

**Friends of Marple Memorial Park  
Thursday 9 November 2023  
Marple Library**

**Present:** Mick Thompson, Lorraine Thompson, Micaela Wood, Joyce Reed, Diane Jackson, Mark Whittaker.

**1.0 Apologies:** Bob Wilson, Cllr Becky Senior, Terry Wood, Patrick O'Herlihy.

**2.0 Minutes of Meeting 12 October 2023:** Agreed.

**3.0 Matters Arising:**

**3.1 Antisocial Behaviour / CCTV / Police**

**ASB Update:**

We have not heard of any new ASB issues in the park.

The police reported back on the digger incident to say that the CCTV has been reviewed and while individuals can be seen to enter the area of the Bowling Green, they are unable to secure images of sufficient quality to identify those involved.

They have also advised that over the Halloween / Bonfire Night period they will have officers on patrol for Operation Treacle, which aims to deter ASB over this period.

Mick mentioned that a large branch has been dragged into the park from the canal near to the Lock 10 entrance. We will have a look at this during our next task day.

**CCTV:**

Following discussion at the last meeting of the reply received on 9 October, Mark raised and discussed our ongoing concerns around this issue with Cllr Becky Senior during her surgery in the library on Saturday 14 October. Cllr Senior agreed to seek further response from council officers and provided this on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> November.

The response was shared with attendees in advance of the meeting and discussed at some length. Our conclusion is that the situation remains totally unsatisfactory and we remain completely dissatisfied at not being treated as stakeholders in the park.

A full and considered response will be made in due course.

In preparation for this a chronological extract from our minutes of meetings going back to the start of this issue in October 2013 has been compiled. The document runs to 30 pages and covers from the start of issues, through the successful formation of a joint Working Group, until satisfactory conclusion with the installation of a high quality pan-tilt-zoom camera and other measures to combat antisocial behaviour in the park.

It then picks up from when we requested that the camera be relocated to a position that would aid the reduction of ASB at the skatepark and concludes with the totally unsatisfactory situation we find ourselves in 10 year later, in November 2023.

The extract was shared in advance and reviewed during the meeting.

It was enlightening to refresh memories of the huge effort we've made over the last 10 years to make the park a safer place; to remind ourselves of the way we were treated as stakeholders and worked as a team with councillors, officers and police to achieve our aims. The steady decline in close cooperation and support from council officers after we asked for the camera to be relocated in 2017 can also be seen.

Unfortunately only our volunteers have continuity from that period of high cooperation and working together 10 years ago – all councillors, council officers and police personal have changed several times over since then. Perhaps the extract from our minutes will make it clearer where we're coming from, maybe it won't.

## **3.2 Buildings and Infrastructure**

### **Community Hub**

We've had no further feedback from the Community Hub Project Team since the two meetings with them on 10 & 11 October noted in the last minutes.

Mark met with representatives of Marple Civic Society on Friday 13 October so we could share our thoughts and concerns over the scheme.

It was agreed to write a joint letter to the Project Team confirming our commitment to working with them to achieve the best possible outcome for the park. We also urged them to provide advice on how the consultation process will continue over the coming weeks ahead – we really need to know a timetable for further engagement.

The letter was sent on 28 October and a copy is appended to these minutes.

So far there has been no response from the Community Hub Project Team, not even an acknowledgement of receipt. This is disappointing but frankly not unexpected. We remain concerned at the quality and timeliness of any further engagement with us.

*[PMN: Apart from some email notifications of surveys ongoing in the park, the situation remains unchanged and at 9 December 2023 we've had no responses.]*

### **Play Areas**

We've heard nothing more since the positive meeting with the Neighbourhood and Project Teams on 10 October. Richard Booker is currently on leave until 20 November, so we are unlikely to receive anything from the Neighbourhood Team until he is back.

Mark has met with Mary Bewes (who wishes to ensure accessible play) and conveyed the outcome of the meeting with officers. This was very similar to the responses Mary had received direct from Richard herself. We agreed to visit as many examples of the equipment suggested in the provisional scheme to form a view of how good they are.

*[PMN: At 7 December Richard was awaiting budget details from the Project Team.]*

### **Long grass areas, reduced weedkiller usage:**

Jon Headlam has discussed our initial thoughts with TLC management and is arranging for a walk-around with Paul McDerment, hopefully next week.

It's proposed to revert to mowing as previous years as the extra long grass areas have shown no real benefit, look untidy and had negative feedback about dog mess.

We will discuss use of weedkiller in more detail. We will seek for this to remain as is – not used around benches, bins, lampposts and other fixtures and fittings. However, we will reiterate the need for it to be applied on certain hard landscaping areas.

*[PMN: A positive meeting took place with Paul and Jon on Wednesday 15 November and email confirmation of what has been agreed is currently awaited.]*

### **Park Benches**

Patrick has done a lot of work tidying the hardstanding edges around benches and we will do some more of that during our 25 November task day.

### **Picnic Benches**

Repairs still to do. *[PMN: Terry has been unable to progress for personal reasons.]*

### **Town Centre Benches**

Mark discussed us giving up maintenance of the town centre benches with Marple Civic Society on 13 October. They asked for details of the processes and requirements and this was sent to MCS and Town Team Officer Richard Daniels on 16 October.

## **Nativity Sculptures**

Mark has confirmed that we intend to continue storing, installing and removing the Nativity Sculptures on Market Street. *[PMN: installed on 4<sup>th</sup> December this year.]*

## **Pavilion Art Project Phase II:**

Pelmets still to fit when the opportunity arises.

### **3.3 Projects**

#### **Outdoor Exercise Equipment Project**

We understand that missing / replacement parts and refurbished legs are now back.

We were told that work would recommence 30 October but it didn't.

We then expected work to recommence this week but so far (Thursday) it hasn't.

Unfortunately Richard Booker, the officer dealing with this, is on leave so others are having to pickup the details. Mark is not applying too much pressure at this stage to avoid aggravating a difficult situation and possibly causing even more mistakes.

We have numerous concerns including warranty issues, the quality of the carpet installation, snag list items and of course the outstanding work to the Mag Bells.

It is extremely disappointing and just as well we haven't paid yet!

*[PMN: The repaired Mag Bells unit was dumped in position on or around Friday 10 November. It was left like that for around a week before being installed. Tarmac was laid around another week later but is poor quality and unfinished. This has revealed more snags with the Mag Bells unit that need to be addressed. There are also ongoing issues with the Combi 5, the carpet and the tarmac around the bike.]*

*Mark met with Richard and Jon on site on Thursday 7 December. Richard has advised that the council is as dissatisfied as we are and the issues will be addressed. The contractor has been responding very poorly to communications but Richard is meeting with their MD on 8 December to identify how everything is going to be resolved.*

*It was confirmed that although Kompan's installation instructions could have been better, all the issues we've had are down to the installation contractor. Therefore it was agreed that the invoice for supply of equipment will be taken off hold and paid by us (the council has already paid Kompan). Our contribution to the installation costs will be addressed once all issues are resolved satisfactorily.*

*Paperwork for the RoSPA inspection has not been forthcoming from the installation contractor, so the Combi 5 may need to be fenced off until this is resolved.]*

#### **Covid Commemoration Project: Flag Pole & Memorial**

Mark met with Jon Headlam and Andrew from Maysand on Tuesday 7 November to go over the issues of concern. These were the quality of pointing around the edges of the cobbles and the creation of a pool collecting water around the back of the flagpole.

Solutions were agreed and Maysand will return to rectify tomorrow. They also agreed to do a small amount of pointing on the cobbles in front of Danny Winter's bench.

Anne Frazer has written an article about the memorial for the Marple Review.

*[PMN: Maysand returned on 10 November and completed the works satisfactorily. The council will now invoice us for MMA / FoMMP financial contributions.]*

#### **Moving the goalposts**

Mark will speak to Richard B when he returns from holiday about moveable posts.

*[PMN: Richard has confirmed that moveable posts are an option and will be sending some information about these for us to consider. Costs sound reasonable.]*

## **Magic Little Grant / Stockport Hydro Environmental Challenge**

Magic Little Grants 2023 has closed. However, a new opportunity is now available with the 2024 Stockport Hydro Challenge, which is open until 31 January 2024.

### **Remedial works to French Boules Court**

Gill and Mark recently cleared the overgrown turf from around the court and it is clear that the original sleepers are now rotting badly and will need replacing.

This may be a suitable project for the Hydro Challenge or another small scheme.

Mark has started a dialogue with a local landscape company who may help FOC.

He has also asked Jon Headlam to speak to TLC about disposal of old sleepers.

We now need to measure up and cost the materials (and possibly the labour).

Mick asked if we could also consider enlarging the court and dividing into two.

### **Possible art boards at Skatepark**

Mark has had some provisional discussions with Earl and Helen about how to spend the £400 donated by Marple Hall School for the benefit of skatepark users. They like the idea of creating art boards along the MUGA fence looking into the skatepark.

Mark has discussed this positively with Jon and now needs to speak with Richard.

*[PMN: Richard is supportive of the idea as long as we can develop a safe and secure way of attaching the boards to the fence without creating snag points or a void where litter can be stuffed behind the boards. We will investigate fixing design further.]*

## **3.4 Task Days**

Task Days since the last meeting were 14 & 28 October.

Remaining task days this year are 11 & 25 November, possibly 30 December.

Task Day applications are approved until 31 December 2023.

Parking is arranged until end of November.

It will soon be time to submit task day applications for the first 6 months of 2024.

## **4.0 Funding - Status of Funds**

### **Income since last meeting:**

£225.65	Gill's cards.
£73.50	Di's Jewellery.
£108.85	Park bucket.
£18.00	Collection boxes.
£58.41	Local Giving.
£368.00	50-50 Club (including Neil's donation of £123 1 <sup>st</sup> Prize).
£15.00	Bandroom SO.
£30.00	First stall fees (Craft Fair).
<b>£897.41</b>	<b>Total</b>

### **Expenditure since last meeting:**

£100.00	Poppy Wreath.
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**Balance in main account: £35,492.57**

### **Committed future spends:**

£28,428.84	Outdoor Exercise Equipment.
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£400.00 Covid Memorial (from Marple Mutual Aid).  
£400.00 Ring-fenced for Skatepark (from Marple Hall School).  
£200.00 War memorial flagpole maintenance.

**£29,428.84 Total**

**Unallocated working balance: £6,063.73**

*[PMN: as we are not having a meeting in December, here's a catch-up on funding raised since this meeting and up to 9 December 2023:*

Income since 9 November meeting:

£90.00 Craft Fair stall fees.  
£250.00 Marple Beer Run donation.  
£58.41 Local Giving.  
£834.00 Cash from Craft Fair (inc: £218 B'Dazzled & £106 Cards).  
£81.00 Gill's cards.  
£256.00 50-50 Club (including donation of £13).  
£15.00 Bandroom SO.  
£1,584.41 Total.

Balance in main account 9/12/2023: £37,076.98 (working balance: £7,648.14)]

## **5.0 Any Other Business**

### **5.1 Handcrafted Christmas Sale: Sunday 26 November 2023**

We have a full complement of stall holders, plus Gill, Di, cake stall and tombola.

We have lots of tombola prizes that have been donated.

3 of the 8 stall holders have paid so far.

Posters are in the park and at the Reading Room. Di and Larry will distribute posters to the local shops and other venues. Promotion on social media is ongoing.

The risk assessment has been updated and will be shared with attendees.

We need cakes baking and help on the day but everything is coming together nicely.

*[PMN: the event was a great success and just pipped last year's total by a few ££'s, raising £954.24 for the park. Contributions to this fantastic total included £241 from the Tombola, £218 from Jewellery and Christmas Decorations by B'Dazzled, £120 from stallholders, £117 from the Cake Sale, £106 from handmade cards and gifts and a £50 donation from a lady called Ann, who makes cushions.]*

### **5.2 External changes to Hollins House Fire Escape**

On 31 October Conservation Officer Paul Hartley advised that Property Services have now informed him that progress has been made and arrangements are being put in place for the non-sympathetic solid doors to be replaced with glazed ones. Paul also confirmed that he has asked to see and approve the details of the replacements doors before the physical work is carried out. Watch that space!

*[PMN: Glazed doors more in keeping with what was there before have now been installed. Paul has confirmed that he is satisfied with them too.]*

### **5.3 Poppy Wreath / Remembrance Service**

Flags have been refreshed, we will put out and remove chains on Sunday.

## **6.0 Next Meeting (14 December 2023 meeting cancelled.)**

Next scheduled meeting is Thursday 11 January 2024. Time and venue TBC.



in association with



Dear Project Team,

**Re: Continuing engagement on Marple Community Hub**

With the Hub consultation now closed, members of Friends of Marple Memorial Park and the Marple Civic Society met to reflect on the events of the past few weeks, and the overall course of the development to date.

Both organisations remain committed to working with the project team to achieve the best possible outcomes at this crucial stage, as the scheme progresses from concept to detailed planning application. During the process we hope that the view, originally promulgated by CABI, that an application should “be based on a good understanding of local character and circumstances”, will be held in mind.

In accordance with this principle, we believe that the location of the proposed building, the building design itself and the spaces that are created around it should be dedicated to enhancing our overall experience of the park and its wider surroundings. In our view, the scheme already benefits from being located within the finest public space in Marple. Further, as SMBC’s first major community development in Marple and one that will last for many decades, we hope that the benefits of its new facilities will be matched by its positive impact on our perception of Marple as a place and on Memorial Park in particular.

We await your advice on how the consultation process will continue over the weeks ahead. Both our organisations have been heavily involved in trying to create a wider public understanding of the project itself, and the objectives of the consultation process. This has not always been easy, but we believe our involvement has been beneficial and look forward to the next stages of your engagement with us prior to making a planning submission.

Yours sincerely,

**Geoff Green**

Chair, Marple Civic Society

**Mark Whittaker**

Chair, Friends of Marple Memorial Park

W: [www.marplememorialpark.org.uk](http://www.marplememorialpark.org.uk)

E: [info@marplememorialpark.org.uk](mailto:info@marplememorialpark.org.uk)