

**Friends of Marple Memorial Park
Thursday 12 January 2023
Marple Library**

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

1.0 Apologies: Cllr. Malcolm Allan, Joyce Reed.

2.0 Minutes of Meeting 8 December 2022: Agreed.

3.0 Matters Arising:

3.1 Antisocial Behaviour / CCTV / Police

ASB Update

Things seem to have been pretty quiet over the Christmas period, which is great news. *[Post Meeting Note: Since the meeting we've been advised by the Police that they are dealing with an assault in the park by one young person on another.]*

CCTV Update

Cllr Allan couldn't attend today so he met with Mark on Monday to discuss a number of issues, including this one. Cllr Allan has followed up but there is still no news.

Actions ongoing from Crime Survey recommendations

Artwork to Bowlers' Hut: Targetted to complete by early spring 2023.

3.2 Buildings and Infrastructure

Pavilion Art Project Phase II

No change - pelmets still to paint and install.

Skatepark repairs

No change - the potential problem of the jump-box rail that is badly worn has still to be addressed by the council. *[PMN: Update from Richard Booker on Monday 23 January: contractor has been given the details in October and is now on site at Torkington Park. Richard will follow up and ask them to assess options.]*

Drainage at woodland behind library

No change and no problems so far. Monitoring ongoing.

Use of weedkiller in the park

No change - details of agreements to be posted on the noticeboard in the Mess Room shared with TLC operatives. *[Post meeting note: completed 24 January 2023.]*

Park Benches

We are still waiting to learn if there will need to be a price increase to cover the paved bases we are insisting on. It's been two months now, so this was followed up earlier in the week and also discussed with Cllr. Allan. The answer from the council was that there is no update at this time because they are waiting for their contractors to respond. The situation was discussed at length and it was felt that we couldn't wait indefinitely as we are constantly having to field enquiries from donor families.

It was agreed the end of January would be a reasonable deadline, at which point we will consider withdrawing from the arrangement. Mark will pass this onto the council.

[Post Meeting Note: Notice of our desire to have this resolved by the end of the month was passed on to the council on Monday 16 January. A reply was received later that day advising that contractors had now responded and there would need to be an uplift charge of £140 per bench to cover the paved bases requested. This has been explained to the four donor families and they have all chosen to go ahead. Full details of the benches including locations, inscriptions, bench type, bases and costs have been agreed with the families and were passed to the council for action on Monday 23 January. We are currently awaiting acknowledgement these have been received.]

Town Centre Benches

The Nativity sculptures have been removed from Market St and are now back in store.

Community Hub

No change – our concerns that conflict may develop over the location when the scheme reaches consultation have been outlined to Cllr Allan at length but he has advised that officers are not willing to talk to us until the next round of consultations.

[Post Meeting Note: The 2nd round Levelling Up bid was not successful. The next steps are unknown at present but our concerns remain and we have submitted the following Public Question to the Marple Area Committee Meeting on 25 January 2023:

In March 2021 Friends of Marple Memorial Park wrote to the Community Hub team suggesting an alternative location within the park for the scheme and explained the advantages we felt this would give over existing proposals.

We asked for discussion asap and followed up again in October 2021 when this didn't happen. Since then we have regularly asked for further dialogue but that has been refused. We have become increasingly concerned since we got wind in 2022 that our suggestion may have been partly implemented but misunderstood.

Now that the outcome of the Levelling Up bid gives time for pause and reset, can Councillors please ensure the team engage with us urgently to determine if our suggestions have been misinterpreted and to avoid potential conflict with our group during the next round of consultations and planning for the scheme?]

3.3 Projects

Skatepark Sign

The final artwork is in production and should be ready by the end of this week. Mark will organise installation as soon as weather permits once received.

Outdoor Exercise Equipment Project

Tenders were received just before Christmas from 3 suppliers. The bids cover a baseline budget of £25k, with options for increased scope of +5k and +10k.

All 3 suppliers have existing sites close by and initial visits to assess their equipment have taken place at Heaton Moor Park, Crescent Park and Cringle Park. We have also asked several other potential users to assess equipment, although only one has so far.

Not all the equipment items being offered to us were available to inspect at the parks visited so far, so we have asked for nearby locations of specific key equipment items so that we can conduct further investigations on these.

A meeting is scheduled with Richard Booker and Jon Headlam on Monday 23 January to review findings and hopefully narrow down and select a supplier to work with.

Our own funding raised currently stands at £21,000. We believe we can reach the baseline budget of £25k in a reasonable timescale but it is clear that if we can raise extra it will make for a much better installation. Mark has now begun looking at grant scheme availability and other opportunities to boost our project funding.

Skatepark Art Mural

The artwork is still on display in the library and staff are happy to keep it until the space is needed for other exhibitions, or it is needed by Helen to start work.

Helen has said that she wants to start soon, so we have asked the council to jet-wash the back of the ramps so we can paint over with the grey. This has been arranged.

The council have asked Helen for her PLI and a risk assessment before she starts.

We are awaiting information from Helen to close out the Magic Little Grant.

Allotment beds

A plan is now coming together and it is proposed to have two raised beds with a paving divider between them. One bed can be built using the recycled materials from the School Gardens Project and the other will need funding. We have submitted a bid to the 2023 Stockport Hydro Challenge to cover the costs of the second bed, plus the materials we will need to relocate the School Gardens artwork to the Bowlers' Hut.

We have most of the recycled paving slabs we will need from Etherow Park, which have kindly been transported by the council. We may need one more large slab.

Hopefully we can begin building the first bed during our next task day.

Infants Play Area picnic benches

The hard-standings under the benches remain a problem because the loose stone has not compacted. Mark discussed this with Cllr Allan and agreed it may be suitable for funding from the MAC Delegated Budget, if councillors see fit to approve it.

The process is for officers to submit a report for councillors on the Area Committee to consider in advance of the meeting. We have asked Richard Booker and Jon Headlam to do this for the 25 January Meeting and offered to help compile the report.

[Post Meeting Note: it has taken longer than expected to confirm the best solution and cost, so the deadline for the 25 January MAC has been missed. Details were agreed on 23 January and the report will be submitted for the 8 March meeting.]

Wildflower meadows

No change – we look forward to developing new ideas this year.

3.4 Task Days

The Task Day Application for 1 January to 30 June was submitted over the Christmas break and approval is awaited. Jon was only back this week, so needs a little time.

The next Task Day is Saturday 28 January and parking has been approved.

Request for parking at future task days needs to be submitted.

4.0 Funding - Status of Funds

Income since last meeting:

£128.00 Donation from The Marple Website.

£15.00 Booklets.

£25.00 Donation from the Bowling Club.

£59.00 Local Giving.

----- **2022 Year End / 2023 Year Start** -----

£230.00 50-50 Club Draw for December.

£69.00 50-50 Club donation from E. Carruthers.

£15.00 Marple Band Room.

Expenditure since last meeting: None

Balance at Year End: 23,877.09 Current balance: £24,191.09

Committed future spends:

- £21,000.00 Ring-fenced for Outdoor Exercise Equipment.
- £300.00 Budget for Allotment Bed.
- £190.00 Budget for Skatepark Sign.

Unallocated working balance: £2,701.09

Mark and Diane need to visit Barclays in Stockport to confirm her ID.

Mark has started on the Year End accounts and will share with Diane when ready.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 Covid Memorial: new flag pole and monument

We are pleased at this proposal developed and agreed with Cllr Allan, as it will link the Covid memorial to the flag pole that we used throughout the Covid pandemic to fly NHS and Rainbow flags. The existing flag pole base is rusting and reaching the end of its life and will be replaced with a new pole plus a small monument and plaque.

Jon Headlam is arranging to have the existing foundation examined by a specialist company to determine if any of the infrastructure can be reused to save funds. Once flag pole costs are clear we can finalise the other elements of the project.

5.2 Toilet Block bed

We have submitted a list of like-for-like mature plants and materials that need to be replaced by the council and are awaiting feedback on this from them.

5.3 Dead tree in car park

The tree has been lopped of its main branches leaving an ugly trunk. So it is now safe but remains a real eyesore in such a prominent location. We are told that it will not now be ground out and replaced until next winter, which is very disappointing.

Funding has been cited as part of the reason for this delay so we have asked Cllr Allan if this is something that Area Committee could possibly help with.

[Post Meeting Note: The trunk has now been cut down to a 3ft stump and is much less of an issue. Cllr Allan has fed back that there are other reasons for the delay in addition to finances and he will explain in more detail when we next meet.]

5.4 Volunteer recruitment

Diane has just started looking for information and ideas about volunteer recruitment and coincidentally has found some useful material on the Fields in Trust web site. Diane and Mark will have a chat about this at the next opportunity.

6.0 Next Meeting

Thursday 9 February 2023 at 6pm for 6.15pm start in Marple Library.

Dates for 2023 (confirmed library bookings shown in bold):

Thursdays: **9 February, 9 March**, 13 April, 11 May, 8 June, 13 July, 10 August, 14 September, 12 October, 9 November & 14 December.