

Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting (AGM)
Monday 8th April 2013
Marple Library

Present: Terry Wood, Bob Wilson, Micaela Wood, Joyce Reed, Anne Frazer, Adrian Ellis, Lorraine Thompson, Mick Thompson, Mark Whittaker, Tony Donovan (part time).

1.0 Apologies: Patrick O'Herlihy.

1.1 Minutes of the last meeting: Agreed.

2.0 Chairman's Report 2012

Successes and achievements since the last AGM in April 2012

The success of our programme for bench refurbishment and replacement has exceeded expectations, mainly thanks to the efforts of Patrick, Terry and Mick and we only have a handful of benches left to deal with for the first time around now.

Successes this year have included:

- Refurbishment of two large cast iron bowling green benches sponsored by Marple Senior Citizens' Association.
- Refurbishment of two benches sponsored by Costa Coffee and All Things Nice.
- Stripping, sanding and treatment of all "Streetmaster" style benches.
- The old concrete bench opposite the Senior Citizens' Hall was replaced with a new commemorative bench funded by a local family.
- Two concrete framed benches near to the library were refurbished using materials reclaimed from benches that have been replaced.
- A picnic bench was installed in the Infants Play Area.
- The council has recently installed a new commemorative bench.
- A project to refurbish the benches on the Recreation Ground has begun.
- Maintenance of all benches in the park will continue as required.

Our project to refurbish the flowerbed in front of the library to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee has been completed.

- Planning permission was obtained at the end of May 2012.
- Hard landscaping works was constructed by Bramhall Paving in July.
- The bed was planted by college horticultural students in August.
- The Sculpture created by Wayne Chaisty was installed in September.
- The bed was planted up with Polyanthus for the spring in February and the college is working on a new summer bedding scheme.
- A display panel explaining the background to the project has been installed (and damaged by a council contractor today).

Wildflowers seeds were sown and plugs planted in:

- The Breathing Places area behind the library.
- The flowerbed in front of the toilet block.
- The raised brick flowerbed at the side of the library.

Improvements to the Park Entrance have continued with additional work by the council to alleviate flooding of the pathway into the park.

Maintenance of the Ornamental Flowerbeds and the War Memorial beds has continued:

- The Rainbows and the Beavers continued to maintain their adopted beds in 2012 but the Rainbows have given theirs up this year.
- The Rainbows bed has recently been taken over by Marple Allotment Association who will be turning it into a mini-vegetable plot that will include herbs, flowers, vegetables and fruit. We look forward to seeing this new project develop over the coming months.
- Local people have donated a lot of the plants added to the flowerbeds but unfortunately some have also been stolen.
- Free bulbs from Lyme Park were also planted.

A variety of maintenance works in the park was undertaken, including:

- Jet washing, sanding, repairs and painting of the Infants Play Area fence. This was a bigger job than anticipated and help from other local groups was welcomed.
- Treatment of sculptures.
- Cleaning of stonework.

The project to refurbish the skate park is ongoing and a funding strategy has been developed that needs us to raise around £20,000 before we can make a grant application to the Veolia Environmental Trust. The group continues to work with Marple Civic Society/Marple Vision Partnership, Marple Hall School, local skaters, SMBC and All Saints' Youth group on this project:

- Funding of £3,596 has been raised.
- Further consultation has taken place.
- A notice board has been installed near to the skate park.
- We are currently trying to find youth workers who can help with organised events and seeking help with funding from a variety of local groups.

Two mature trees had to be removed from the park due to decay – replacements have been obtained via the council.

The council has recently purchased additional tools and materials for the group.

The group attended Marple Food and Drink Festival with their Tombola stall and the Marple Christmas Cracker with a stall for the skate park.

We have been featured on Pure Radio's Podcasts.

We enjoyed an excellent Christmas lunch at the Hare and Hounds.

Task days have been held once a month during the autumn and winter and twice a month during the spring and summer.

Adrian thanked everyone for their efforts over the past 12 months and congratulated the group on their achievements.

2.1 Treasurer's Report 2012

The McInnes Partnership has audited the Friends' accounts for the year 1st January to 31st December 2012, and a certified income and expenditure sheet was distributed with the agenda.

The McInnes Partnership has now provided this service free of charge for 8 years.

Our income during 2012 was £6,582, taking the total money raised since the group began to £39,398 - 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 account.

The highlights in 2012 have been:

- £1,000 from Stockport Homes, £1,000 from Marple Area Committee, £500 from Marple Local History Society, £500 from Marple Civic Society, £300 from Cheadle and Marple College and £100 from Marple Business Forum for the Diamond Jubilee Project.
- £800 from Marple Senior Citizens, £180 from Costa Coffee and £180 from All Things Nice for bench refurbishments
- £650 from the Bluhm family for a new bench.
- £513 from Ring o' Bells Quiz Nights.
- £272 from the tombola at the Food and Drink Day.
- £229 from the fund raising at the Christmas Cracker for the skate park.
- £100 from Marple Carnival Committee.
- £60 from Mr Senior's monthly donations.

In 2012 we spent £7,534, taking our total spending on the park to £34,362.

The biggest outgoings were:

- £4,777 on the Diamond Jubilee Project.
- £813 on the Kay family bench.
- £810 on bench refurbishments via the David Lewis Centre.
- £604 on the Bluhm family bench.
- £226 on plaques for bench refurbishments.
- £177 on a variety of maintenance materials.

At the end of 2012 we had a bank balance of £5,037 with £4,207 of that committed to various projects, giving us a working balance of £830.

Commitments were made up of: £1,529 Jubilee Project, £143 on All Things Nice Bench and £2,534 on the skate park.

Total income on the Jubilee Project (over last 2 years) was: £6,275 with an additional £150 received in 2013 from CAMSFC giving a grand total of £6,425.

Since the start of 2013 our income has been £1,691 and expenditure £487.

Income highlights in 2013 so far are:

- £1,032 income from Localgiving.com (Including £500 from The Marple Website and £500 match funding from Forever Manchester [less fees])

- £325 from Marple Area Committee for Recreation Ground benches.
- £150 from CAMSFC for Jubilee Project plants.
- £138 from Ring o' Bells Quiz Nights.

Expenditure highlights so far in 2013 are:

- £288 for Polyanthus for Jubilee bed.
- £100 for timber from David Lewis Centre.
- £72 Localgiving.com annual fee.

In addition to the above, expenditure since the last meeting is £29.51 on various materials including duct tape, cable ties, clip boards, seeds, paint brushes, a bag of sand and cement and a trowel.

This gives us a bank balance of £6,211

Our committed funds now are:

- £1,391 for Jubilee Project (display £760 + planting).
- £325 for Recreation Ground bench refurbishment.
- £3,567 for Skate Park Fund.
- £120 for Jet Wash

Leaving a working balance of £808 at present.

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 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 Diamond Jubilee Project

Display Panel

The group installed the display panel during the last task day and an email report has been sent out to funding contributors to let them know that the project is complete but that planting will continue this year using the surplus funds.

Mark advised that he had asked Jonathan to invoice the group for the cost of the new display but has since rescinded this request because unfortunately a council contractor due to remove asbestos from around the library has rested scaffolding on the display without protecting it and caused damage to the corners.

Tony Donovan from NPS attended the meeting and apologised for the damage that has been done and confirmed that the council would ensure that this was put right.

Mark reiterated that the group would not pay for the display until the scaffolding was removed after the contractor's work is completed and the damage has been rectified.

Mark asked for the display to be fully boxed out and protected with timber to ensure that no further damage could be done whilst the contractor's works were ongoing.

Tony agreed that this would be done tomorrow and the group thanked him for attending at short notice following the discovery of this problem today.

Future Planting

As discussed last month, the college are currently developing plans for summer bedding and the bed is expected to be planted-out during May. We have £632 remaining in the budget to pay for plants.

3.2 Park Benches

Refurbishment of benches

Terry treated three benches during the last task day and weather permitting we should be able to continue with the others now, including Jim Heald's bench, the Boules Court benches and the Ian Rice bench (near the towpath entrance at lock 12).

The Alan Proctor seat on the driveway to the park still needs to be sanded and retreated to remove the graffiti that it was recently subjected to.

It is planned to sand and paint the Coronation Bench when weather permits too.

Picnic Benches on the Recreation Ground

A flexibility grant of £325 has been received from Marple Area Committee to cover the materials needed to refurbish the two picnic benches on the Recreation Ground and work should be able to start on the first of these during the next task day.

(Post meeting note: The first bench has been completed and Terry has taken the plaque for cleaning up and refitting. The second bench will be done during a task day in May, as Patrick will have to miss the end of April one).

The council has replaced the bench that we were planning to refurbish by re-using the timber from the picnic benches, so this will no longer be necessary.

3.3 Maintenance Materials and Tools

New materials and tools provided by the Council

Most of the materials ordered for us by the council have now been received. A shortage list has been sent to Jonathan and hopefully these will be available soon.

Jet Wash

As agreed at the last meeting, a new Jet Wash has been purchased from Aldi at a cost of £124. It has a 3-year warranty and includes a patio cleaner and splash shield.

3.4 Tidy Up of Lock-up

Mark has contacted the locksmith whose details are included on the front of the safe and sent them some photos. A response is waiting with regard to opening / removing the safe and if it has any value that would benefit the park. *(Post meeting note: they have quoted prices ranging from £285+VAT to open the safe only to £445+VAT to open, remove and dispose of it. Needless to say, we will have to work around it!)*

More shelving will be needed – Terry will have a look at what he can obtain.

3.5 Infants Play Area Fence

Painting of the Infants Play Area fence will be continued when the weather is suitable.

3.6 Treatment of Sculptures

Weather permitting, the tree sculpture will be jet washed during the next task day.

3.7 Skate Park

Mark is trying to organise another skate park meeting this week or next.

Richard is still struggling to find someone who can help with coaching and demonstration events and we are awaiting feedback on requests for funding support from a variety of local organisations and businesses.

Mark is in the process applying to Stockport Homes for a contribution towards match funding and Marple Area Committee will consider an application on Wednesday night.

(Post meeting note: Marple Area Committee awarded £1,000 and a skate park meeting was held on 16 April. A further set of minutes is attached to these.)

Local Giving scheme

£72 fee has been paid. £500 match funding from Forever Manchester for The Marple Website's donation of £500 via localgiving.com has been received.

3.8 WWI Centenaries (2014 – 2018)

Mark has been in touch with Jon Bintliff about using the book "Remembered" in a way that would commemorate the First World War anniversaries. The initial responses have been positive and more details will be provided when this is confirmed.

Mark and Terry will attend the Council 2014 meeting at the Town Hall on 17 April to present the proposals to interested parties across the borough.

3.9 Park Cottage

It is understood that the land behind the cinema is now up for auction. If this is successful it should provide sufficient funds to for the bands to build the extension.

3.10 Task Days

Last Task Day – Saturday 30 March

The Jubilee display panel was installed, three benches were treated and a large amount of pruning was carried out.

We were also joined by Marple Allotment Association, who have agreed to take over the flowerbed previously adopted by the Rainbows. They plan to turn it into a vegetable, herb, fruit and flower garden and have made a great start with the planting of several fruit bushes and a small sign explaining their plans. We look forward to seeing their new project develop over the coming months.

Nest Task Days - Saturday 13, 20 and 27 April

Jet washing the tree sculpture, starting the recreation ground bench refurbishment and maintenance of flower and shrub beds are amongst the activities planned.

Mark will send out parking requests and task day emails.

There is a special litter picking task day with All Saints' Church Youth Group on Saturday 20 April between 11am and 1pm. Adrian will arrange for litter-pickers and rubbish bags for them to use. Mark will coordinate with the Youth Workers.

Task Day Dates for 2013

13 & 27 April; 11 & 25 May; 15 (Carnival Day) & 29 June; 13 & 27 July; 17 & 31 August; 14 & 28 September; 26 October; 30 November; 28 December 2013.

3.11 Risk Assessment Training

Mark, Mick, Patrick and Terry attended the council risk assessment training course on Thursday 4 April. There are further sessions on 11, 18 and 25 April and there will be more sessions in May and June for people who wish to attend.

The four who attended felt that it was a useful course. The most important thing is to think about the tasks we are undertaking and apply common sense to ensure that we are taking suitable precautions like wearing gloves, protecting our eyes and other actions that will protect ourselves and other park users from harm.

Mark has written to Richard Booker asking for the standard RA's for approved tasks and hopes to use these as a guide to develop our own risk assessments.

(Post meeting note: a FOMMP generic risk assessment has been issued to the council for comment and to volunteers with the task day email).

4.0 Funding - Status of Funds

Refer to Treasurer's Report earlier in minutes.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 2014/15 Budget Cuts

The council are proposing cuts of £1M against the current Parks and Open Spaces budget of £3.9M. The cuts are on top of those made in the last two years and include:

- Not employing people with horticultural knowledge to take care of our parks.
- Removing instead of repairing or replacing broken play equipment, seating, signage and other park furniture.
- Picking up litter no more than once per week.
- Removing support to Friends Groups on Task Days.

These and several other proposals will undermine the efforts of our group over the last 10 years to maintain and improve the park. They will have a lasting and damaging impact on Marple Memorial Park and many others across the borough.

The council are carrying out an on-line consultation on the proposals that will continue until 31 May 2013. It is important that as many people as possible are made aware of this and encouraged to take part.

Details have been placed on The Marple Website and the group's web site. Posters have been placed in the notice boards in the park and local community and business groups have been asked to notify their members. Twitter/Facebook have been used too.

Via the Stockport Greenspace Forum it has been agreed that a paper version of the consultation can be used. There is a 6-page version that can be submitted via a freepost address. We have also prepared a 2-page version that can be used to collect people's views and then be submitted on-line by Friends Groups.

Stockport Greenspace Forum will raise the issue of the cuts at Marple Area Committee on Wednesday 10 April 2013.

Michaela and Terry's son Tom will distribute 100 flyers with the local papers.

It was suggested that litter should not be picked up in the park for a week from 6 to 11 May to demonstrate the impact of the proposal to "pick up litter no more than once per week". Mark will contact Jonathan and Richard about this idea. *(Post meeting note: Jonathan has declined to issue an instruction to support this initiative.)*

It was agreed to have a stall on Market Street on Saturday 20 April to raise local awareness and collect surveys from people without Internet access.

Mark will write to local schools to ask them to make parents aware of the proposal to remove instead of repair or replace broken play equipment. Anne will visit local playgroups to raise awareness of the same issue with parents of younger children.

It has been suggested to the Greenspace Forum that they should set up an e-petition on the council web site on behalf of all groups in the borough.

5.2 Bowling Green Steps

The Bowling Green steps remain a concern. Jonathan has advised that this will be dealt with as soon as he receives this year's budgets.

5.3 Library Opening Hours

Mark has spoken to library staff about locking up after our meetings due to the library closing at 7pm on Mondays from April this year. The library has provided a copy of the Opening / Closing Procedure and Mark will lock up and return the keys the next day.

5.4 Lightweight Wheelbarrow / Tools

Micaela asked if a lightweight wheelbarrow or similar method of transporting tools could be purchased. It was agreed that this could be possible and Micaela was asked to identify some equipment that she thought would be suitable.

6.0 Date of next Meeting

Monday 10 June 2013 at 6pm in Marple Library.

Meeting dates scheduled for 2013 (library booked):

13 May, 10 June, 8 July, 12 August, 9 September, 14 October, 11 November, 9 December 2013.

Skate Park Development Project Meeting
Tuesday 16th April 2013
Ring o' Bells

Present: Richard Booker (Council), Craig Silcock (All Saints Youth Worker), Graham Clarke (Marple Vision Partnership), Mark Whittaker (Friends of Memorial Park).

1.0 Absent: Lewis Abbott, Ben Meeks.

3.0 Matters Arising.

Fund Raising

£500 donation from The Marple Website via localgiving.com has been match-funded by Forever Manchester plus several other small on-line donations gave us £1043.

Local Councillors awarded £1,000 from their Area Flexibility Fund at Marple Area Committee on Wednesday 10 April 2013.

Total funding raised to date is £4,596 (target £20,000).

Awaiting responses to our requests for support from:

New Mills, Marple and District Rotary Club
The Macnair Trust
Marple Senior Citizens
Marple Carnival (committee will select their chosen charity in May).
Firefighters at Marple Community Fire Station
Kirkland Developments
Nat West Bank (local branch)

Marple Business Forum has proposed a scheme that may enable an application for match funding to Rotary International for a number of local projects including ours. For the time being we simply need to continue our efforts to raise funds pending development of this idea by MBF towards the end of the year.

MBF / Marple and Goyt Valley Rotary Club have also proposed that Friend of the Park may be able to share the proceeds of the Rotary Christmas Float collection on the basis of man-hours spent helping with this. MBF have been advised that we are interested in doing this and we should hear more towards the end of the year.

An application supported by two residents of Queens Court has been made to Stockport Homes for a contribution of £1,000. Public voting is expected to commence around 23 April and **Mark** will notify / publicise when details available.

The need for an independent contribution of 10% (approx £10,000) to the Veolia Trust in the event of a successful grant bid has been highlighted to Marple Area Committee with a request that they take this into account when allocating current and future commuted sums eligible for use in Marple Memorial Park.

Craig will ask if All Saints' Church has any funds that could help us in any way.
Mark will look into the Manchester Airport Fund and write to RBS.

Events Organisation

Richard has managed to find a company called Team Extreme that responds properly to enquiries and we have developed proposals with them to hold an event during Marple Carnival on 15 June 2013 that will cost £1,700 +VAT.

Team Extreme has quoted to provide a Team Extreme organiser / MC with two performers / coaches / judges (BMX and Skateboard) to do 4 x 10 minute demonstrations as well as run workshops / coaching sessions and / or organise and judge a small competition, on our own skate park during the carnival. They would also bring a PA system and petrol generator, spare helmets and pads and spare BMX bikes and skateboards for the public to use. All participants to the coaching sessions have to sign a disclaimer. If under 16 a parent or guardian has to sign on their behalf. At least one of the performers/coaches will be CRB checked and First Aid Qualified.

Mark has made a grant application to the Co-Op Community Fund for the £1,700 needed but unfortunately the funding committee in this area does not meet until 20 August, so they will not be able to support the carnival event (they do not fund retrospective events). After further discussion the Co-Op have agreed to consider the application for an event that would be held at a future date.

If the Co-Op bid were successful we would propose to hold an event in September (probably the weekend after the Food and Drink Day so that it could be publicised).

A detailed discussion took place about whether we should use some of the funding already raised to pay for the Carnival event if we are unable to raise enough for this specific purpose from other sources in time. It was concluded that an event tied in with the carnival was likely to be much more successful than one on its own due to the large audience that would be available. So it was agreed that we would be prepared to use some of the funds raised towards match funding if there was no other way.

Mark will enquire with TE about a community discount and charging for coaching. We need to confirm the booking with TE by 1 June latest but preferably earlier. The order on TE will be placed through the council (**Richard**) in order to make savings.

Richard will speak to the Events Team about taking part in the Carnival.

Mark will ask **Lewis / Ben** if they could source prizes for competitions and ask them to think about other ways of supporting/gaining sponsorship for the event.

It was also agreed it would be important to use the opportunity to underpin the bid to Veolia with a video of the event. This would need to include interviews with skate park users, parents and people of all ages to show that the whole community supports the project. The video would need to be of high quality (but low or zero cost):

Richard will pursue the video ideas with Solomon at Rising Stars.

Mark will enquire via his contacts at local colleges and other organisations.

Craig will also check via his contacts at local colleges.

Mark to ask **Lewis / Ben** if they know anyone who could help with this too.

Craig will also continue dialog with young people with a view to forming a user group who can work more closely with the project team.

Richard to revisit the planning permission requirements with Tim Boylan.

Next Meeting: Mark to arrange the next meeting for early in May so that we can firm up ideas and details for the Carnival event.