stone & plaques		£500
Notice board repairs		£50
Raised for Play Area		£395
Working balance:	£921	

4.0 Monthly Park Report

Bob has been on holiday for the last fortnight, so there is little to report in the park. Now that he has returned work will continue on cutting back of shrubs, pruning and weeding.

There has been a problem with the Bowling Green mower and the break-in at the cottage mentioned already.

Bob has also been invited to speak at other local events as a spin-off from his guided walks.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 Risk Assessment Training

Peter Bardsley has now attended the risk assessment training with Stockport Council.

5.2 Merchant Navy Day Ceremony

The event will begin at 2pm on Sunday 2 September with music from Hawk Green / Marple Bands and the service will commence at 2.30pm. After being raised at the ceremony the flag will be flown for the rest of the week.

Bob will attend the service to provide the flag and the key to the flagpole and help with operation of the raising mechanism if necessary.

6.0 Date of next Meeting

Monday 24 September 2007 at 6:30 in Marple Library.