

Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting
Monday 11th May 2015
Marple Library

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

1.0 Apologies: Lorraine Thompson, Adrian Ellis.

2.0 Minutes of the last meeting (AGM): Agreed, except that ongoing collection of drugs paraphernalia should have been mentioned under ASB Logs.

3.0 Matters Arising

3.1 Anti-Social Behaviour

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

- Ongoing football and ASB around Bowling Green & Pavilion.
- Pavilion windows knocked out and forced entry to Mess Room.
- Further damage to Scout Hut.
- "Cling-filming" of the Teen Shelter (we understand to use as a drugs den).
- Food spread all over notice board.
- Ongoing collection of drug packets and paraphernalia.
- Fruit tree snapped off after being staked during Saturday's Task Day.

Marple Bands have been in touch to express concerns about drug use in the park. They are in a unique position to witness this as they often pass through the park late at night while accessing the band room. This has been mentioned this to CSU and Police and we are now waiting for more information from the bands' representative(s).

Installation of CCTV Camera

Last promise was completion by 8 May and we understand internal wiring installation is ongoing at the moment but the camera is not yet fitted.

Mark has asked if he and local councillors can visit the control room and see the camera in operation once it is commissioned. This has been agreed, albeit that it will be in a separate room due to data protection requirements.

(Post meeting note: The camera was fitted on 14 May but in a different place to that specified in the quote. We do not know if it is operational yet. Warning signs for the new camera and those for the older cameras on the office have not yet been fitted. Questions were sent to the council on 15 May 2015 and a response is awaited.)

Crime Prevention Report:

Fencing of the Bowling Green

A second quote for fencing around the Bowling Green has been received. Current indications are that a budget of £15,000+ VAT would be needed.

As per the Bowling Club's comments reported last month, it is proposed to consider this further when the effectiveness of the camera is reviewed in September.

It remains the group's view that fencing of the green is highly undesirable and we would rather any money that can be raised be put towards something positive like a better football provision in the park.

Terry commented that that the Bowling Club members did not seem very pro-active in trying to stop the ASB on the Bowling Green yet they are the people inconvenienced the most by the damage to the green. We would not expect them to try to stop things physically but believe that they should complain much more voraciously to local councillors and council officers. Mark agreed to discuss this with them.

(Post meeting note: Mark has discussed this with Ken Else the Bowling Club Chair and Ken has undertaken to encourage members to complain. He will try to set up a club log of incidents, dates and times that he will share with us so that we can pass on.)

Fencing / gating of the WWI Bowling Pavilion

A second quote has been received and details were shared with the group. A third quote is needed and Jane is making arrangements with another contractor for this.

The intention would then be to discuss the requirements in more detail with the contractor who provides the best price / option to ensure it meets our needs for both security and as a platform for a WWI artwork project.

No Ball Game signs

The sign was finally installed at the end of April 2015.

Covenants and Bylaws

Jane has passed on an enquiry from Legal asking where we would intend to put a new football facility because different areas of the park are covered by different legal constraints. This has been answered (where the existing single goal post is sited). Hopefully it means they are getting on with their response after 6 months of waiting.

3.2 Roundabout in Infants Play Area

The roundabout in the Infants Play Area has been broken and out of service for at least 6 weeks. It has never worked properly and soon after it was installed in 2008 the group told the council it was not fit for purpose. Many promises to rectify the situation followed over the next 2.5 years but none were fulfilled and now the roundabout is unusable and the safe surface around it is getting worse every day.

The group has sought assurances from Greenspace that the roundabout will be replaced with a new piece of equipment but these have not been received. We have only been told that "Greenspace and SSK are currently reviewing priorities and spend for this financial year, this is one of the items that will be considered".

A copy of an email to local councillors complaining about this and their replies was distributed with the agenda. Councillors have responded to say that they will consider funding replacement equipment from commuted sums at the next AC on 10 June.

Councillors were surprised at comments that the group had identified problems with the roundabout as soon as it was installed. This is disappointing as it was regularly recorded in our minutes of meeting between April 2008 and September 2010. This has been addressed by providing an extract from the minutes to local councillors.

A discussion took place about whether it was necessary to run a campaign to raise awareness of the problem and to seek community support for the roundabout to be replaced. It was decided that this could do no harm and may help, so an ePetition will be set up on the council's own web site and we will endeavour to get as many signatures on this as possible before the Area Committee on 10 June 2015.

(Post meeting note: The ePetition is set-up and has so far received 172 signatures, making it currently the 5th highest response to an ePetition on the council's web site.

It has received more signatures than the one against a supermarket on Hibbert Lane in 2011 or the Save Stockport Parks campaign conducted last year.)

It was agreed that the roundabout does not necessarily have to be replaced by a new roundabout and suitable alternative types of equipment that would make good use of the available space could be considered. *(Post meeting note: This was highlighted to Cllr Martin Candler at his surgery in Marple Library on Saturday 16 May.)*

It was also agreed that we should highlight the matter to the two newly elected Conservative councillors and new MP William Wragg, who campaigned on a 6-point plan that included "Improving Local Parks". *(Post meeting note: Correspondence has been issued to Cllr. Annette Finnie, with a request to pass onto Cllr. Kenny Blair, and to William Wragg, who has replied that he's happy to lend his support.)*

3.3 Julian Wadden Treasure Hunt

The date for the Treasure Hunt in the park has been fixed as Saturday 30 May 11am to 2pm, which coincides with our Task Day at the end of the month too.

Mark has tested the hunt with his granddaughter, aged 7, and it works really well.

Terry brought along the Treasure Chest he is making for us all to see. It's not finished yet but everyone was very impressed. Other things we need to organise are:

- Volunteers to help (hopefully Di, Anne, Mark, Micaela, Richard + others?)
- Display to show what the group does in the park.
- French Boules (one of the clues includes throwing one on the Boules Court).
- First Aid Kit.
- First Aid Cover (Micaela will be attending and also a First Aider from JW).
- Collection buckets.

Jonathan, Manager at Julian Wadden, has submitted the event application. He is also meeting Jane to prepare the Risk Assessment on Wednesday 13 May.

Micaela's suggestion of also doing a raffle has been passed on to JW. *(Post meeting note: Jonathan and Di are making good progress encouraging sponsors and prizes.)*

3.4 Park Benches

General Bench Maintenance

No change apart from: Terry has now completed repair to the slat from the bench near the library and it is ready to refit. Patrick will do this at the next task day.

Town Centre Benches

No change: waiting for competent person training from SMBC / SSK.

3.5 Treatment of Sculptures & Wooden Features

No change: we should be able to start soon.

3.6 Commemorative Plaques

No change: 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".

3.7 Park Buildings

Gents' Toilets

Toilet repairs are now complete and the urinal is finally being flushed properly. However, the new spreader pipe work is very flimsy and vulnerable to being ripped off by vandals. We originally suggested that it should be boxed in and have asked for it to be fixed more securely but this has not been done. This has been discussed with Greenspace and Mark will enquire whether they plan to do anything about it.

Tool Store

Tidy-up of the tool store is still needed (*PMN: now been done by Mick and Patrick.*)

3.8 Skatepark Development Project

Latest Skatepark Project News

Planning permission was granted on 29 April 2015. This has been fed back to the DET and all we can do now is wait for the outcome of our grant application. It is due for review towards the end of May and we should learn the outcome by mid-June.

The sponsored silence by Marple Hall School pupils raised £53. This took us to £19 short of £23,000 and when this was announced on Face Book we received a donation from a local resident of £19 via Local Giving, so we now have exactly £23,000 of Community Match-Funding towards the project.

Forever Manchester have been advised where we are up to as they are still holding £2,500, which was awarded with the proviso that we manage to find all the funds we need before it is released. They've asked for a further update by 19 June.

3.9 World War I Centenary Commemorations

Silhouette Art Project

The project is now complete. We're still waiting for confirmation that David Birch, MD of the company who supplied the silhouettes, will be able to visit the park on 30 May.

Timeline Commemoration

Joe McDermott, Frank Bradshaw-Isherwood and the Lusitania family have been added so far since the last meeting. Geoffrey Hamilton-Bagshawe, John Eustace and Arthur Rhodes are still to be added in May.

3.8 Task Days

Last Task Day – 25 April 2015

The end of April task day primarily focussed on work to the flowerbeds. There was also a lot of litter picking with numerous broken beer bottles left in the park.

We also sold some used plant pots for donations and collected £33 in our bucket.

Next Task Days – 16 and 30 May 2015

Quite a lot of plants should be ready to go in over the next task days, hopefully the weather will allow us to start treating wooden items and the 30 May task day will run alongside the Julian Wadden Treasure Hunt.

Parking has been arranged and Mark will send out the task day emails when due.

Saturday Task Days scheduled for 2015

Approved: 16 & 30 May, 13 & 27 June, 11 & 25 July 2015

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

11 volunteers have attended current risk assessment training.

New training including power tools is due to begin later this month. Mark, Patrick and Bernard are booked up to attend on 19 & 20 May 2015.

We will have to wait and see if the training allows us to make use of the offer from Wright Hire to provide equipment free of charge.

4.0 Funding - Status of Funds

The balance on latest bank statement dated 22 April is £24,405.57.

Income since last meeting includes:

£53.00 Sponsored Silence.
£64.00 Local Giving donations.
£39.61 Collected in Park.
£1.97 Interest.

Expenditure since last meeting includes:

£72.00 Local Giving Fee (they have accepted us for 2015-16.)
£1.99 Compost.

Committed funds in account are: Skate Park Fund £20,481, Pavilion Fencing £3,000, Flowerbeds £65 and WWI Display £167, leaving a working balance of £689.

Kevin Dowling has mentioned that a donation from his book is available but he wanted to wait until after the elections as he didn't want to be accused of promoting himself. *(Post meeting note: a cheque for £240 was received from Kevin on 20 May 2015).*

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. It has been advised that installation will take place by the end of this week (w/e 15 May).

5.2 Cargo Net in Junior Play Area

Delivery and installation of the new cargo net is awaited *(PMN: Now installed).*

5.3 Meeting with Asda

An Asda PR representative has been in touch to confirm that the sign near the park entrance has been removed following objections by FoMMP and others. They are also meeting with local councillors and a number of different local groups. Mark will be meeting with them in the park on Friday 15 May 2015.

5.4 Forthcoming Events

We have a stall booked at Marple Carnival on Saturday 20 June. We also have a stall booked at the Marple Locks Festival on 5 July. What we do at these will depend on the outcome of the Skatepark grant application.

The Food and Drink Festival is on Saturday 19 September. Marple Business Forum is taking over the organising of it but we hope we will be able to continue taking part.

5.5 Next Meeting

It was agreed to cancel the next meeting scheduled for 8 June, so the next formal meeting will be Monday 13 July 2015 at 6pm in Marple Library.

There will be opportunities for informal meetings during task days and they can be arranged at short notice if there is anything urgent that arises in the meantime.

Meeting dates scheduled for 2015 (library booked):

13 July, 10 August, 14 September, 12 October, 9 November and 14 December 2015.