

Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting (AGM)
Monday 16th April 2007
Marple Library

Present: Dave Burrows (Acting Chair), Jay Havoleana, Robert Wilson, Chris Armitt, Peter Bardsley, Micaela Wood, Richard Booker, Cllr. Andrew Bispham, Rebecca Nedeljkovic, Mark Whittaker.

1.0 Apologies: Adrian Ellis, Bill Ardern.

2.0 Minutes of the Last Meeting:

The minutes of the last meeting & AGM were accepted and approved.

3.0 Matters Arising.

3.1 Task Days

3.1.1 Last Task Day

There was a good turn out for the last task day on Saturday 24th March. Tasks achieved included reinstating approx 50% of the rockery stones to the Memorial flowerbeds, covering the flowerbed next to the beech tree stump with wood chippings and clearing and tidying the hedge around the Bowling Green.

3.1.2 Future Task Days

The next Task Day is on Saturday 28th April. If another good turn out can be achieved it is hoped to complete the reinstatement of the rockery stones and arrange them ready for planting. There are also a number of other lighter-weight tasks to complete.

There are several very large stones that are not manhandle-able and Dave agreed to arrange for these to be transported and set in place with the tractor before the Task Day.

Dave advised that Brian Pendlebury had booked the YOT to attend the Task Days from 30th June onwards.

It was agreed that the Friends would be given access to inspect the park cottage during the Task Day on 28th April.

3.1.3 Advertising of Task Days

Chris advised that the Carnival Committee did have an A-Frame that they no longer used and the Friends could have it. Micaela will take charge of this and see if it can be used to help publicise the Task Days.

Richard Booker has again provided laminated posters advertising the April Task Day and Micaela and Jay will distribute around the usual outlets.

A schedule of the Task Days for the rest of the year can also be added to the new notice board.

3.2 Teen Rotator

Dave advised that a price is still awaited for the installation of the Teen Rotator. This should be available before the next meeting.

3.3 Beech Tree Sculpture

Mark submitted an application for a Stockport Council Voluntary Arts Grant in March. This has been successful and an award of £1,000 has been confirmed. In addition, Brian Nash confirmed last week that the Marple District Centre Partnership would donate a further £1,000. Cheques for both of these contributions are expected within the next week or two.

With Marple Area Committee's Kick Start grant of £1,000 this means that £3,000 in total has now been raised towards the tree sculpture. This is sufficiently close to the target of £3,358 that the project can go ahead whilst the Friends seek to raise the small balance.

A condition of the Arts Grant is that we need to consult with local children regarding the design. With the guidance of Richard Booker Mark has developed a consultation sheet that can be included in the newsletter, made available in the library and distributed to local schools. Mark will also add it to the Marple Website. It asks the children to name the owl, vote for other creatures to be included in the main trunk sculpture and submit designs for the ground sculptures.

Richard will arrange for a consultation pack to be delivered to the 7 local primary schools. Bob Wilson and Peter Bardsley will follow this up with the schools if the response is not as good as hoped for.

Richard will also arrange for a 'drop off' box to be situated in the library.

A target of end May was set for completion of the consultation process.

The possibility of timing the work so that it coincides with either the Carnival or the Locks Festival was considered. Chris Armitt felt that the area might be too crowded during the Carnival, especially as the scaffolding around the Council Offices may still be in place. Mark will therefore discuss this opportunity with the MLHS for the Locks Festival.

(Post meeting note: Dave Burrows has managed to secure the £358 needed to finalise the fundraising for this project.)

3.4 "Lock 17" Flowerbed

Mark advised that the 'Stockport Fund' application was not successful. The reasons given were over-subscription and prioritisation, rather than any particular weakness in the application.

Mark has discussed alternative funding options with Marple Locks Heritage Society and an application for an Area Committee "Kick Start" Grant has been submitted by the Society that should be considered by the committee on 25th April. Following this we should be able to formulate a strategy to raise any remaining funds required in partnership with the Society. A Green Space Development Grant is one option that could be pursued.

3.4 Infants Play Area

Rebecca Nedeljkovic gave the group feedback from her initial investigations into the options available for a new Infants Play Area:

Playground Maintenance are not keen on the idea to replace the two training seats with ordinary swings but Rebecca advised that if the Friends are determined to do this they could probably be swayed. It was agreed that replacement of only one of the two swings might be a viable option to consider further.

The guidance on new benches is that they must be all-metal construction. Rebecca will provide a range of options for the Friends to consider.

One of the most significant costs in any scheme is the replacement of the bark-pit in the former paddling pool with 'wet pour'. This will cost in the region of £20,000.

Rebecca provided examples of possible new equipment including a Net Pyramid at £7,620 and two different Multi-activity items at £14,500 and £17,045 respectively. All prices are for supply and fit. Additional 'Springer' seats would cost around £700 each.

Rebecca agreed to supply the Friends with more details via web site links and catalogue information. The group can then choose a range of items for developing into schemes, which could then be used in consultation with park users to make a final selection.

Sources of funding were discussed and it was concluded that 'Playful Ideas' was probably not suitable. Rebecca passed over a draft schedule of possible sources for the group to consider. Richard will also be able to give advice on the suitability of sources such as Landfill. These are current coordinated via the Green Space Forum but this is due to change in the near future. Marple does qualify due to being within 10 miles of Tenements Lane at Adswold, although the Biffa web site says it does not.

Councillor Bispham advised that he has received a number of emails and enquiries from parents keen to see new equipment installed in the Play Area.

3.5 New Notice Board

The new notice board near the Infants Play Area was installed during the last Task Day. Micaela has added a notice about the Friends' meetings and Bob has one about his guided walk. A schedule of Task Days and details of the next one needs to be added plus info about the consultation.

Mark asked Dave to provide him and Micaela with a key each.

3.6 Council Offices

The contractors have been experiencing difficulties and it is not certain when work will be completed. It was due to finish before Carnival Day but it is possible work will overrun. Dave Burrows will investigate further and report back.

3.7 Free Picnic Bench

The bench has not been picked up from Peter Bardsley's home yet. Dave agreed to expedite this.

3.8 Newsletter

Mark passed around a draft copy of the newsletter, which was well received. There are a few amendments needed to the tree sculpture consultation and Jay passed over a Carnival article that Mark will try to squeeze in. It will then be passed to Brian Nash, who has kindly agreed to arrange for 1,000 copies.

3.9 Woodland Trust "Tree for All"

Discussion took place about the Woodland Trust "Tree for All" scheme. This is an opportunity to seek up to £100 of funding for a tree-planting event during the winter of 2007/8. The grant could cover the purchase of trees, planting materials and publicity costs for a community tree-planting event in the park.

Bob Wilson will investigate what trees could be purchased within the scheme's guideline for around £100 and where in the park it might be suitable to plant them. The group can then decide if we wish to go ahead at the next meeting. Micaela suggested tying the event to an anniversary such as the 100th year of Marple Scouting.

If we want to proceed, the first stage will be to fix a date and register our event. Applications must be submitted by 30th April, 31st July or 31st October and the grant be spent by 31st March 2008.

4.0 Monthly Park Report

- The Bowling Green is now open.
- Bob will be leading a guided walk from Top Lock to the Aqueduct on Monday 7th May and asked for as much publicity as possible.
- Bob also advised that Peter Clarke had approached him with a view to doing 3 Sundays leading similar walks for MLHS.
- There was a need for more bins in strategic locations in the park. This was discussed at length with no clear resolution and needs to be considered further, including how they could be funded.
- The missing double-yellow lines were also raised again and Bob will try to get the lining team to complete them when they are expected in the area in the near future.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 Outstanding actions

The flagpole and one old lamppost have now been removed but there is another old lamppost remaining that also needs removing. Dave Burrows will chase this up.

The flat roof repair to the park cottage is still outstanding. Dave and Bob will chase this up.

5.2 Recreation Ground Trees

Cllr. Bispham advised that complaints had been received about a large number of the Chestnut trees in the Recreation Ground that appear to be diseased and dying. Rebecca agreed to ask the Tree Inspector to investigate what was wrong with them. Cllr. Bispham asked if the details could be reported to the Area Committee.

5.3 Weeding along fence adjoining canal

Jay highlighted that there was a problem with weeds and undergrowth around the bulbs planted in front of the fence installed during the Task Day in May 2004. This can be added to the activities for future Task Days.

5.4 Stall at Carnival & Locks Festival

Mark advised that due to his own commitments with the Marple Website and the Iron Bridge Project he would not be able to put together or man a stall for the Friends at the Carnival or the Locks Festival. Richard Booker will be able to help out with display boards and presentation materials if anyone wished to take it on and Mark asked the other members to consider doing this. A single table display could probably be squeezed into the Marple Website tent if the weather is not suitable for it to be fully uncovered.

5.5 Vandalism to Interpretation Board

Mark advised that an 'educated' vandal had taken it upon themselves to correct a couple of minor grammatical errors on the new canals & locks interpretation board near the entrance from Lock 10 and asked if the Parks Team could try cleaning it off with a non-abrasive type cleaner.

The board has also been attacked with a knife or similar object but has withstood this reasonably well. There is probably nothing that can be done about this at the present time, as the amount of damage does not currently warrant replacement of the transparent covering.

5.6 Available Funds

Mark advised that this year's fundraising has continued to progress well and since the last meeting:

- Marple Local History Society have donated £25 for Mark & Peter's presentation to them in March.
- The two Ring o' Bells Quiz nights in March raised £167.
- Mark's colleagues at work have donated a further £62.
- £1,000 has been received from Marple Area Committee for the Tree Sculpture.

The current bank balance is nearly £2,000, although with funds earmarked for the Tree Sculpture and match funding for the Breathing Places bid there is a working balance of approximately £450. The remaining funds for the Tree Sculpture are expected to arrive within the next couple of weeks.

5.7 Basketball Court

Mark has been contacted by Patrick O'Herlihy, chair of the District Centre Partnership, about the possibility of improvements to the basketball court and an enquiry about installing a second set of goalposts to create a 5-a-side pitch in the park.

The additional goalposts will not be possible due to the park's covenants and restrictions but the group would be keen to undertake improvements to the basketball court if ways to fund them can be found.

(Post meeting note: After the meeting members of the group visited the court with Rebecca and a discussion took place with the youngsters using it about what they would like. The discussion confirmed Patrick's suggestions:

- *Fencing to stop the ball being continually lost down the hill sloping towards the canal. Possibly needed on two sides only.*
- *A new surface, as the existing one is in very poor condition.*
- *New nets for the basketball hoops made of chain, so that they would last much longer than the string versions.*

The opportunity was also taken to ask the youngsters about installing the Teen Rotator on the area just below the basketball court and they responded positively to this.

Rebecca will investigate the pricing options for fencing and establish the cost of resurfacing the court so that the funding requirements can be discussed with Patrick.

Any possible work to the court needs to be considered in conjunction with the proposals to install the Teen Rotator because a barrier and ramp between this area and the basketball court are identified as part of that project. A coordinated approach will need to be developed.)

5.8 Pot hole on entrance road

Jay advised that she had received complaints from some of the elderly folk using the Senior Citizens' Hall about the large pothole on the road near the hall's entrance. Dave Burrows and Bob Wilson will ask the pothole team if they can help, even though it is not on the main highway. If not an alternative solution will have to be found.

7.0 Date of next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 21st May 2007 at 6:30 in Marple Library.

7.1 Reminders for next meeting

- Next Green Space Development Grant deadline is 11th May 2007.
- Refurbishment of notice board at entrance to park.
- Purchase of chain nets for basketball hoops.
- Distribution of newsletter.