

**Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting
Monday 11th December 2017
Marple Library**

Present: Mick Thompson, Lorraine Thompson, Micaela Wood, Bob Wilson, Cllr. Malcolm Allan, Mark Whittaker.

1.0 Apologies: Patrick O'Herlihy, Adrian Ellis, Joyce Reed, Terry Wood.

2.0 Minutes of last meeting: Agreed.

3.0 Matters Arising

3.1 Teen Area / Skatepark Phase II / MUGA

We have developed plans for improving the small top section of the skatepark and converting the basketball court to a MUGA (Multi-User GAMES) Facility. Budget costs are £35k for the skatepark phase II and £35k for the MUGA = £70k+ in total.

Richard Booker has made good progress with the planning application, Canvas Spaces have provided the extra info he needed, and he now just has to do just a bit more work on the MUGA section. Richard is forecasting submission this week.

Funding options will be investigated further if planning permission is granted.

(Post meeting note: The Planning Application was submitted 14 December 2017).

3.2 Fencing of Bowling Green

New flowerbed

Top-soil is expected early in the New Year to allow this to progress.

Fixing down of relocated benches

This has been delayed due to absences and urgent safety related work. Richard will continue to chase SSK for a completion date.

Extra notice board

No change. This can be discussed with Bowlers and installed before next season.

3.3 Play Areas and Play Equipment

Nothing new.

3.4 Park Attendant

Cllr Allan summarised this matter and conveyed the recent explanation he has received via Greenspace management concerning the loss of the Park Keeper.

Greenspace has advised Cllr. Allan that following the public consultation results the money to retain the park keeper was left in the budget and was allocated to an "absence fund" intended to provide an extra level of cover when operatives were absent from work. With an increased level of funding in this pot they expected to be able to use it to fund the full-time Park Keeper in Memorial Park to a level equivalent to the 2015/16 financial year. Subsequently there were further budget cuts and the absence fund was reduced to a level that could no longer sustain that undertaking. At the time of these later changes it was not realised that it would impact on the promises made to retain the park keeper and nobody was informed of this.

The following response to this was agreed by the group:

We are extremely disappointed at what has happened and feel that clear promises made to us, the public and local councillors have been broken. The undertakings made

after the public consultation in 2016 have been paid lip-service only and in practice have been completely ignored.

We are also very disappointed at how difficult it has been to get to the bottom of this matter, which has revealed a lack of transparency, an unwillingness to answer questions and repeated attempts to divert us away from the main issue onto the quality of maintenance.

We have been questioning these matters for almost 2 years and it feels like we have deliberately been misled. Unfortunately this fosters a lack of trust that can be difficult to regain.

Having made our position clear, it is important that we move forward in a positive way with the things we wish to achieve in the park. Dwelling on this matter further will have an increasingly negative influence on our activities, so it is proposed to note the explanation we have finally been given and end discussions on the matter.

The group thanked Cllr Allan for getting involved and supporting us. Without his intervention and persistent investigation into this matter it had the potential for our relationship with Greenspace and SSK to deteriorate to the point that we may have opted to disband. Thankfully Cllr Allan has helped to avert this kind of outcome.

Cllr Allan asked the group for any ideas that could be suggested to Greenspace Management to improve trust and repair damage done to the relationship by this matter. This was discussed and the following initial suggestions were made:

- Someone from SSK to take ownership of the park, take a pride in it and coordinate maintenance with the group's own activities. This is the biggest loss arising from the removal of the full-time park keeper role. Perhaps someone could spend several full mornings in the park on a regular basis.
- Better dialogue with the group about what maintenance work is scheduled by SSK and when they will be doing it.
- Better coordination of work to shrub beds – we never know if SSK are going to do them or not. On occasion they've been done again after we've done them.
- Improved litter-picking throughout the park.
- Gritting of main paths for safety reasons in icy weather due to high public use.
- Edging of flowerbeds after cutting grass. More frequent cutting.

The group will consider this further and provide additional feedback.

It was noted that we were very happy with the support given during preparations for this year's Remembrance Service by SSK and the working relationship with SSK Area Supervisor Steve McGlynn and also that with Wayne Bardsley has been very good.

3.5 Park Benches

Kay bench

No change.

Grey painted benches at Fletcher Moss Park

An initial response has been received from Friends of Fletcher Moss Park indicating that they are not responsible for the maintenance of the park benches there but they will try to find out answers to our questions about the treatment they have been given. Mick and Mark agreed a visit to the park would be a good idea too.

Hard-standing for 4 benches

Wayne has contacted Highways to see if they have any slabs to spare.

Mark will try to get to Etherow Park and see if there are still any there.

3.6 Town Centre Benches

Clearing of the grass from under the benches in the town centre has now been done. Thanks to Cllr Annette Finnie for pursuing this item for us.

3.7 Park Buildings and Infrastructure

Replacement of Midnight

Condition is deteriorating quickly now – we hope that Myers Tree Care will be able to source a large piece of timber suitable for creating a replacement for Midnight.

Painting of Pavilion Buildings

We have 2 part full tins of black gloss and 1 part full tin of white. This should be enough to make a start next year but we will ask Greenspace to order more next FY.

Bowling Hut / Pavilion Building roofs

We still await the outcome of Property Services' assessment of the roofs, however we have indication from Wayne Bardsley that they apparently consider it to be OK.

Breathing Places reading circle

Renewal of the hard-standing surface has been discussed with Wayne Bardsley and will be raised again next FY, when funding may be available to help.

York stone stolen from park entrance

Highways have given Cllr. Allan a forecast completion date of 27 December 2017.

Graffiti around the back of the library

(Post meeting note: graffiti has been painted over.)

Painting of Infants Play area fence

We have 2 full 5L tins and 1 part tin of cream paint, 1 full 5L tin and 1 part tin of red and the same for blue. So we will be able to start next year but will need more. We will ask Greenspace to jet-wash the fence next spring in preparation for painting.

Boules Court

Sourcing of materials to top-up the Boules Court has been discussed with Greenspace and we will raise the matter again in the new FY, when funding may be available.

Circular Coronation Bench

Mark has begun discussing potential refurbishment of the circular bench with Wayne Chaisty. It may be possible to remove, blast-clean, galvanise, powder-coat and then reinstall it but there are quite a few technical challenges to overcome. Discussions will continue to determine if this is viable.

Information board near to Lock 10

Contact details for an Art Tutor at Marple College have been received from Steve Abbott and Mark will follow this up to see if they are interested in getting involved.

The frame has been inspected and it looks like it could be refurbished by volunteers, meaning that only new artwork would be required. There are a number of other interpretation lecterns in the park that would also benefit from new artwork.

3.8 Skatepark Development Project

Outstanding Skatepark Project tasks

Rubber bonded mulch repair

Richard has asked SSK to soil over the lifting edge of the bonded mulch that is coming away and says that grass should then knit it back together.

Screening trees and shrubs

A meeting is being arranged to discuss the plans for tree planting with residents during the week before Christmas.

Switching off lights

Cllr. Allan has obtained technical approval for our proposal to switch the lights off at a fixed time. We are now waiting for costing information to be provided, which seems to be proceeding at normal council speed and will probably need to be chased up again.

3.9 World War I Centenary Commemorations

Timeline Commemoration

Ben Phillips and Joe Duddy have been added since the last meeting and Frank Allen will complete the casualties of 1917 tomorrow. Things start again on 25th January 2018 and then become horrendous during the March "Spring Offensive".

No further work has been done on the permanent timeline feature at this stage.

3.10 Task Days

Last Task Days – 25 November 2017

Unfortunately this task day was cancelled due to poor weather.

Ad-hoc Task Days

Nothing scheduled.

Next Task Days – 30 December 2017 and 27 January 2018

Parking is requested for these. Emails will be sent out when due.

On 30 December we will head for the pub for refreshments!

Task Day Registration / Risk Assessments

Risk Assessments have been reviewed and updated and a Task Day Application covering 1 January to 30 June 2018 has been submitted for approval.

Saturday Task Days in 2018: 27 January, 24 February, 17, 31 March, 14, 28 April, 12, 26 May, 16, 30 June, 14, 28 July, 11, 25 August, 15, 29 September, 13, 27 October, 10, 24 November & 29 December.

Training

We await news of any further dates for training.

Dates are also still awaited for Mick and Bob to do the power-tools training.

Power Tools

Nothing new.

4.0 Funding - Status of Funds

Last statement on 22 November shows a balance of £3,917.56.

Income since last meeting:

£89.42 Local Giving.
£25.00 Donation from Bowling Club.

Expenditure since last meeting:

£7.99 Telescopic anvil loppers purchased by Patrick.

The sum of £7.99 above will be refunded to Patrick from donations collected In the park. A sum of just over £19 cash from park collections is still to be paid into the account too.

Currently committed funds are: WWI Display £122 and Plants £72, leaving a current working balance of £3,421.72.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 Name plates for driveway into the park

Wayne has obtained a price of £340 for installing a double sign at the entrance and a single sign at the top of the drive near the car park entrance.

A public question asking Marple AC if they would be able to fund this from their Highways Initiative budget has been submitted and will be considered on Wednesday.

(PMN: The AC were happy for Wayne to submit a report requesting funds for this.)

5.2 Manure for allotment beds

Heavy Duty sacks have been provided by Greenspace and passed to the Allotment Team. They have brought 2 loads to the park so far using their own vehicles, so it looks like it will not be necessary to arrange transport.

The manure is fresh and not suitable for our flowerbeds. If there is a surplus it can be stored in the shrub bed nearest to the flowerbeds to rot down.

5.3 Open Gardens in Marple (7th and 8th July 2018)

An article has appeared in the Review. 18 gardens are now "signed up".

Organiser Mary Hoult applied for some funding to Parkers. This wasn't successful but a runner-up prize of a large sack of a special double-headed variety of daffodil bulbs was awarded. Mary has kindly donated these to the park.

5.4 Tea Dances at Roman Lakes

An excellent event enjoyed by all.

5.5 Encouraging new and younger volunteers

Ideas for this can be discussed and developed further at future meetings.

Joyce has put forward a provisional idea of having a 'Little Growers' stand and lots of quite large seeds with pictures of what they'll look like, and pots and compost, and encouraging the children to plant something - and then encourage them and parents to bring it back to the park to plant out on a summer task day. That way a connection is established which might 'take root'. It was agreed that this sounded an excellent idea and should be developed further.

6.0 Next Meeting

Monday 12 February 2018 at 6.15pm in Marple Library.

Future meeting dates scheduled for 2018 (library booked):

8 January (cancelled), 12 February, 12 March, 9 April, 14 May, 11 June 2018.