

Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting
Monday 14 January 2019
Marple Library

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

1.0 Apologies: Joyce Reed, Marple North Councillors.

2.0 Minutes of last meeting: Agreed, except typo on page 3, commitment of £1164.40 should have read £164.40.

3.1 Teen Area / Skatepark Phase II / MUGA

The tender exemption approval has been received for the skatepark element of the project and an order can now be raised by the council with Canvas for Phase II.

A JCT Design and Build Contract will need to be put together by Richard Booker, so Canvas has been asked for a full risk assessment and construction methodology pack for phase II plus a delivery schedule with start and finish dates.

Canvas has asked for the preferred start date and they have been told asap. It is thought that they are busy and things are likely to continue dragging on.

A tender is out for the MUGA element of the project with 3 bids due by 18 January. Once this is available we will have a firmer handle on the total costs.

We are making progress but everything is taking so much longer than we hoped.

3.2 Bowling Green and Buildings

Missing Tool Store Keys: This has become a security issue. After repeatedly chasing the return of the keys from the contractor he has now told the council that the keys were returned to "someone" at the bowling hut but they did not get a name.

We have checked with Ken Else, Secretary of the Bowling Club and he does not believe that the keys have been given to any of their members. They have also not been given to any of our volunteers. We therefore have to assume that they are in the hands of someone unknown and this is a security risk to our property in the tool store.

Mark has advised the council that we consider it is necessary to change the lock to ensure that our property is secure and suggested that they should pay for this as it is their contractor who has been irresponsible with our keys.

The council has responded once offering to have more keys cut, showing a lack of understanding of the issue. Mark has clarified why extra keys would not be helpful and that it is the fact that the keys are missing that is the problem. This is particularly frustrating as the potential for this happening was identified by us as soon as the contractor retained the keys so they could paint the new door. We asked the council to ensure the keys were accounted for way back in September when the new door was first installed and have been reminding them repeatedly ever since.

It was the consensus of those present that the lock should be changed by us, additional keys cut as required and an invoice sent to the council covering the costs.

Cracks in Bowling Hut gable end: Chased again and we were advised that it will be carried out when we have a dry week. We will continue to remind until it gets done.

3.3 Park Benches

Park benches general: Routine maintenance to commence as weather permits.

Town Centre benches: One bench to refurbish in spring so far (Marshall Shaw).

Policy for replacement of existing commemorative benches:

The original donor family of the Newiss bench has been in touch and agreed that we should contact them to discuss the options when we eventually need to replace their bench. They will decide when the time comes if they wish to fund this.

Contact from original donors of the other two benches is awaited until October 2019.

We have started a waiting list of other people who are interested in these too.

Several people have commented about the bench notices on social media. We have gone to great length to answer queries and to explain that we are not planning to replace the benches until it is necessary but are getting the 12 month search period for original donors underway so that we can be flexible and not have to wait when the time comes that they need to be replaced.

3.4 Park Buildings and Infrastructure

Replacement of Midnight: The remains of the sculpture were vandalised over the Christmas period and Mick, Patrick and Mark cleared up the mess. Myers Tree Care then removed the last section free of charge, for which we are very grateful.

The Greenspace Team have been asked if they can arrange for the stump to be ground out and removed. Anthony Crook has advised that he will seek a price.

Myers Tree Care has some sections of timber available and Mark will visit to see if any of these would be suitable for a new sculpture project to replace Midnight.

Info board near to Lock 10: Mark will look at creating replacement artwork as soon as time allows. In the meantime, refurbishment of the frame can be undertaken.

Painting of Pavilion Building: Painting under the canopy will be done later this year. Mick will arrange a meeting with artist Henry Quick to discuss the mural option.

Breathing Places reading circle: We now have a price of £938 from Greenspace to resurface the reading circle and path. This includes widening the path from 1.1m to 1.2m to give the required access for wheelchairs and also to edge around the sculpture and include it in the circle. Greenspace do not have the budget for this.

We could look at grant options for this or we could fund it from our existing reserves. This was discussed and it was agreed that because we are currently uncertain about the final costs of the Skatepark Phase II / MUGA and also the replacement tree sculpture that we should hold back on this for the time being. Once the demands of these other projects are clear then we would hope to be able to fund the works.

Terry will look at refitting the birdbath feature that has come off the sculpture.

Painting of Infants Play area fence: To be progressed later in year.

Possible refurbishment of Park Toilets: We have continued to chase up progress on this, which has been exceedingly slow and frustrating. The issue over the charge code has now been resolved and we were told that we would receive some schemes by the end of last week. As of yet nothing has arrived.

(Post Meeting Note: After further chasing two options were received on 23 January and a meeting has been arranged with Wayne Bardsley and the engineer on Thursday 14 February to understand and refine the options presented.)

3.5 Skatepark Development Project

Relocation of CCTV: A 10 day completion has been agreed for the tree work for skatepark phase II access and to create a visual window between the trees for CCTV. Once this is completed we can resurrect the request to have the CCTV moved.

3.6 World War I Centenary Commemorations

Timeline Commemoration / permanent display: The final invoice of £162.60 for the last panel has been received from HB Printing and a cheque was presented to them just before Christmas. The project is now complete apart from announcing the 100th anniversaries of the final men on the timeline when they are due.

Since the last meeting Henry Woodhouse, William Dean, Benjamin Miller, William Leigh and Roland Mather have been announced online and via social media.

Repairs to War Memorial: The top section of the war memorial platform has now been fully re-pointed and looks significantly better. We need to have a closer look at the walls as a cursory inspection suggests that these may still need attention.

Knitted Poppies: These were removed at the end of November.

Wreaths: Wreaths were wired down by us after the service and will be removed at the end of January. A selection will be stored for re-use throughout 2019.

3.7 Task Days

Last Task Days – 24 November & 27 December 2018:

The last two full task days of 2018 took our total for the year to 24 and over 1,000 volunteer hours have been worked since last January.

Ad-hoc Task Days: Vandalism of the tree sculpture was cleared over Christmas.

Next Task Days – 26 January & 23 February 2019:

Parking has been approved for January and will be requested for February. Emails reminders will be sent out when due.

Dates for our full task days in 2019 have been added to noticeboards in the park.

A concerned effort is to be made to thin out saplings in the canal side woodland.

Task Day Registration / Risk Assessments:

Risk Assessments were reviewed and updated in December and a Task Day Application covering 1 January to 30 June 2019 was submitted and approved.

Scheduled Saturday Task Days in 2019: 26 January, 23 February, 16 & 30 March, 13 & 27 April, 11 & 25 May, 8 & 29 June, 13 & 27 July, 17 & 31 August, 14 & 28 September, 12 & 26 October, 9 & 30 November & 28 December.

Training / Power Tools: Mick and Bob have finally received some date options for Power Tools Training from Greenspace. Unfortunately Bob is not in a position to take part in this but Mick has booked to attend on Tuesday 22 January.

4.0 Funding - Status of Funds

We are currently changing banks due to the closure of the RBS in Marple.

RBS statement of 21 December shows a balance of £4,639.76. Money in new Barclays account at 31 December was £216.00, giving us a total balance of £4,855.76.

Income since last meeting:

£132.07 Local Giving (RBS).
£15.00 Marple Bands standing order December (RBS).
£216.00 Collected in park plus cards sales (Barclays)
£25.00 Donation from Bowling Club (RBS)
£15.00 Marple Bands standing order January (Barclays).

Expenditure since last meeting:

£162.60 Final timeline panel (RBS)
£10.20 3 x blades for bow saws (paid from loose cash collected in park).

We have no committed funds at the moment and current balances of £4,477.16 (RBS) and £231 (Barclays) gives us a total working balance of £4,708.16.

New bank account: The new account at Barclays is up and running. £216 cash from park collections and card sales was paid in during December and Marple Band has changed their standing order to the new account and the first payment of £15 was received in January. In order to change Local Giving payments to the new account we need a recent bank statement. It has been problematic obtaining this so far as the account was set up by Barclays to provide an annual statement only. This is not what we asked for and they have now changed it to monthly. However, we have been unable so far to obtain a statement for the end of December and a dialogue is ongoing with Barclays via their messaging system to resolve this.

Extra forms have been received from Barclays asking for further complex information relating to tax residency outside the UK. Currently it is unclear how these forms relate to our community organisation and they cannot be filled in. If further correspondence is received on this we will have to make an appointment with the bank to discuss.

Once a statement is available we can switch payments from Local Giving to the Barclays account and then look at transferring the bulk of funds from the RBS account, leaving the latter dormant for the immediate future.

Once statements covering the end of December are received Mark will prepare the accounts for submission to the McInnes Partnership for the annual audit / review.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 St Martin's Christmas Tree Festival

We were delighted to be awarded the Best Tree Prize, selected by the Mayor, for our WWI Centenary themed entry. Everything has now been dismantled and collected.

Congratulations to Gill, Micaela, Lorraine and Terry for their efforts.

5.2 Library Open+ Consultation

The council has been consulting on Open+ and the reduction of staffed hours at the library from April 2019. We are unclear how this will impact us but we have been told that groups like ours will continue being able to use the library for meetings.

5.3 Consultation on further cuts to parks

The consultation closed on Friday. Mark has submitted extensive comments on behalf of the group and these have been copied to William Wragg MP, local councillors and published on-line. Others volunteers have commented individually too.

We've tried to make clear to the council the grave risk of causing volunteer groups like ours to throw in the towel if they are not treated as true stakeholders and the park is subject to further arbitrary cuts in service without discussing the details with us.

5.4 New Projects and Ideas

Quite a few projects are ongoing but everyone was asked to think if there are any special projects we should consider for 2019. We will do Little Growers again this year.

6.0 Next Meeting

Monday 11 February 2019 at 6.15pm in Marple Library.

Future meeting dates scheduled for 2019 (library booked):

11 February, 11 March, 8 April, 13 May, 10 June 2019.