

Friends of Marple Memorial Park AGM
Monday 13th April 2015
Marple Library

Present: Joyce Reed, Micaela Wood, Mick Thompson, Terry Wood, Lorraine Thompson, Bob Wilson, Patrick O'Herlihy, Adrian Ellis, Mark Whittaker.

1.0 Apologies: Patrick O'Herlihy attend part time due to other commitments.

1.1 Minutes of the last meeting: Agreed.

2.0 Annual General Meeting

2.1 Chairman's Report for 2014

Adrian reported the successes and achievements since the last AGM:

The Skatepark Development Project has made considerable progress over the last year, with a great effort from everyone to make it a success. We're now in the hands of the planners, the Derbyshire Environmental Trust and Lafarge-Tarmac LCF.

- With help from many other groups and organisations we've raised nearly £23,000 of community match funding towards the project.
- The council has set aside £22,000 of commuted sums.
- A Design Competition tender was held and a contractor selected.
- Extensive consultation took place to ensure the design is what users want.
- A planning application was submitted in March.
- A grant application for £62,000 was submitted to the DET in March too.

The group has undertaken several projects to commemorate the First World War:

- Two new WWI silhouette artwork signs have been fitted at the front and rear entrances. The metalwork and laser cutting for these were provided free of charge by Advanced Engineering Techniques of Sheffield and was arranged by Marple resident Alan Burton, who works for C Brown & Sons (Steel) Ltd.
- A WW1 Timeline Display has been started on the railings in front of Hollins House. This will grow over the next 4 years to highlight the impact of the First World War on the Marple Community as it happened 100 years ago. This has been funded by a Stockport Council 2014 grant for £300.
- A series of six guided walks led by Andy Cook were organised that showed local people where many of the soldiers killed during WWI lived. These raised £400 towards the Poppy Appeal. We hope to do more with Andy later this year too.
- A flagpole has been repaired and WWI commemorative flags purchased.

A total of 20 regular and ad-hoc Task Days were held in the park during 2014.

- The main focus of the task days has been the ongoing maintenance of the flowerbeds and shrub beds throughout the park. We've also undertaken more work to the woodland and wildlife areas of the park compared to previous years.
- We held a special task day with young people from the Challenge Network to paint the Infants Play Area fence and they did a great job. We hope they will help us in 2015 too.

- A total of 11 volunteers have now attended the council risk assessment course.
- We are waiting for details of training to be provided by SMBC/SSK that will allow us to use a range of small power tools in the park.

Our programme of bench maintenance has continued to ensure that all benches in the park are in the best possible condition. We've also improved the seating provision in the park this year with:

- A second picnic bench added to the Infants Play Area.
- A new commemorative bench in the Infants Play Area paid for by a local family.
- A hard surface installed under the bench between the play areas.

We've had prolonged discussions about refurbishing the town centre benches and are now waiting for small power tools training so that we can proceed with a trial bench.

18 months of monitoring ASB in the park and campaigning to have CCTV cameras installed has at last come to fruition with the approval of a PTZ camera to monitor the Bowling Green area and buildings to be funded by Marple Area Committee.

- A 153-page dossier of ASB logs was produced as supporting evidence.
- We've recently started work on a project to fence off the bowling pavilion and have received a £3,000 grant towards this from the East INPT.

Other achievements include:

- "Midnight" the tree sculpture has been injected with resins to stabilise it and hopefully prolong its life. Funded largely by a Stockport Homes grant of £1,000.
- An outside tap has been fitted to make watering easier.
- A special flag to commemorate 10 years of the group was raised in the park with local councillors, who have given us great support since we began.
- We looked closely at becoming a registered charity but eventually decide against this.
- The council has been encouraged to provide extra bins at the skatepark and bowling green.
- Work has recently started on a Children's Treasure Hunt with estate agent Julian Wadden.

The group attended Marple Food and Drink Festival with their Tombola stall and Marple Carnival with stalls for the skate park consultation.

The Tombola has now raised a total of £5,249 for the Park, so a big thank-you to Micaela and Terry for organising these.

We've attended several social events including:

- An excellent Christmas meal at the Ring o' Bells.
- First Task Day meal at the Navigation.
- Two evenings with the Rotary Club in Hayfield.
- Had champagne and canapés at the launch of Julian Wadden.

Adrian thanked everyone for their efforts and finished his report with the hope that we can continue this success in 2015, and fingers crossed on the Skatepark Application!

2.2 Treasurer's Report 2014

The McInnes Partnership has audited our accounts for the year 1 January to 31 December 2014. An income and expenditure sheet was distributed with the agenda.

The McInnes Partnership has now provided this service free of charge for 11 years.

Our income during 2014 was £8,136 taking the total money raised since the group began to £60,903 - this doesn't include the funding from Stockport Council or Living Spaces for the two play areas or the basketball fence from commuted sums. It is just the money raised directly by the group and passed through our account.

The fund-raising highlights in the year were:

£1,020 raised at local events, £1,000 donated by The Marple Website, £1,000 Stockport Homes Grant, £850 share of Christmas Collections with Rotary, £620 Marple Area Committee, £500 Romiley and Marple Lions, £380 Charity Bike Ride, £328 Ring o' Bells Quiz Nights, £294 donated through local giving, £263 Artist Sarah Morley, £250 donated by Mrs Fielding, £232 collected in the park, £200 donated by Marple Tavern & Woodstock Pizza, £200 donation from Marple Senior Citizens, donations of £100 each from the Brass Bands of Marple, Marple Business Forum, Marple Health, Marple Mini / Youth Rugby, MESS, Recon Cycles and the Challenge Network. We've also had many smaller donations of less than £100 totalling £300.

With regard to Local Giving, last year they advised that we needed to become a registered charity because our income was greater than £5,000. Mark has written to explain that we decided not to become a charity and that our income was over £5,000 again this year. They have acknowledged that our situation is unusual and we await a final reply. (*Post meeting note: Local Giving has approved our membership renewal.*)

In the year we spent £2,943, taking total spending on the park to £41,607.

The biggest outgoings were:

- £1,100 on preservation of the Tree Sculpture.
- £470 on tools and maintenance materials.
- £409 on Jubilee Project repairs.
- £183 on public liability insurance (which has increased due to income).
- £139 on flagpole repairs and flags.
- £99 on the WWI timeline display project.
- £72 on our local giving fee (compared to income of £294).

At the end of the year we had a bank balance of £19,296 with £18,734 of that committed to various projects, giving us a working balance of £563.

Commitments were: £18,579 on the skatepark, and £155 plants and seeds.

Since the turn of the year our income has been £5,750 and expenditure £730.

This takes our total income to £66,653 and our "spends" to £42,336.

Income highlights in 2015 so far are:

- £3,000 from East INPT for fencing and gating of pavilion.
- £793 share of collections at the Co-Op with Marple & Goyt Valley Rotary.
- £600 from Marple & District WI.
- £500 from The Marple Website banner advertising.
- £300 from the 2014 WWI Grant.
- £195 from Di Jackson's birthday donations.
- £183 Ring o' Bells Quiz Nights.
- £79 Local Giving.
- £50 from the Thompson family donation.

- £50 from Murson Cars.

Expenditure highlights this year so far are:

- £480 on the silhouette project materials and consumables.
- £90 on trees, plants and seeds.
- £64 on tools and materials.
- £52 on the Skatepark grant application.
- £33 on WWI Timeline Display.
- £10 on flags.

Expenditure since the last meeting (included in the above) is:

£8.28 on dividers for skatepark application.
 £26.60 for recorded delivery of skatepark application.
 £9.90 for fencing pliers and staples.
 £3.78 on roses.
 £21.89 on 11 fruit trees.
 £5.99 on a Rhododendron.
 £3.00 on Cif Stainless Steel cleaner.
 £30.26 on consumables.
 £2.85 on WD 40.

Our bank balance on the last statement for 20 March 2015 was £20,604 and is estimated to now be £24,317.

Funds in the bank for the skatepark totals £20,428 (plus £2,500 held by Forever Manchester). Other committed funds are £65 on plants, £167 on the WWI display and £3,000 on fencing / gates to the pavilion.

This leaves a current working balance of £657.

2.3 Election of Officials

2.3.1 Chairman

Adrian advised that he was happy to continue acting as Chairman. There were no other candidates and this was agreed by all present

2.3.2 Treasurer / Minutes Secretary

Mark advised that he was happy to continue as treasurer. There were no other candidates and this was agreed by all present. Mark will also continue to write minutes and letters on behalf of the group and act as the key contact.

2.3.3 Secretary / Social Secretary

Micaela advised that she was happy to continue as Secretary and Social Secretary. There were no other candidates and this was agreed by all present.

2.3.5 Committee

In accordance with the requirements of the constitution, the following members were confirmed as committee members:

Adrian Ellis, Patrick O'Herlihy, Bob Wilson, Micaela Wood, Terry Wood, Gill Whittaker and Mark Whittaker.

With the election of officials completed the AGM was declared closed and the meeting continued with normal business.

3.0 Matters Arising

3.1 Anti-Social Behaviour

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

- Football continues to be played on the Bowling Green; damage to the green is increasing and there has been more damage to roof tiles on buildings.
- Offensive graffiti was placed on the WWI Timeline Display.
- Graffiti to benches.
- Asda sign removed by vandals and thrown into bushes in park.
- Flowerbeds trampled on and low level arson (setting fire to bins).
- Glass in Library front door smashed.
- Attacks on Scout Hut and Senior Citizens' Hall with windows broken.

In addition to the above, on Saturday evening windows were knocked in on the Bowling Pavilion building and entry gained to the Mess Room with work equipment and personal items belonging to the park attendant being removed. This was reported to the Control Centre who arranged temporary repairs and reported to Police.

Installation of CCTV Camera

The council placed the order on 23 March with installation due to be completed within 4 weeks, which means that it should be completed this week. Mark has chased this up to ask for confirmation. (*Post meeting note: we were advised that installation would be completed by this week, or latest next week: 24 April 2015. This and a subsequent promise were not achieved and we are now assured it will be by 8 May 2015.*)

Tree Removal

Myers Tree Care removed the tree to schedule and free of charge on 20 March 2015. The group thanked David Myers for his ongoing support of the group.

Crime Prevention Report:

Fencing of the Bowling Green

Comments on the recommendation to fence the bowling green have been received from the Veteran's Bowling Club.

In summary, their view is that the CCTV installation is a positive step forward and time needs to be allowed for it to be evaluated before further measures are taken.

In the event that CCTV doesn't resolve the situation then they are supportive of a fence being installed around the green, subject to certain provisos that we think are reasonable. They have also stressed that they cannot help with funding of this.

Greenspace has also been asked for their views and this is their response:

"The cost of the fencing will likely never be recuperated from savings through non-repair of vandalism i.e. the value of any necessary repairs is minuscule in comparison to the outlay for the fencing. Cost savings are further dented by the increased maintenance costs associated with the fence/gates (e.g. annual inspection). The loss of access to what is a public open space will bring with it complaints from legitimate users and those who may wish to use the green for acceptable informal recreation activities other than bowls.

Furthermore any assessment of the cost benefit of installing a fence around a green that requires funds from the Council either as capital or ongoing revenue should consider all greens and not simply the one at Marple Memorial Park. As such given the level of anti-social behaviour / apparent damage the green at MMP would be considered low priority in comparison to those at other sites.”

It is the group's view that fencing of the green is undesirable and would rather any money that can be raised be put towards something positive like a better football provision in the park. We also agree with the Bowlers that time needs to be allowed to establish the effectiveness of the CCTV camera and other actions already agreed.

Effectiveness of the CCTV is due to be reviewed by the working group in September 2015 and the fencing of the green can be considered further at that time.

Greenspace is obtaining quotes for fencing the green to give understanding of costs.

Fencing / gating of the WWI Bowling Pavilion

We've received a grant of £3,000 towards this project from East INPT.

Mark has met with Greenspace and a first contractor, who has recommended square hollow section (SHS) construction and provided a quotation. We need to get two more competitive quotes to comply with the grant, so will not minute the price at this stage.

Mark has also met with Ken Else, Chair of the Bowling Club, and they are happy in principle with the pavilion being fenced off. Their notice board currently under the canopy would need to be relocated to the front of the Bowlers Hut.

Alan Burton is still keen to be involved with the WWI artwork aspect.

No Ball Game signs

Still waiting for a response to comments and an acceptable proof. (*Post meeting note: new proof received 20 April, further comments made and sign is now fitted.*)

Covenants and Bylaws

We've now been waiting 5 months for a response from Legal on whether it would be acceptable to install a better open and inclusive football provision in the park.

Jane has sent a follow-up enquiry today.

3.2 Park Benches

General Bench Maintenance

There is graffiti to remove on two benches and we should be able to start on a general programme of maintenance soon.

Terry advised that he would repair the slat for the library bench in time for the next task day. (*Post meeting note: now complete and ready to install.*)

Town Centre Benches

Waiting for competent person training from SMBC / SSK.

3.3 Treatment of Sculptures & Wooden Features

We should be able to start soon, although won't be able to jet wash until trained.

3.4 Commemorative Plaques

We've been waiting since September for the Greenspace Team to draft a report on the commemorative plaques for submission to Area Committee. They have recently advised, "This will be done when they have capacity within the team".

3.5 Park Buildings

Gents' Toilets

We have been told that the work was completed but this appears to be incorrect. We are now waiting for Carillon to reinvestigate and advise what they plan to do.

(Post meeting note: a new surface mounted spreader has been fitted but it is a very flimsy installation and is not boxed-in as was suggested. It is therefore prone to vandalism. In addition, the system still does not spray water when it is supposed to. Mark has met with Jane to discuss and we wait to learn what will happen next.)

Tool Store

Tidy-up of the tool store is still needed.

3.6 Skatepark Development Project

Latest Skatepark Project News

The DET has acknowledged our application and confirmed that it will be considered towards the end of May this year. They've asked a number of questions and these have been answered with help from the council's Greenspace Team.

We need to feedback the outcome of the Planning Application to the DET as soon as it is known. Assuming planning permission is granted then it will be a matter of waiting to learn the outcome of the Lafarge-Tarmac LCF grant application.

(Post meeting note: the planning application was granted on 29 April 2015).

3.7 World War I Centenary Commemorations

Silhouette Art Project

The second silhouette was installed on 17 March. A few more tools and consumable items were purchased and the total spending has come to £480.

Mark met with Alan Burton during the last task day. Alan is hopeful that David Birch, MD of the company who supplied the silhouettes, will be able to visit the park on 30 May. Confirmation is awaited.

Timeline Commemoration

The group has had to remove obscene graffiti applied to the display.

Next additions are Joe McDermott on 5 May, the Lusitania family on 7 May, Frank Bradshaw-Isherwood on 9 May and 3 others in May too.

3.8 Task Days

Last Task Days – 14, 28 March and 11 April 2015

Work in the park has now started in earnest with 3 task days since the last meeting. Work to flowerbeds and shrub beds has begun, bulbs and shrubs have been planted, gaps in the hedge along Station Road filled with Beech saplings and Willow whips planted to begin the creation of a natural bird hide along the woodland walk.

Lots of work has been done in the woodland trimming trees and clearing unwanted saplings and the park is springing back into life with a great display of daffodils.

11 fruit trees have been planted along the woodland walk.

On the downside, someone has been forcing his or her way through the repairs to the hedge so we need to monitor this and make it more difficult if necessary.

We've also had people letting their dogs smash through the shrub beds when they let them off the lead. Mark has spoken to one owner about this.

Next Task Days – 25 April, 16 and 30 May 2015

Parking has been arranged for 25 April but not May dates yet.

Mark will send out the task day emails.

Saturday Task Days scheduled for 2015

Approved: 25 April 2015.

Registered: 16 & 30 May, 13 & 27 June, 11 & 25 July 2015 (*PMN: now approved*).

To register: remainder of 2015.

Ad-hoc Daily Task Days

Daily Task Days are registered on the council's system until 30 June 2015 for gardening tasks, painting and treatment of benches and sculptures.

Risk Assessments / Training

Risk assessments and training are currently up to date with 11 volunteers having attended the RA training.

SSK Support for Task Days / Competent Person Training

Training is expected to begin in May. A list of names has been provided to the Greenspace Forum and further details are awaited.

(Post meeting note: Bernard and Mark are now booked to attend training at Bredbury on 19 May and Patrick on 20 May 2015.)

Patrick advised that Wright Hire have offered the free use of a petrol disc strimmer. We will have to wait and see if the training permits us to take advantage of this.

4.0 Funding - Status of Funds

Covered during AGM, see earlier in minutes.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 New Waste Bins

New bins are to be installed near the band room, in the infants and junior play areas, at the Garth Road entrance, at the bowls pavilion and at the skatepark. Programme timings are still to be confirmed. (*PMN: installation expected by w/e 15 May*.)

5.2 Cargo Net in Junior Play Area

A replacement cargo net has at last been ordered.

5.3 Roundabout in Infants Play Area

The roundabout in the Infants Play area has failed and been partially dismantled and locked off by the council. The safe surface is also damaged and deteriorating.

This is very frustrating as we all remember highlighting to the council soon after it was installed in 2008 that it was not fit for purpose. That was followed by continual promises over the next two years to sort it out that never materialised.

The council's response to our enquiries about when it will be replaced is:

"Greenspace and SSK are currently reviewing priorities and spend for this financial year, this is one of the items that will be considered."

The group feel that this is unsatisfactory and will start a campaign to encourage the public to complain if we cannot obtain a better commitment in any other way.

(Post meeting note: after further discussion with Greenspace on 28 April Mark has written to local councillors seeking their support. They have undertaken to consider how the roundabout replacement can be funded at the next Area Committee meeting after the elections, which is Wednesday 10 June 2015.)

5.4 Treasure Hunt Event

It's understood that arrangements for the Treasure Hunt are going well. Micaela is interested in helping on the day but needs to know when so that she can arrange her "off-duty" at work to suit.

(Post meeting note: Di and Anne have met with Jonathan to finalise the details of the event; Mark has met with him to help submit the event application to the council and Jonathan will be meeting Jane to prepare the risk assessment on 13 May. The event has been fixed for Saturday 30 May 2015.)

5.5 Next Meeting

The next meeting is Monday 11 May 2015 at 6pm in Marple Library.

There is a clash with the Reading Group due to the bank holiday but they have agreed to use the exhibition area so that we can use the meeting room.

Meeting dates scheduled for 2015 (library booked):

11 May, 8 June, 13 July, 10 August, 14 September, 12 October, 9 November and 14 December 2015.