

## **Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting**

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2006**

**1.0 Present:** Dave Burrows (Chair), Micaela Wood, Jay Havoleana, Robert Wilson, Peter Bardsley, Chris Armit, Bill Ardern, PCSO Ian McDonald, Lesley Wright (PCT), Kay Blair (YOT), Mark Whittaker.

**Apologies:** Sue Caldicott (Marple Library).

### **2.0 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted and approved.

### **3.0 Matters Arising.**

#### **3.1 Anti Social Behaviour**

The issues of anti-social behaviour in the park and library were discussed at length. Kay Blair from the Youth Offending Team and PCSO Ian McDonald explained the history and background to some of the problems that were being experienced and identified the measures that are currently being taken to combat them. They also explained some of the future proposals and expectations. It was not felt appropriate to minute these discussions in detail but it was clear that the YOT Team and the police are trying hard to resolve these issues.

It was agreed that Kay Blair and Bob Wilson would investigate the possibility of a local youth serving a community service order to work in the park with Bob.

Bob Wilson highlighted several malicious acts that have occurred in the park, such as deliberate placing of broken glass so that it was likely to harm users of the skate park. The group were extremely concerned at this and it was emphasised that all such incidents must be reported to the police.

Ian McDonald mentioned "Mosquito" ultrasonic devices as a possible solution to groups of youths gathering in certain areas of the park. Mark will try to obtain information regarding costs and usage of these.

Lesley Wright from the Primary Care Trust introduced herself to the group and briefly explained that her role was to work with local people to address health issues and to help maintain a healthy environment. There are many different aspects to this and it was agreed that Lesley would give a presentation to the group about the Primary Care Trust's activities at the next meeting.

### **3.2 Marple Locks Flower Bed.**

Dave Burrows advised that Parks & Maintenance had said that they cannot make suitable steel/hardwood locks structures themselves and were seeking prices from external contractors. Mark asked Dave if they could also get a price from Wayne Chaisty of Ironwood, who had done such an excellent job on the Coronation Bench. After receipt of prices the Group will consider whether the display should be rebuilt in the park or moved to Oldknow gardens alongside lock 13.

### **3.3 Brabyns Park Friends Group**

Dave Burrows advised that Jackie Collins, one of the people trying to get the Friends of Brabyns Park off the ground, is interested in the possible amalgamation with our group but their next meeting is not until January 2007. It was agreed that the Friends of Memorial Park AGM due in January would be postponed until either February or March, after the Brabyns meeting had taken place.

### **3.4 Removal of old Flag Pole**

Since the last meeting Dave Myers has visited the park with the intention of removing the old flagpole but it was discovered that the pole contained a live electric cable, so the attempt had to be abandoned. Dave Burrows is currently seeking a price for disconnection of the cable and will also obtain one for removing the pole to give us a second option, if it is affordable.

### **3.5 Repairs and handrails to War Memorial**

Repairs to the memorial and installation of new handrails were completed in good time for the Remembrance Day Service. Mark advised that he received several favourable comments about them after the service on Sunday and commended Dave and his team on the work that had been done.

### **3.6 Restoration of Marple Hall Sundial**

Dave Burrows advised that restoration of the Marple Hall sundial has been completed.

### **3.7 Task Days.**

Next task day is Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November starting at 10.30 am. One of the new interpretation signs will be installed during the task day.

The following dates are scheduled for future task days:  
10:30 Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December

### **3.8 Coronation Bench**

Mark Whittaker advised that fitting of the Coronation Bench plaques had now been completed, bringing the project to a conclusion. Mark thanked Bob Wilson for arranging for the extra mounting holes to be drilled for the plaques.

Bob commented that the bench has so far been well used, particularly in the summer when a group of mothers were using it as a picnic area with young children playing on blankets. It is also well used by students during the lunchtime.

### **3.9 Oldknow Memorial Plaque**

Dave Burrows advised that he had asked the Landscape Team for suggestions and costs for a possible external housing for the Oldknow Plaque. He also suggested that housing it inside in the library was another option that could possibly be considered.

### **3.10 Breathing Places**

Dave Burrows, Bob Wilson, Micaela Wood and Mark Whittaker attended a hastily arranged meeting with Linda Paton of the Library Service on 24<sup>th</sup> October to discuss making a bid for funds from the Big Lottery via the BBC campaign for "Breathing Places". It was decided that despite the limited time available an attempt would be made to submit a bid by the 13<sup>th</sup> December deadline.

The proposed project is to create a reading and sitting area within the wooded area behind the library and to develop the biodiversity and wildlife habitats within the area.

A second meeting is to be held tomorrow to review some provisional designs completed by a Council Landscape Officer and to consider the way forward. The plans will also be reviewed during the task day on Saturday and the owners of adjacent properties will be consulted.

## **4 Monthly Park Report**

Bob Wilson reported that a group of students from Marple & Cheadle College studying horticulture had been working with the Parks staff recently. This had gone well and they are due to return again in 2 weeks time.

The Health Walks are continuing to prove popular with up to 12 people taking part.

Clearing up of glass etc., see anti-social behaviour, has been occupying a significant portion of the Parks Team's time.

## **5.0 Any Other Business**

### **5.1 Park Keeper's Cottage**

Mark Whittaker advised that he had been in touch with David Brayshay for an update on the status of plans for the former Park-Keeper's cottage and had received the following advice in a phone call today:

Finding a solution to the problems is now the responsibility of the Council's Finance and Property Services Division, who are considering four options:

**1 - Private Sale** – the problems with this are the legal covenants and restrictions, which are strict and clear. Loss of control of the building is also a potential problem and the price would be depressed due to the lack of access to the property and the amount of investment needed.

**2 - To let the property** – Pure Innovations and Treetops Nursery have considered the property and declined; so another partnership needs to be found. The council considers that a high revenue stream may not be achievable and the location as a business may not be financially viable. Letting is likely to mean that the council would have to pay for the refurbishment.

**3 - Bring back into Council use** – Possibly as a drop in centre for mobile workers, a tourist information point, a base for Community Support Officers etc. Refurbishment costs would again be an issue. Estimates / surveys suggest a budget price in the region of £20,000 would be needed to bring the property back to a habitable state.

**4 – "Envelope & Secure" it** – basically to batten down the hatches and leave it empty for the foreseeable future. This may be the preferred option if the choice is made purely on financial grounds. The council are aware that this would be very unpopular in the eyes of local groups and politicians.

Through the Marple Website forum Mark is aware of an apparent interest in the cottage from an existing and well-respected local business. David Brayshay is also aware of this potential interest but says that following initial contact the party concerned has not yet spoken directly to him about their plans.

Mark agreed to try and ascertain if the interest still exists and to see if he could initiate contact between the two parties if it does.

## **5.2 Use of Children's Play Area equipment by students**

Jay Havoleana expressed concern at the use of the junior playground equipment by students at lunchtimes, sometimes in a particularly aggressive manner as if they were trying to break it. Jay felt that the age restrictions for the equipment should be more rigorously enforced by the Parks Team, or by the police if necessary.

Bob Wilson advised that he has on occasion asked them to stop and they have cooperated but he could not be there to monitor continuously. The equipment is inspected each day and there have not been any problems but Dave Burrows and Bob agreed to discuss this matter further after the meeting.

## **6.0 Date of next Meeting.**

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December at 6:30 in Marple Library.