

**Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting (AGM)
Monday 11th April 2016
Marple Senior Citizens' Hall**

Present: Adrian Ellis, Joyce Reed, Micaela Wood, Terry Wood, Bob Wilson, Malcolm Allan, Cllr Geoff Abell, Mark Whittaker.

1.0 Apologies: Mick Thompson, Lorraine Thompson, Patrick O'Herlihy.

1.1 Minutes of the last meeting: Agreed.

2.0 Annual General Meeting

2.1 Chairman's Report for 2015/16

Adrian reported the successes and achievements since the last AGM:

The Skatepark Development Project has remained our main focus. It received a second funding setback in May 2015 when our £62k application to Lafarge-Tarmac was unsuccessful. Despite this we've battled on with considerable effort and made significant progress.

Planning permission was granted in April 2015.

In August a £50,000 £ for £ match-funding agreement was reached with the council.

We've now raised £35,396 within the community and we're working hard to raise the balance of £14,604 that we still need.

Notable highlights include contributions from the Treasure Hunt organised by Julian Wadden, donations from Marple and District WI, Christmas collections with the Rotary Club, a Music Night at Hawk Green Cricket Club, the "Grow Your Tenner" scheme with Local Giving, fundraising in the new Asda store and grants from Stockport Homes, Forever Manchester, Marple Area Committee and The Marple Website. We've also had great support from the Ring o' Bells, the Hatters Arms and All Things Nice.

A good relationship has been developed with the Adsa store and they are keen to support us as much as they can within company guidelines.

There are plans for another Treasure Hunt and Music Nights in the near future.

We're awaiting the outcome of grant applications to the Postcode Lottery, the Greggs Community Fund and the Rotary Club of Stockport at present.

Our WWI Timeline Display project is ongoing and has been well received. There are now 23 men's details on the display with another 118 to be added over the next 3 to 4 years. The display was recently featured in the Marple Review newspaper.

A total of 19 regular and ad-hoc Task Days were held in the park during 2015.

The main focus has been maintenance of the flowerbeds, shrub beds and woodland areas throughout the park.

Our programme of bench maintenance has continued to ensure that all benches in the park are in the best possible condition.

We held a special task day with pupils from Brabyns Prep School to clear leaves before the Remembrance Service.

7 volunteers have attended the new Team Leader training and 3 have attended the power-tools training. Hopefully more will receive training this year.

We've purchased a petrol long-reach hedge cutter and a strimmer. We've also had a standard hedge cutter donated by Bob and a blower donated by Myers Tree Care.

Completion of power-tools training has allowed us to progress at last on refurbishing a trial bench in the Town Centre. This has been adopted and sponsored by Harmony Decor and we hope to make some real progress on the others this year too.

After prolonged campaigning a CCTV camera funded by Marple AC was installed in the park. This and the installation of fencing and gates around the Bowling Pavilion canopy seems to have reduced ASB around the bowling green area. However, it has not stopped completely and it is important that incidents are reported via the number displayed on signs or direct to police on 101.

A positive off-shoot of the ASB working group meetings was a consultation conducted by SAVY last summer and a series of Youth Group nights run between January and March this year.

The teen shelter was removed after reports of it being used by adults taking drugs.

We've had a long-running dialogue with the council about the legal constraints around providing an enhanced football/multi-sport facility in the park. We hope that this can be resolved by the council in the coming year.

Some other achievements:

Fruit trees were planted in the woodland walk areas alongside the canal.

A public campaign to put pressure on the council to replace the roundabout in the Infants Play Area was successful.

New safe surface was also installed in the Infants area and repairs to the safe surface in the Junior Play Area carried out.

Pressure was also applied to replace the cargo net in the Junior Play Area.

We successfully campaigned to keep a full time park attendant in the park, although at the moment we wait to see evidence of this being implemented.

We won a grant of £500 from the Equity Foundation for the purchase of new tools.

The group attended Marple Food and Drink Festival with their Tombola and Marple Carnival, Marple Locks Festival and Mellor Mill Day with a stall to raise funds.

The Tombola has now raised a total of £5,749 for the Park, so a big thank-you to Micaela and Terry for organising these.

Adrian also thanked Mark for his ongoing efforts to organise and administer the group and hoped that Friends of the Park can continue this kind of success in 2016!

2.2 Treasurer's Report for 2015

The McInnes Partnership has audited our accounts for the year 1st January to 31st December 2015 and a certified income and expenditure sheet was distributed with the agenda.

The McInnes Partnership has now provided this service free of charge for 12 years.

Our income during 2015 was £13,715 taking the total money raised since the group began to £74,618 at the end of the year - this doesn't include the funding from Stockport Council or Living Spaces for the two play areas or the basketball fence from commuted sums. It is just the money raised directly by the group and passed through our own account.

The main highlights in the year have been:

£3,000 grant from East INPT for the gating of the bowling pavilion, £1,520 raised at local events, £1,383 via Local Giving, mostly the Grow Your Tenner scheme, £1,000 grant from Stockport Homes, £983 raised by the SkateFest music night, £793 collected with the Rotary Club, £600 raised by Marple WI, £530 donated by The Marple Website, a £500 Equity Housing grant, £434 raised by Lewis Abbott's Beard-Off, £402 raised by Julian Wadden, £383 from Ring o' Bells Quiz Nights, £357 from the Shelley family, a £300 WWI display grant, £277 raised by Di Jackson, £250 from Marple Locks Society and £240 from author Kevin Dowling. We also collected £184 in the park. Other smaller contributions totalled £578.

Local Giving accepted our renewal last year and it has proved to be very worthwhile. In the year we spent £1,299, taking our total spending on the park to £42,906.

The biggest outgoings were:

- £480 on the WWI Silhouette Project.
- £220 on tools and maintenance materials.
- £183 on public liability insurance.
- £164 on plants and seeds.
- £72 on our local giving fee.
- £180 on various smaller items.

At the end of the year we had a bank balance of £31,712 with £31,139 of that committed to various projects, giving us a working balance of £573.

Commitments were made up of: £27,319 on the skatepark, £3,150 on the Pavilion fencing £500 on tools, £128 on the WWI display and £43 plants and seeds.

Report on 2016 to date:

Since the turn of the year our income has been £7,977 and expenditure £242.

This takes our total income to £82,596 and our "spends" to £43,148.

Income highlights this year are:

- £2,500 Forever Manchester.
- £1,500 from Marple Area Committee.
- £1,000 from The Marple Website banner advertising.
- £901 from Christmas Collections.
- £630 from ongoing Local Giving donations.
- £588 from Easter Hamper / Collection.
- £420 from All Things Nice & The Hatters.
- £200 from Asda Chosen by You.
- £105 from Marple Tuesday Bridge Club.
- £102 from Ring o' Bells Quiz Nights.
- £100 from Nationwide Community Count.
- £32 from Easyfundraising.

Expenditure highlights this year are:

- £82 on Equity Tools
- £72 on Local Giving annual fee.
- £46 on Harmony Decor Plaque and screws.
- £25 on plants and seeds.
- £17 on tools and materials.

Our bank balance on the last statement for 22 March 2016 was £36,286 and is calculated to now be £39,548.

Funds in the bank for the skatepark totals £35,396. Other committed funds are £3,150 on fences and gates to the pavilion, £418 on Equity Tools, £128 on the WWI display and £18 on plants and seeds from Selma Fielding.

This leaves a working balance of £438.

2.3 Election of Officials

2.3.1 Chairman

Adrian advised that he was happy to continue acting as Chairman. There were no other candidates and this was agreed by all present.

2.3.2 Treasurer / Minutes Secretary

Mark advised that he was happy to continue as treasurer. There were no other candidates and this was agreed by all present. Mark will also continue to write minutes and letters on behalf of the group and act as the key contact.

2.3.3 Secretary / Social Secretary

Micaela advised that she was happy to continue as Secretary and Social Secretary. There were no other candidates and this was agreed by all present.

2.3.5 Committee

In accordance with the requirements of the constitution, the following members have agreed to continue and were confirmed as committee members:

- Adrian Ellis
- Patrick O'Herlihy
- Bob Wilson
- Micaela Wood
- Terry Wood
- Gill Whittaker
- Mark Whittaker

With the election of officials completed the AGM was declared closed and the meeting continued with normal business.

3.0 Matters Arising

3.1 ASB / CCTV

Last ASB Working Group Meeting

The last ASB working group meeting was held on 11 February 2016. The minutes of this meeting were distributed with the agenda. At that time things were very quiet in the park but since then football on the bowling green is now picking up and there has been damage to plants – daffodil heads being kicked off – and damage to a frame supporting a tree in the allotment bed. These incidents were reported to police.

It is important to report all incidents via the CCTV number or direct to police on 101. Mark recently attended a neighbourhood police meeting and they advised that they have had no reports of ASB in the park in recent times apart from the damage above.

Since then Mick and Lorraine have reported an incident to police too.

Since the last working group meeting Ronit Bowman (CSU) has left the council and Mark Allinson (SAVY) has been laid off due to funding cuts. The Community Safety Team has also been dissolved / absorbed into other departments.

A change to the camera cycle has been requested after removal of the teen shelter.

SAVY Youth Group

As we understand it the youth group has now ended. Mark Allinson has left due to funding cuts and there has been no news of the "showcase" event as yet.

It was also understood that SAVY were talking to Stockport Homes about possible funding to continue the group but we have no idea if this has been successful.

Fencing / gating of the WWI Bowling Pavilion

No change: installation is generally complete but concerns have been expressed to the council about the misalignment of levels between railings and gates, sharp edges left exposed and damage done to some areas of the railings during grinding.

The council has agreed not to authorise payment until these issues are resolved.

A site visit is still to be arranged by Greenspace.

Bowling Club Notice Board

The bowlers have purchased their own notice board and Mark and Bernard fitted it for them during the last task day.

Covenants and By-laws (permitting an improved Football Facility)

No change: This has been ongoing between us, Greenspace and Legal for over 16 months (since November 2014) and it still doesn't look any closer to resolution.

From our perspective it remains unclear what needs to be changed or why, so it is a very confusing situation. Our interpretation is that providing such a facility is open to all then it would comply with the covenants and by-laws on the park.

Marple Area Committee has requested consultation with park users / stakeholders.

Greenspace has advised that they are now awaiting further responses from Legal.

3.2 Play Areas and Play Equipment

The stiffness issues after the Rocking Horse was reinstalled have been resolved.

Repair of the Spinner is ongoing. This was chased up on 21 March and we were told that repairs were more extensive than first thought but it was expected to be back in place within 4 weeks (which would be 18 April 2016).

3.3 Park Attendant

Rob has been laid off by SSK and finished in the park on 31 March 2016. We had no notification again except from Rob himself. Mark wrote to Cllr Candler to complain again and there has since been further correspondence with Ian Walmsley, who also contacted SSK about the matter. A copy of this correspondence was distributed with the agenda. Key points arising from this were:

- Greenspace expect the presence in the park to be the same as last year (which at this time was full time 5 days a week and 3 full time days a week later).
- There is no obligation for SSK to engage with Friends Groups, this is done on a goodwill basis only.
- Ian has asked SSK to formally introduce the new attendant to us and also asked them to build a relationship with the group.

- He has made them aware of our tools stored in the pavilion building and instructed that they should not be used by SSK.
- SSK have been asked to describe the minimum level of staffing we can expect in the park.
- Ian has also asked the group to monitor the level of presence in the park, the impact on maintenance and the extent of cooperation with the Friends Group.

Cllr. Abell confirmed councillors pushed hard to maintain the same level of funding for Marple's park attendant, namely for the equivalent of a person working full time for 3 days a week. Solutions SK are the contractor and they determine who is on site.

It remains to be seen how all this pans out but at the moment we don't seem to have got what we expected after the perceived "success" of the campaign to keep the full time attendant in our park.

3.4 Park Benches

General Bench Maintenance

No change: Treatment of park benches will recommence in the spring.

Town Centre Benches

The Harmony Decor plaque has now been fitted. Supply of paint from HD awaited.

Mark has met with David Hoyle of Helen Winterson and theirs should be the next bench that we tackle. Payment of £120 sponsorship is awaited.

The task of doing the town centre benches is covered until the end of April and a new application needs to be submitted to allow us to continue beyond that date.

Mark still needs to contact Mr Haq.

3.5 Park Buildings

The metal security screen on the bowlers hut has now been properly re-fixed.

The 2 windows boarded up on the Bowling Pavilion following forced entry to the Mess Room last year have still not had a permanent repair.

3.6 Skatepark Development Project

Latest Skatepark Project News

The project was awarded £1,500 by Marple Area Committee in March.

A donation of £1,000 has been received from The Marple Website.

£587 was raised in Asda at Easter with the hamper raffle and collection.

A £100 runner-up award has been received from Nationwide Building Society.

We await the outcome of grant applications to the Postcode Community Trust, Greggs' Community Fund and the Rotary Club of Stockport. *(Post meeting note: notification that the Postcode Community Trust application was not successful now received).*

Skatepark Music Festival II

The date is fixed for Saturday 14 May and the venue is Hawk Green Cricket Club again. The line-up of young local acts is set and All Things Nice will provide food again too. Tickets have been ordered and posters are being printed by the council.

We now need to focus on raffle prices and selling tickets.

Hawk Green Maypole Event

This is the day after the music night, Sunday 15 May from 12 noon to 5pm.

The plan is to have a stall with Splat the Rat, Canvas print sales, plant sales, Di Jackson will be selling books and we could trial the "Wheel of Fortune" too.

Julian Wadden Treasure Hunt

This was fixed for Saturday 28 May, to coincide with our task day. Julian Wadden did enquire about changing it to 21st but we have replied that we would prefer to stick with the 28th. It was agreed that if essential we could bring the task day forward to 21st and Mark will discuss with JW. (*Post meeting note: event will remain 28 May.*)

Art Auction

Joyce has mentioned this to Malcolm Melia and the Society of Marple Artists and it looks like there is interest in doing this. Hopefully plans will develop.

Marple Carnival

The carnival is on 18th June and we have a stall booked. We can work out exactly what we will do nearer to the time. Micaela and Terry will be away for this.

Rotarians Christmas Collection

Jules has been in touch to say that the Rotarians will not be doing the Christmas collections this year due to illness of some of their members and they have suggested that we take over the collection in Asda. We can borrow some of their equipment (Santa suit etc.) but would need to provide our own branding, not Rotary.

This was discussed at some length and it was agreed that we should get the dates booked up and develop plans for doing this our own way nearer the time.

Skatepark Funding Update:

Target:	£100,000	
Community Funding:	£35,396	(growth of £3,349 since the last meeting).
With match funding:	£70,792	
Balance needed:	£29,208	(reduced by £6,699 since last meeting).
We need to raise:	£14,604	(50% of balance).

3.8 World War I Centenary Commemorations

Timeline Commemoration

George Phillips was added on 5 April. Leonard Austin is due on 11 May and Harry Frost on 18 May. Things then start to ramp up at the end of June and into July.

3.9 Task Days

Last Task Day – 27 February & 19 March 2016

Lots of work to flowerbeds, the tool room was tidied up and storage brackets fitted and the bowlers' notice board installed too. Six nest boxes donated by Marple Naturalists were also installed in several of the shrub beds around the park.

Next Task Days – 16 & 30 April 2016

We will probably focus on flowerbeds, shrub beds and start bench maintenance.

Free parking has been granted for these dates.

Mark will send out the task day emails around a week in advance.

Micaela asked if 90 low cost red white and blue plants could be purchased to commemorate the Queen's 90th birthday somehow. Perhaps planted in the Jubilee bed. There is mixed feelings amongst the group on this and it was suggested that it be discussed further on a task day between Gill, Joyce, Lorraine and Micaela.

Saturday Task Days scheduled for 2016

Approved: 16 & 30 April, 14 May.

To register: 28 May, 11 & 25 June, 11 & 25 June, 16 & 30 July, 13 & 27 August, 10 & 24 September, 29 October and 26 November.

Ad-hoc Daily Task Days

Daily Task Days are approved on the council's system until 30 June 2016.

Town Centre Benches are covered until 30 April 2016.

Risk Assessments / Training

A new RA for small hand power-tools has been prepared and approved.

We are still waiting for suitable dates for Lorraine and Micaela to do the Team Leader training and for Mick and Bob to do the power-tools training.

Power Tools

Tools are now stored in the pavilion on new brackets.

3.10 Equity Housing Grant for Tools

Some low cost tools have been purchased for trial from Wilkinson's including pruners (£2.50) loppers (£13), shears (£3.95) and a sharpener (£8).

The pruners have proved successful and another 5 pairs were purchased for £12.50.

Other tools will be tested further before purchasing more.

Total spend to date is £82, with a balance of £418 still to spend by end of the year.

4.0 Funding - Status of Funds

Covered under AGM earlier.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 WWII Warship Week Plaque

The stone from the ECO Centre has been collected for us by Marple Blasting Services at Wood Farm. This has saved us £120+VAT for delivery quoted by SSK. It is currently at Wood Farm awaiting blast cleaning.

Benring, the company who did the resin work on the tree sculpture has donated the epoxy resin needed to bond the plaque to the stone, saving us around £30 too.

Adrian may have some bags of Postcrete that can be used for the installation.

5.2 Neighbourhood Plan

This seemed to be well received in the community. We have asked to have a representative on the forum and our main aim will be to ensure that the park is protected from development.

5.3 Boules Court

Joyce suggested that the French Boules Court may need some additional material adding to it this year. We will need to take a closer at this and perhaps purchase some from Offerton Sand & Gravel or similar. It may also need whacking again afterwards.

5.4 Pot holes on driveway / naming of driveway

Following a discussion on the large pot hole that needs filling on the driveway into the park the naming of the road was raised again. We had thought this resolved some years ago but in typical council fashion it never happened. Mark agreed to dig out any old correspondence he could find and send to Cllr. Abell to see if it would be possible to pursue this further.

6.0 Next Meeting

Monday 9 May 2016 at 6pm in Marple Library.

Future meeting dates scheduled for 2016 (library booked):

9 May, 13 June, 11 July, 8 August, 12 September, 10 October, 14 November
& 12 December 2016.