

Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting

Monday 9th October 2006

1.0 Present: Dave Burrows (Chair), Michaela Wood, Jay Havoleana, Bob Wilson, Peter Bardsley, Chris Armit, Bill Ardern, Mark Whittaker, Sue Caldicott (part time).

Apologies: Sue Clarke, Peter Clarke.

2.0 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted and approved.

3.0 Matters Arising.

3.1 Resignation of Chairman & Secretary

Mark Whittaker advised that Peter and Sue Clarke had formally tendered their resignations as Chairman and Secretary respectively due to the demands placed upon them in their new role as landlords of the Ring o' Bells. To give the group time to reorganise this is with effect from the next AGM, or earlier if replacements can be found.

Dave Burrows confirmed that he would continue to chair the meetings at least until the AGM and Mark agreed to act as secretary.

The group agreed that Peter and Mark would continue as joint signatories on the Friends' account until the AGM in January, when new arrangements would have to be made.

Mark suggested that due to the diminishing number of people involved in the group there might be advantages in joining with the newly proposed Friends of Brabyns Park as a "Friends of Marple Parks" Group. Dave Burrows to investigate the feasibility and practicalities of doing this and if there was any interest from the organisers of the Brabyns Group.

3.2 Marple Locks Flower Bed.

Dave Burrows has requested a price from Parks & Maintenance for making stronger steel/hardwood locks structures for the display. After receipt of this the Group to consider whether the display should be rebuilt in the park or moved to Oldknow garden alongside lock 13.

3.3 Removal of old Flag Pole

It was understood that Myers Treecare were going to remove the old flag pole when the large tree trunk was removed on the entrance road but this did not happen. Mark Whittaker to get in touch with Dave Myers to establish if there is still an opportunity for the pole to be removed.

3.4 Restoration of Marple Hall Sundial

Dave Burrows advised that funding was now available for the restoration of the sundial, and also for repairs to the wall of the old bridge over the filled-in canal arm near the cinema. The work on both is expected to be complete by March next year.

3.5 Task Days.

Next task day is Thursday 12th October starting at 10.30 am. This has been advertised in the notice board and it is hoped that the weather will allow work on preparing bedding and planting by volunteers.

The following dates are also scheduled for future task days:

10:30 Saturday 18th November (bulbs have been ordered).

10:30 Thursday 7th December

3.6 Coronation Bench

Mark Whittaker advised that three prices had been obtained from engravers for the two Coronation Bench plaques ranging from £163 to £200. They had been ordered from the lowest of these, The Trophy Store Ltd of Bredbury, and the completed plaques were handed round for viewing. They now need to be fitted and Bob Wilson agreed to try and arrange for Playground Maintenance to drill two extra holes in the bench needed for the oval plaque to a template provided by Mark, who would then fit them when this was done.

Mark also advised that the monitoring form required as part of the grant process had been submitted to the council and acknowledged by Richard Booker of Community Services.

3.7 Possible New Projects

Michaela Wood and Jay Havoleana carried out a survey of visitors to the park during several days last week using forms provided by Bob Wilson. Some of the suggestions included more seats overlooking the Bowling Green and better lighting at the Skateboard Park. These were discussed and will be considered further after investigation by Dave Burrows and Bob Wilson.

The possibility of housing the Oldknow Memorial Plaque in the park was also discussed further and Dave Burrows agreed to investigate if the council had resources available to design a suitable housing structure.

The Toddlers' Play Area has recently been vandalised and the playhouse structure burnt to the ground. Dave Burrows advised that insurance details were being checked and he would investigate if there were any funds available for replacement, or if there was any possibility of proposed longer-term replacement being brought forward.

Jay Havoleana highlighted the current BBC campaign for "Breathing Spaces" and handed round copies of the leaflets about this obtained from the library. Bob Wilson to review if this would be appropriate for Memorial Park. [Post meeting note: The deadline for applications is 13 December 2006, so there is very little time for a bid to be put together.]

3.8 Toilet Open Times

Chris Armitt raised the regular topic of keeping the public toilets open later, especially during the summer months. Michaela and Jay added that several people mentioned this during their survey last week. It is also understood to be an issue that the Local Councillors have asked to be investigated. Dave Burrows to ascertain if there has been any movement on this with SDS who are responsible for opening and closing the toilets.

4 Monthly Park Report

Bob Wilson reported that the main task is preparing the flowerbeds for spring bedding and soiling up to improve the structure. Work has been delayed by the recent vandalism in the park but the beds should be ready for planting on Thursday (Task Day) and the target is to have them looking their best for Remembrance Day.

Dave Burrows also reported that the War Memorial had been partially undermined by water eroding the soil away and repairs were necessary before new railings could be fitted. The good news was that funding for repairs and new rails have been identified and the work targeted for completion before Remembrance Day. It was acknowledged that this timescale might be optimistic and it was important that the memorial is not left looking like a building site during the services to be held there.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 Anti-social Problems and Vandalism

Sue Caldicott, Head Librarian of Marple Library, joined the group to discuss recent developments regarding anti-social behaviour and vandalism at the library and in the park. Sue described some of the problems that have been escalating in recent months, including groups of youths using abusive language to staff and intimidation of visitors using the entrance to the library, throwing of books from the second floor balcony and spitting at staff. There have also been two plate glass windows broken with bricks and several failed attempts to break others by kicking and hitting them with bottles. Staff of the library have even been subjected to youths exposing themselves.

In addition to the problems immediately in and around the library Bob Wilson reported details of the vandalism and intimidation that has been

taking place in the children's play area, culminating in the recent arson attack on the playground equipment.

Other issues identified including underage drinking in the park and selling of drink from cars in the car park. The group agreed that the situation was totally unsatisfactory. Dave Burrows requested that Sue Caldicott email him the details of the incidents so that he could report them at the next Neighbourhood Police Unit Meeting. It was also agreed that Sue would invite representatives from the Police and the Youth Offenders Team to the next Friends meeting to discuss these issues further.

5.2 Flag Raising Ceremony.

Michaela Wood expressed disappointment that although the press took pictures of the whole group during the green flag raising ceremony the one used in the paper only featured the Mayor and Mayoress, giving the impression that there was no one else there!

6.0 Date of next Meeting.

Monday 13th November at 6:30 in Marple Library.