

**Friends of Marple Memorial Park AGM
Monday 14th March 2011
Marple Library**

Present: Micaela Wood, Bob Wilson, Adrian Ellis, Terry Wood, John Wright, Alan Chin, Mark Whittaker.

1.0 Apologies: Patrick O’Herlihy, Jonathan Long.

1.1 New attendees: John Wright, Chairman of Marple Carnival Charities Committee, and Alan Chin, Deputy Head of Ludworth Primary School were welcomed to the meeting.

2.0 Minutes of the last meeting: Meeting was held on 14th February not 24th as recorded. Otherwise agreed.

3.0 Matters Arising.

3.1 Improvements to the Park Entrance

Carver Commemoration – The final artwork proof for the display panel was approved on 24 February and delivery is expected end of March, actual date will be firmed up nearer the time. Delivery will be to Brabyns Park council depot. Cost is £2,140 + delivery.

Adrian will arrange for the old notice board to be removed for storage / refurbishment in the near future.

Mark requested that if the new display has to be installed during normal work hours, rather than during a task day, then it be installed on a Friday so that there was opportunity for him to be involved and take photos. Adrian agreed to this but advised that he would not be able to purchase concrete for the installation until the new financial year.

Drainage Improvements – Not discussed at this meeting – waiting for the new financial year to see if Jonathan can find funding to cover it.

3.2 Ornamental Flowerbeds

The application for £600 Flexibility Funding towards the cost of plants and shrubs for the ornamental beds was approved by Marple Area Committee on 2 March 2011. Mark also reported that the Committee were very complimentary of the group’s efforts in the park and supportive of the project to save the flowerbeds.

Jonathan has provided a planting list for the five beds being adopted by the Friends with a cost of £1,537, which is in line with the value approved by the group during the last meeting. The plants have been ordered but at the moment a firm delivery date is not available and it is not certain if they will be delivered in time for the March Task Day.

Although the 26 March is the desired date to plant-up the beds Adrian advised that because the plants and shrubs would be supplied in pots there is a fairly broad window during which they can be done without causing any problems. The main issue will be that if lots of people come along to help with the planting and there is no delivery then it will be disappointing for the volunteers. It also makes it difficult for the group to campaign to get people to come for this purpose. Mark asked to be advised as soon as the delivery is known so that the task day can be plugged heavily if the plants will arrive on time.

Mark has submitted an application to Stockport Homes' Community Fund for £1,000. This includes £900 towards the remaining money needed for the five beds adopted by the group and £50 each for the Beavers and Rainbows to spend on their beds. The application had to be supported by two of Stockport Homes' tenants and was signed by two residents of Queen's Court, the sheltered housing managed by Stockport Homes just a few minutes walk from the park. *(Post meeting note: Mark has learnt that there may be a problem with more than one application being made by Queen's Court residents in a financial year and is waiting to find out if it will need to be resubmitted because of this).*

Mark met with Beaver and Rainbow leaders in the park on Saturday 19 February and both groups were very keen and confirmed adoption of a bed each. A press release has been made about this but as yet it has not appeared in the papers.

Micaela passed over to Adrian and Bob a large selection of seeds that she had been given by a lady called Mary Carlisle, who was anxious to help save the flowerbeds. This kind of gesture demonstrates the level of support there is within the community to keep the beds.

3.3 Ludworth Primary School

Alan Chin, Deputy Head of Ludworth, attended the meeting to explain that the school were keen to support the saving of the flowerbeds and also to help in the park in other ways if they could. It was agreed that there were a couple of ways that this could be achieved:

Mark will add Alan to the distribution of the group's task day emails so that he can pass the details on to parents in the school's newsletters. It is hoped that some parents will be encouraged to bring the children to the group's task days on the last Saturday of each month.

Alan is also interested in occasionally bringing the children to the park to carry out tasks such as planting or litter picking during school time. Although this could not be done on a regular basis he believed it would be good to encourage the children to feel that the park is part of their lives. It was agreed that daytime activities like this could be arranged through Bob Wilson, the Community Parks Officer.

3.4 Park Benches

The report on the bench survey conducted by Terry and Mark has been completed and sent to Jonathan and Adrian with a request to see if the council would be able to provide the refurbishment materials if the group provides the labour. *(Post meeting note: Adrian has discussed with Jonathan and confirmed that it will be possible to provide sandpaper and preservative to do this in the new financial year).*

There are 33 benches in the park (excluding the 3 metal ones in the Infants Play Area). 23 of them are commemorative and 10 are not. Of the 10, 1 needs to be replaced and 6 others could be replaced or adopted and refurbished as commemorative benches.

Terry agreed to take the lead on a long-term programme to refurbish the benches, starting with the commemorative ones. It was also agreed to encourage members of the public enquiring about benches in memory of friends or family to adopt or replace an existing one.

Terry has priced the hardwood required to refurbish one of the bowling green benches (narrow slat design) at £200+VAT, which seems very reasonable. It was felt that the 3 benches around the bowling green are ideally suited to adoption in memory of bowling green users, not that we wish an early demise for any of them of course!

Mark has recently met with members of a family wishing to commemorate their parents in the park and they are considering options including replacing a bench or contributing towards planting.

3.5 Picnic Benches

Jonathan has confirmed with Gareth of Playground Maintenance that it is acceptable to install a picnic bench in the Infants Play Area.

Gareth has expressed a preference for an all-steel "Streetmaster Glenside" bench (at £739 + delivery) or a steel-framed and timber lath "Streetmaster Uplands" bench *(Post meeting note: price for softwood laths version is £491 + delivery).*

Terry has investigated the cost of making a bench in Iroko hardwood at the David Lewis Centre and this would be in the region of £409. Most of this cost is in the material and it is very good value. *(Post meeting note: compares to £698 + delivery from Streetmaster).*

However, Terry can produce softwood benches from the David Lewis Centre for just £80 each including all materials and labour, which is exceptionally good value. *(Post meeting note: compares to £395 + delivery for slightly smaller softwood bench from Streetmaster)*

Terry advised that he is happy to supply several of them providing a staggered delivery over a few months is acceptable to the group.

Terry also advised that there are some of these benches at the centre that have been regularly treated and are still going strong after 8 years.

It was agreed that at £80 the softwood benches were by far the best value for money and Mark will send photos and an offer for him or Gareth to inspect one of them to Jonathan and seek agreement that we can provide one of these for the Infants Play Area and several others for outside the play areas over the next few months.

3.6 Treatment of Sculptures and Wooden Features

Patrick has agreed to take the lead on this, as it is one of his favourite activities on task days. Weather permitting he will start with the sign above the entrance to the Infants Play Area, which has gone very green, and work his way through the list of sculptures and features with help from other volunteers as required.

3.7 Painting of Bowling Green Buildings

The plan is still to restart this during the April task day. Painting materials are available and it will be weather and volunteer dependant.

Mark will notify the Bowling Club of these plans.

3.8 Task Days

Previous Task Day - 26 February 2011

The day was so wet that it looked like being a washout but things got better and much more was done than expected. A good turnout enabled the main path and driveway to be edged, a bench to be repaired and a good tidy up of the Infants Play Area.

It wasn't possible to do much on the flowerbeds due to the wet but the edges of the beds were redefined and they are now ready for planting.

Next Task Day - 26 March 2011

It is hoped that the plants and shrubs for the flowerbeds will be available for planting out but if not there are plenty of other tasks to tackle.

Free parking for the specified vehicles has been arranged and the task day email has been sent out.

3.9 Park Cottage

Although it is believed that there has been some more progress on the lease we have no further confirmed details to report since last month.

3.10 Park Toilets

There is no further news regarding the potential closure of the park toilets. John Wright expressed the Carnival Committees' concern over this and suggested that it conflicted with the desire to improve Marple and to increase visitors to the area. It was agreed by all present that it would be a backwards step for the park if the toilets were closed.

3.10 Vision of Marple

Mark advised that he had recently met with Gillian Postill and Graham Clarke of Marple Civic Society and gave a brief outline of the background and content of the society's "Vision for Marple" document, to which the group had contributed a number of ideas for improvements to the park. The Civic Society see the park as a good area to begin targeting some of the ideas contained in the "vision" and to begin trying to flesh them out into real projects. The two ideas that the society would like to start developing with us are the extending of the skate park and teen area and the provision of a bandstand.

Skate Park

Jonathan has already contacted the Landscape Team about providing support to the group to begin developing a scheme for extending the skate park. He has advised that they are presently engaged in the final stages of Playbuilder but should be able provide help with this early in the new financial year.

The Civic Society has a lady on their team called Kirsty Pierce, who works at Marple Hall School. Kirsty is in a good position to engage pupils at the school who use the skate park to determine their aspirations and is keen to get involved, although she cannot do so immediately.

The plan is to get together with the Civic Society again towards the end of April to see if we can begin moving this project forward. In the meantime, Mark recommended a visit to www.wheelscape.co.uk for some inspiration of what might be possible to achieve.

Bandstand

It is probably not a good time to start this from the Bands of Marple point of view as they are already heavily engaged in their project to turn the park cottage into a band practice room and it could potentially dilute those efforts. However, the Civic Society is keen to pursue this and it seems a good idea to help as much as we can.

Although it may be possible for MCS & FOMMP to take this project on without diverting the Bands too much, it is important to engage with them as they would be primary users of a bandstand in the park. Mark has therefore approached members of the Bands committee for their input and guidance on specification, location and usage for a bandstand.

MCS and FOMMP currently believe that the best location for a bandstand would be in the large open area to the Northeast of the Junior and Infants Play Areas and in the general vicinity of the park cottage that is to become the band practice room.

The Bands have a meeting on Wednesday night and have agreed to discuss our request and advise their response, or when they can provide a response, soon after.

4.0 Funding

Status of Funds

Current bank balance:	£4,408
Committed Funds:	£2,140 (Entrance Display Panel*)
	£1,537 (Flowerbeds)
Working balance:	£731

* Delivery charge will also need to be covered.

There has been no further income or expenditure since last month, although the £600 Flexibility Fund grant is expected soon. This will boost the working balance to £1,331, which is relatively healthy.

John queried where the group got most of its funding from and Mark outlined some of the main sources of donations, grants and fund raising that has been achieved over the last few years.

Alan asked if the Co-Op was a potential source of grants and also highlighted the extra income that had been generated at the school as a result of some of the parents working in banks and businesses that would match-fund the efforts of their employees. Both these suggestions are worth further investigation.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 Marple Civic Society Design Awards 2010

The Civic Society's Design Awards were presented to participants on Thursday 24 February at Marple Bridge Methodist Church. The Friends received runners up awards in Urban Landscape and Public Art categories and the certificates will be displayed in the new notice board once it has been installed.

5.2 Marple Carnival

John advised that this year's carnival would be held on Saturday 18 June and that the theme was "Up, Up and Away". He was encouraged by the influx of new people on the Carnival Committee after last year's appeal for "new blood", especially the number of young people that were now involved. John also highlighted plans to include a Tug-o-war event and asked that if anyone knew a local pub or other organisation that may wish to take part in this to let him know.

The Friends have received a request from the Carnival Committee for information to go in a display that will highlight the activities of the various charities and organisations that the carnival supports. It was agreed to provide information for this but we also need to decide if we will have our own tent/tombola at this year's carnival, as this will determine how much material we can provide for the display.

It was proposed that due to Micaela and Terry now also being involved in the Carnival's organisation it would be better to have the Friends of the Park tombola at the Food and Drink Festival.

Mark will approach the festival organisers to see if we can have a gazebo at the event this year, which is scheduled for Saturday 17 September.

5.3 Civic Society Task Day / Picnic 25 June 2011

Mark advised that the Civic Society were organising a special task day on Saturday 25 June to celebrate National Civic Day and the society's 50th Anniversary.

This is the date for the Friends' June task day anyway, so we will be pleased to join in with the society's celebrations.

(Post meeting note: the following additional detail has been received from the Civic Society since the meeting:

Marple Civic Society intend to take part by undertaking some refurbishment and clean up work at Possett Bridge, including refurbishment of public benches and painting the railings leading down to the canal, and re-pointing All Saints Well in Hawk Green (by a heritage builder contactor who will finish the work on the task day). This will be done on the morning of Civic day followed by a picnic/refreshments in Memorial Park in the afternoon for all those taking part.

The idea is that each group will arrange their own task working party to carry out work in Marple and the surrounding area and come together to celebrate with a picnic in the park in the afternoon.

The following groups have been invited to take part:

*High Lane Residents Association
Friends of Rose Hill Station
Compstall Residents Association
Marple Golf Club - Dave Myers
Mellor Residents/Groups
Marple Bridge Association
Hawk Green Residents Association
Friends of Marple Memorial Park
Marple Locks Heritage Society)*

5.4 Canal Display Panel Damage

The display panel has now been damaged quite badly and ideally needs to be renewed. It was agreed to wait until the new notice board is delivered and installed and current financial commitments have been settled before seeking a price from Shelley Signs for its replacement.

5.5 Acorn Sculpture

One of the acorn sculptures near to the main Tree Sculpture was removed from its foundation over the weekend. It had been pushed towards the library and was discovered by Terry who put it back on its spike. Since then Bob has removed it for safekeeping and filled the hole until it can be repaired and re-installed. *(Post meeting note: Adrian has confirmed that it can be repaired but he will not be able to purchase concrete to re-fix it in position until the new financial year.)*

6.0 Date of next Meeting (AGM):

Monday 11th April 2011 at 6pm in Marple Library.

Future meeting dates in 2011:

11 April (AGM)
09 May
13 June
11 July
08 August
12 September
10 October
14 November
12 December