

**Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting
Monday 13th July 2015
Marple Library**

Present: Joyce Reed, Micaela Wood, Terry Wood, Chris Neilson, Pauline Neilson, Anne Frazer, Cllr. Geoff Abell (part time), Mark Whittaker.

1.0 Apologies: Lorraine Thompson, Mick Thompson, Adrian Ellis, Patrick O’Herlihy, Bob Wilson.

2.0 Minutes of the last meeting: Agreed.

3.0 Matters Arising

3.1 Anti-Social Behaviour

Installation of CCTV Camera

The camera installation was finally completed on 14 May but it has been installed in a different place to that agreed during site meetings and specified in the quote. Mark has attended a demo of the system and the cycle of the camera was agreed and set.

The quality of images is very good, with excellent range and coverage, apart from the issue over the incorrect location.

It is not really clear why the installers deviated from the agreed position, which was specified to give the best possible view of the bowling pavilion. In the installed position the camera does not cover as much of this area as intended.

Judgement on the position has been reserved until after the pavilion is fenced off – if not for this we would be asking for it to be moved now but the fencing may alter the dynamics of activity in the area so it will be reviewed after that has been installed. The council has stated that the camera will be moved at no cost if necessary.

We are still waiting for signs to be installed. Four locations have been agreed, a design draft commented on and the council placed the order on 10 July. We really need to get them installed before the start of the school holidays.

(Post meeting note: discussion with the bowlers reveals that when calling the Duty Team number they have received unhelpful responses, which has quickly put them off using it. This will be raised at the next Working Group meeting.)

Anti-Social Behaviour Logs

ASB logs submitted since the May meeting and distributed with the agenda include:

- Ongoing football and ASB around Bowling Green & Pavilion. *
- Beer bottles smashed throughout the park and causing hazards.
- Ongoing collection of drug packets and paraphernalia.
- Picnic table in Infants Play Area vandalised.
- Couple having sex under bowling pavilion canopy.
- Excrement smeared on toilet and walls in gents’ toilets.

* Activity at the bowling green does seem to have declined in the last few weeks. Following installation of the Keep-off sign and the camera Police have been moving people off and made arrests too, which has probably had the biggest impact of all.

The person from Marple Bands has not responded to our correspondence since the initial enquiry about concerns over drug use in the park. We therefore assume that they don’t wish to pursue this further at the present time.

Following a second-hand report of a gent being abused on the bowling green we've managed to track the person concerned down and Mark will meet with him and the Community Safety Officer in the park on Tuesday 14 July.

The abuse of one of our volunteers at the last task day on Saturday 11 July has been reported to the Police, CSU, Greenspace Team and the Dog Warden.

Crime Prevention Report:

Fencing of the Bowling Green (suggested by the report)

Current indications are that a budget of £15,000+ VAT would be needed.

The group's view is that fencing of the green is highly undesirable and we would rather any money that can be raised be put towards something positive. Greenspace has also responded very negatively to the suggestion. It can be discussed further when the effectiveness of the camera is reviewed in September.

Police have suggested that even a low fence may help as a barrier around the green.

Bowling Club

Mark has spoken to Bowling Club Secretary Ken Else about bowlers being more proactive in complaining to councillors and police about ASB, keeping logs etc. Ken has undertaken to discuss this with the club members.

Fencing / gating of the WWI Bowling Pavilion

Three quotes have been received and Mark and Jane have met with the lowest priced contractor (£3,150 +VAT) to discuss requirements in more detail. This went well and hopefully the council has placed an order by now but confirmation is awaited.

The group agreed to allocate £150 from available funding to make up the difference between the quoted price and the grant of £3,000 received from East INPT.

Covenants and Bylaws

We've now been waiting 8 months for guidance from the legal team on whether a better football provision can be made in the park. Cllr Shan Alexander has recently got involved to try to expedite this but as yet we still have no response from legal.

The CSU have proposed to engage SAVY to consult with young park users about what they want and what they would use but the group is not prepared to be involved in discussions about this until the legal issues of covenants are clarified by the council.

Greenspace has responded negatively about a new football / multi-sport provision in the park citing that there is no budget to maintain a new facility even if it could be built. The group therefore feel that a better option may be to try to upgrade the existing basketball court, turning it into a multi-sport facility with a better surface.

Anything proposed will not take priority over the current project to upgrade the skatepark and is therefore likely to be much longer term.

3.2 Roundabout in Infants Play Area

The petition to encourage the council to replace the roundabout has been very successful. With 211 signatures it is the 2nd highest electronic only Stockport Council ePetition and the 4th highest including paper petitions listed on the site. Geoff confirmed that he and other councillors have received many complaints too.

The petition was submitted at the last Area Committee Meeting in June and councillors responded very positively, especially Cllr Candler who was particularly supportive.

At this month's AC Meeting on 15 July the committee will consider a report allocating £10,000 of commuted sums to the park. If approved there will be a total of £18,288 of commuted sums available for play improvements in the park.

The Greenspace Team is proposing to use the money to replace the roundabout and to upgrade much of the safe surface in the Infants Play Area and the Junior Play Area with synthetic carpet. The safe surface is in need of upgrading as it is failing and repeated repairs are causing trip hazards in the Infants Play Area. The Junior Play Area surface dates from 2005 when the facility was built and is also becoming hazardous and easily damaged. The group is fully supportive of these proposals.

(Post meeting note: the report was reviewed at the 15 July AC but councillors had questions that could not be answered. They requested an Officer attend the next meeting to explain the allocations and how it was proposed to spend the money.)

3.3 Julian Wadden Treasure Hunt

The Treasure Hunt organised by Julian Wadden on Saturday 30 May had good weather and was well attended. It was a great success, not only because it raised £402 towards the skatepark project, it was also very positively received and enjoyed by young families who took part and was a real "feel good" event.

The group thanked Jonathan Hyde from JW, plus Diane Jackson and Anne Frazer who also helped to organise the event. We hope that we'll be able repeat this or do similar events again. An Easter Egg hunt and "Gruffalo Picnic" were suggested as possibilities.

Anne also mentioned that the Mini-Rangers events held in Etherow Park are really popular and wondered if it would be possible to do something similar in our park.

Joyce highlighted that our own wildlife reading circle hasn't been used much since the launch with storyteller Shonaleigh. This was a great event organised by the library but they no longer seem to use it any more.

3.4 Park Benches

General Bench Maintenance

Patrick has refitted the slat on the bench near to the library after Terry repaired it.

Rob has done some repairs to the vandalised picnic bench in the Play Area. Terry has also done some work on it during the last task day but plans to do more.

Patrick treated a good number of benches during the last task day.

Town Centre Benches

Now that some volunteers have completed power-tools training a risk assessment proposing the use of mains sanders with a petrol generator to avoid trailing cables has been submitted to Greenspace. We now await their approval or comments on this.

3.5 Treatment of Sculptures & Wooden Features

Work has now started with the apple and pear treated by Patrick last Saturday.

3.6 Commemorative Plaques

No change: We've been waiting since September 2014 for the Greenspace Team to draft a report on the commemorative plaques for submission to Area Committee. They have advised, "This will be done when they have capacity within the team".

3.7 Park Buildings

Gents' Toilets

The flimsiness of the pipe spreaders installed in the gents toilets have been mentioned again to Greenspace but they have not said if they intend to do anything about it.

There are still issues with the toilet flushing system in that now it is working too often and causing the toilet to flood. This has been reported to Greenspace several times.

(Post meeting note: as of 20 July the toilets are currently closed due to this issue.)

Bowling Pavilion

Two windows were boarded up following forced entry to the Mess Room a couple of months ago and these have not yet had a permanent repair. They are not very secure and we have asked for the permanent repair to be chased up.

Bowlers Hut

One of the metal security screens fell off recently when it was opened by the bowlers. It's been temporarily re-fixed but cannot be used until a proper repair is carried out.

3.8 Skatepark Development Project

Latest Skatepark Project News

The minutes of the last Skatepark Meeting were distributed with the agenda.

As everyone knows by now, the Lafarge-Tarmac application was unsuccessful. We plan to continue fund-raising locally while we look for suitable grant schemes that we can apply to. Six small grant applications have been made recently to:

The Vernon Building Society, Gascoigne-Halman, Persimmons, Nationwide Building Society, Stockport Homes and Skipton Building Society.

Mark met with three Asda HO representatives in the park on 15 May and this went very well. They seemed supportive and provided the contact details for the store manager and Community Champion. Since then there has been no response to emails or phone calls to the store. Mark has now followed this up with the HO contacts and hopefully we will hear from the store soon.

Geoff highlighted that the Asda HO Team had also met with local councillors and other groups around the same time. Agreement has been reached over nighttime parking and one of the signs (the one we objected to) has been removed.

A local lady who works as a fundraiser and is currently on maternity leave has met with Mark and Di and offered to try and see if she can give any advice and guidance.

Mark has had discussions with Greenspace managers and asked them to consider supporting the project over and above the £22,000 previously set aside from formal sports commuted sums by undertaking to match any money that we can raise up to £50,000. The response was very positive but this would need to be formalised and agreed before we could promote our own fundraising on this basis. If and when we can do this it should be a very strong incentive to help raise further funds.

Planning permission expires in April 2018 and would be a realistic as a backstop target for ongoing fundraising.

Fundraising

Recent fundraising successes include £124.40 at Marple Carnival and £202.94 at the Locks Festival. The latter includes £25 from the sale of the BMX donated by Recon Cycles. Lewis Abbott's "Beard-Off" and Steve Abbott's silhouettes at these two events seemed to go well but the money from these has still to come in.

Current status of fundraising is:

Community Funds:	£24,101*
Commuted Sums:	£22,000
Total:	£44,101
To go:	£53,899

* £2,500 from Forever Manchester will be lost in December 2015 unless we have managed to raise the balance we need, which is looking unlikely at present.

Food and Drink Day – Saturday 19 September 2015

Marple Business Forum has confirmed donation of a free stall.

The tombola letter has been prepared for Micaela to approach local shops for support.

Terry will look at making a "Wheel of Fortune" device to give us something new.

We also have the opportunity to attend the Marple Cricket Club Family Fun Day tied in with their Beer Festival on Sunday 20 September. However, this was discussed and it was felt that it would probably be too much for our volunteers with it being only one day after the Food and Drink Festival.

Art Exhibition at Marple Library

Joyce has proposed holding an art exhibition at the library to raise funds for the Skatepark. She has sounded out the Society of Marple Artists and spoken to library staff and it seems that we could have it for the full month of September.

It was agreed to go ahead and book this. Joyce will continue discussions with SMA and Steve Abbott. Mark will approach Lewis Abbott and Arthur Procter about including their photography and is considering doing something with historic glass slides too.

3.9 World War I Centenary Commemorations

Timeline Commemoration

Nine men have been added to the display since our last meeting in May: Geoffrey Hamilton-Bagshawe, John Eustace, Arthur Rhodes, William Ward, Oswald Carver, Edmund Young, Joe Ardern, Charles Slater and Arthur Hayes.

3.8 Task Days

Last Task Days – 16, 30 May, 13, 27 June & 11 July 2015

Five task days have been held since the last meeting, including the one run in parallel to the Treasure Hunt. Volunteers have achieved a huge amount of work including maintenance of flowerbeds, shrub beds and woodland, planting of flowerbeds, litter picking, bench repairs and maintenance and training in the use of power-tools.

Next Task Days – 25 July and 15 August 2015

More of the same will be undertaken. Parking has been arranged for the July dates but not the August ones yet. Mark will send out the task day emails when due.

Saturday Task Days scheduled for 2015

Approved: 25 July 2015. **Submitted:** 12 & 26 September, 17 & 31 October, 14 & 28 November 2015. **To register:** 12 & 26 December 2015.

Ad-hoc Daily Task Days

Daily Task Days are now approved on the council's system until 31 December 2015 for gardening tasks, painting and treatment of benches and sculptures.

An ad-hoc task day was carried out on 2 July working in the woodland behind the library and trimming hedges with Rob.

Risk Assessments / Training

11 volunteers have attended the previous risk assessment training.

Mark, Patrick and Bernard have attended the new Team Leader training and Gill, Mick and Bob are booked to do it on Saturday 1 August 2015.

Chris is down as a reserve for the above date if there are spaces but may have to do it later. Micaela would also like to do it if there are further sessions arranged.

Mark, Patrick and Bernard have also attended Power-Tools training on petrol driven lawn mower, hedge trimmers, blowers and strimmers.

We can now consider purchase of equipment to give the best advantage from this training: probably a strimmer or hedge trimmers. We already have a blower.

The new Risk Assessment process is not yet live on the council web site. We'll continue using our existing ones until it's made available to us and can then begin a progressive migration to the new system and processes.

4.0 Funding - Status of Funds

The balance on latest bank statement dated 22 June is £25,072.67.

Income since last meeting includes:

£402.00	Treasure Hunt.
£240.00	Kevin Dowling (book sales).
£17.51	Easy Fundraising.
£18.29	Collected in park.
£3.62	Local Giving.
£124.40	Marple Carnival.
£202.94	Marple Locks Festival.

Expenditure since last meeting includes:

£182.50	Public Liability Insurance.
£36.19	Plants, compost etc.
£21.26	Sweets for Guess the Sweets and Splat the Rat.
£3.96	Growing pots.

Committed funds in account are: Skate Park Fund £21,601, Pavilion Fencing £3,150, Flowerbeds £24 and WWI Display £167, leaving a working balance of £238.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 Sports / Fitness Training Equipment

Anne suggested a new project to look at the possibility of providing fitness equipment at different locations within the park to create an outdoor training circuit or fitness trail with challenges / target times etc.

She feels that as well as providing new facilities for a different group of users that are not well catered for in the park at present, it may also indirectly improve antisocial behaviour by encouraging more adults into the park at a wider range of times.

The group did make a bid to provide fitness equipment in the park a few years ago but at that time we didn't manage to secure any of the funds that were available within the borough for that particular opportunity.

It was agreed that this would be a desirable project to do but there were concerns that it may conflict with ongoing fundraising efforts for the skatepark if started now.

Anne is hoping that we could avoid such conflict by engaging directly with the people who would benefit from this facility to raise the funds. For example, there's a large contingent of Park Runners who use Brabyns Park who may be keen enough to have this kind of equipment that they would get involved in raising money for it.

It was agreed that Anne should develop the idea further, speak to people who may be able to help and assess whether it's viable to pursue this at the present time.

5.2 Waste Bins

The bins designated for removal have now all been taken out and the ones being replaced have also been done, apart from the one at the Skatepark. This may now be replaced by adding a double bin in place of the other one nearby. New ones have also been added at Garth Road and near the Bowling Green as planned.

5.3 Nettles at Park Entrance

Micaela asked if the wildlife pathway through the nettles at the main entrance could be widened to give better access. *(Post meeting note: this has now been done.)*

5.4 Pure Innovations

Anne advised that Pure Innovations does work in Etherow Park with disabled people and wondered if we would have work for them too. It was agreed that we could probably keep them busy if they were interested in doing some task days in the park.

5.5 Next Meeting

Next meeting will be Monday 10 August 2015 at 6pm in Marple Library.

Meeting dates scheduled for 2015 (library booked):

10 August, 14 September, 12 October, 9 November and 14 December 2015.