

**Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting
Monday 11th February 2008
Marple Library**

Present: Adrian Ellis (Acting Chair), Robert Wilson, Micaela Wood, Jay Havoleana, Bill Ardern, Patrick O'Herlihy, Mark Whittaker.

1.0 Apologies: Dave Burrows, Rebecca Nedeljkovic, Chris Armitt.

2.0 Minutes of the Last Meeting: Agreed.

3.0 Matters Arising.

3.1 BBC Breathing Places Reading Area

Landscape Work and Planting

Rebecca was on leave last week and as today is her first day back she has not yet caught up with everything. Mark has discussed the agenda items with her this afternoon and obtained updates where available.

The landscape work was completed a couple of weeks ago but the planting around the path and reading circle has not yet been done. Before going on leave Rebecca's believed that the contractor was obtaining the plants so she will chase him up to find what is happening.

Sculpture

Mark confirmed that the BLF Project Officer has agreed that the budget for the sculpture can be increased from £1,000 to £1,800, utilising the surplus from the landscape works.

Rebecca provided Andrew Frost with a reminder of the brief on 22nd January and asked for sketches based on this for the group to review but he has not yet responded. Adrian said he was aware that Andrew was struggling with his current workload due to the weather and had not yet finished the job at Torkington Park.

Rebecca will chase Andrew up stressing that we have concerns about meeting the project's deadline of end of May 2008.

(Post meeting note: Rebecca has made contact 12th Feb. Andrew has undertaken to provide sketches by Friday 15th. He is planning to use a large section of beech and the sculpture should stand around 6 feet high. When the sketches are received Mark will distribute for review rather than wait for the next meeting.)

Under-storey Planting

Rebecca advised Mark earlier today that she has prepared a list of shrubs suitable for under-storey planting but has not yet priced them up.

Mark will ask Rebecca to do this as soon as possible so that we can understand the costs and include them in proposals to be put to the BLF Project Officer. However, in addition to this, Adrian advised that Dave Burrows has told him that he has ordered the under-storey plants, some wildflowers and also the willow bundles discussed last month, which leave the situation a little confused.

Mark asked Adrian to clarify as soon as possible with Dave what had been ordered and the associated costs, as we should be agreeing how we will spend the surplus funds with the BLF before proceeding.

Wildflowers

Mark advised that wildflowers are available in trays of 104 plugs for a cost of £57.50, including VAT and delivery. The plugs can be purchased as mixed varieties suitable for sunny, shaded or semi-shaded areas.

It is possible that the council can get them cheaper than this and the situation needs to be clarified with Dave Burrows before agreeing the way forward.

Bird & Bat Boxes

12 bat boxes made by the David Lewis Centre were available for the January task day but as Adrian was off sick the installation was postponed. They should be installed on the 23rd February task day.

The cost of these is £40 and Micaela will ask Terry for an invoice from the David Lewis Centre so that it can be paid.

Hedgehog Boxes

Terry has also agreed to make some hedgehog boxes but as the details of the design chosen were not completely clear one box has been purchased, at a cost of £29.50, so that he can see how they are made.

It was agreed that one hedgehog box should be sufficient for the area behind the library but two others could be sited elsewhere within the park. Micaela will therefore ask Terry to work out a price for two more.

Providing Terry has obtained all the details he needs it is planned to install the existing box in the area behind the library on the 23rd. It will need to be buried beneath tree limbs and cuttings that can be trimmed in the park on the day or Adrian will provide.

Wildlife Habitats

Mark advised that a variety of fabricated wildlife habitats were available:

- Bug boxes - £12 - £15 each
- Bumble Bee Nests - £15 to £20 each
- Solitary Bee Houses - £20 to £25 each
- Ladybird Houses - £12 to £15 each

Proposals for spending surplus funds

The BLF Project Officer has confirmed that, subject to agreement of the details, we can spend the surplus funds within the park as a whole rather than being restricted to the area behind the library. She has also confirmed that the purchase of appropriate books is acceptable and several suitable titles were discussed.

Further to Jay's enquiry last month Linda Paton has advised that the library will be ordering 15 seating mats at a cost of £9.50 each, probably before the end of April. They will be stored in the library and easy for the children to carry. Linda confirmed that the money for them is available, so we do not need to consider funding this.

Mark advised that a bat-detector training course was being run at Reddish Vale on 10th May between 4.30pm and 11.30pm at a cost of £20 per person and the BLF may consider this to be a suitable use of funds. A few members expressed an interest so Mark will find out more.

Jay advised that the main recommendation from her reading of the Urban Handbook was that we should plant thistles and native shrubs with berries that will encourage wild birds.

In conclusion, it was agreed in principle that the surplus funds should be spent primarily on planting of shrubs, plants and wildflowers throughout the park's nature areas with some money also allocated to wildlife habitats, books and possibly the bat-detector training.

Once information is available from Rebecca and Dave Burrows Mark will draft up a costed proposal for the group to agree.

Other Breathing Place matters

The Big Lottery Fund provides a free plaque for the Breathing Places they have funded. Jay agreed to order one of these from the BLF using the form provided.

Jay queried if there had been enough involvement of children in creating the area. It was felt that the participation of the Beaver Scouts had been a key element and satisfied what we undertook to do in the application but there would be no harm in seeking further opportunities.

Patrick will raise this with his contacts at the local schools, perhaps with a view to organising a bird survey or similar activity. It should also be possible to involve the school children in planting of wildflowers.

Jay also volunteered to conduct an initial bird survey in order to establish something to measure improvements against in the future.

The artwork for the interpretation board will need to begin development soon.

3.2 Basketball Court Fence

Patrick advised that his discussions with users of the basketball court have identified that a 3m high fence along the full length of the two sides of the court was essential for it to become properly used.

There had been some disagreement over whether a break in the fence giving access down to the lower level local to the teen shelter (as shown on the current plan) was desirable. However, it was concluded that this would be advantageous providing a chicane arrangement could be adopted to prevent the basketball escaping through it too easily.

Due to the change in height of the fence it will be necessary to submit a formal amendment to the planning application. It was also considered appropriate to ensure that local councillors were aware of the proposed changes to the scheme that has been approved.

Mark will ask Rebecca if she can deal with these issues and also obtain a revised price for the higher fence with a chicane opening and steps down to the lower level. Mark will also reiterate Patrick's offer of help with this and ask Rebecca to get in touch with him directly if she would like to take this up.

It is understood that the fence can be funded from the available commuted sum of £4.7k, however, £1k of this is expected to be spent on the infants play area, leaving a balance of £3,752.

The cost of the original scheme without the steps was £3,375, so there is likely to be a shortfall. The group would hope to be able to make this up from their own fundraising activities if this is the case.

Before leaving the basketball / teen area Mark advised that, with Rebecca's help, an application has been submitted to the Stockport Primary Care Trust for the purchase and installation of £5,000 worth of outdoor fitness equipment in this area. The outcome of the application is expected in early March.

3.3 Beech Tree Sculpture

Adrian advised that he had not yet had an opportunity to speak to Andrew Frost about the replacement apple sculpture. The wood was delivered to Torkington Park over Christmas but Andrew has not yet taken it. Adrian will follow this up with him as soon as possible.

Adrian also advised that installation of the ground sculptures would be his team's next job, after the current round of park inspections, and he anticipated it would be done during the first two weeks of March.

The markings or stains on the tree sculpture were discussed and Mark asked if they could be cleaned off and the sculpture re-oiled. Adrian will investigate the best action to take.

3.4 Infants Play Area

Micaela and Bob visited Brabyns Preparatory School on Monday 21st January and were presented with a cheque for £743.10p towards the play equipment, taking the amount raised by the group to £3,362.

Mark has asked Rebecca to invoice the group for this amount so that the money can be handed over to the council to pay the contractor when the work is fully completed.

The installation work is almost finished, with the main outstanding items being the new benches and play table. Rebecca has advised that these have been ordered and the contractor has been asked to install them after the half-term break, so that the play area can be used during the holiday.

Micaela has spoken to users in the park and the feedback has been good. Bob has also received mainly positive comments, although there has been some criticism of the coloured markings on the tarmac. Mark has received some criticism on the web site that the equipment is a little tame for the upper age range. He has also expressed concern to Rebecca about the coloured artwork markings, which are supposed to symbolise the old boating pond that used to be there.

(Post meeting note: Rebecca has inspected the markings and asked the contractor to re-do them and also to include the blue outline of the pond's perimeter as on the original scheme.)

Mark asked Adrian if he would speak to Dave Burrows about organising a formal reopening of the area and if he could invite Cllr. Alexander to preside. Adrian and Bob advised that there had actually been an opening ceremony conducted on Friday 8th February with Cllr. Alexander and David Brayshay. The group were extremely disappointed to learn that this had been arranged without their involvement being acknowledged by an invitation to attend the ceremony.

3.5 Boules Court.

Since the location of the Boules Court was agreed last month a representative of users of the Senior Citizens Hall has asked Mark if the group will consider locating it closer to the hall, to make it more accessible to the less mobile users.

Mark has already fed this back to Dave Burrows and Adrian and they both feel that there is nowhere of sufficient size that is suitable nearer to the hall. This was discussed further at the meeting and the general consensus was that the proposed location was the most suitable.

Adrian suggested that extra benches could be provided in the area to make it more comfortable and accessible to the less firm.

Mark did invite the Senior Citizens representative to attend the meeting to express their point of view but as nobody has come he will feed back the outcome of the groups deliberations.

Funding still needs to be found for this with the O2 Community Scheme being a possible source for up to £1,000 of the £2,240 sum needed.

3.6 Task Days

Last Day – 26 January

Despite a small turnout those who did attend managed to mulch the two large shrub beds near the tree sculpture and the Council Offices.

Next Task Day – 23 February

Proposed tasks include installing the bat boxes and hedgehog box in the Breathing Places area and Bob would like the shrub beds near to the entrance to be mulched too.

Mark has sent a poster to Richard Booker for printing and laminating but they have not come back yet.

War Memorial Flowerbeds

Adrian confirmed that drawing up the planting scheme was his next office job and would be completed as soon as possible.

Car parking during task days

The arrangements for free car parking worked satisfactorily for the last task day and Mark will submit the same registration numbers for the next one.

3.7 Fundraising Activities

Micaela confirmed that the Marple Cinema fundraising event would be a special showing of the Railway Children on Sunday 27th April at 2pm.

This has been confirmed with Mr. Lillis and the fee of £119.26 for the hire of the film has been sent to the British Film Institute. There will also be a charge for Ushers to be paid near the time, which is expected to be around £60.

The next step is to begin publicising the event and selling tickets. Micaela, Terry, Mark and Gill will get together to sort out the details for a poster and how the tickets will be sold. Micaela and Terry will also look at obtaining suitable raffle prizes, perhaps linked to the film's theme.

Patrick offered to email the details to his local school contacts once they are finalised.

3.8 Park Cottage

No new information available.

3.9 Pets' Memorial

After a series of red herrings Adrian has traced the pets' memorial mentioned at the Green Space Forum to Gatley Carrs Park. He is currently waiting for details to be emailed to him and will pass them on once received.

3.10 Status of Funds

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|--------------------------|---------|--------|
| Current bank balance: | £11,767 | |
| Committed Funds: | £10,719 | |
| Breathing Places | | £6,945 |
| Tree Sculpture | | £358 |
| Sundial & Shuttle panels | | £53 |
| Raised for Play Area | | £3,362 |
| Working balance: | £1,048 | |

Income since the last meeting includes £743.10 from Brabyns School, £50.81 interest, £20 donated from the Football Competition at Mark's work and £10 from the sale of a Gordon Mills video. Outgoings were £119.26 for the film hire and £29.50 for the hedgehog box.

The accounts for the period ending 31st December 2007 have been submitted to the McInnes Partnership for audit.

Patrick enquired about the group's sources of funding and Mark gave a summary of the money received in the last financial year. Patrick explained that the District Partnership and Marple Business Forum were keen to spend their funds locally and he believed that the group's activities were the kind of things that they would wish to support. Mark confirmed that the group would be delighted if the Partnership or Forum would consider donating some of their funds to be spent in the park and Patrick agreed to pursue this with them.

4.0 Monthly Park Report

Bob has been on holiday for much of January but has managed to fit in a history talk at Chadkirk on the canals and the origins of Chadkirk.

Main tasks have been working on the shrub beds and getting the Bowling Green ready for the new season starting in April.

Adult students will be helping in the park in the near future and there have been further discussions with the Stockport Volunteers.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 Lock 17

Malcolm Allcard has approached Mark with concerns about the height of the gates and stonework on the Lock 17 display. Mark has similar views and will be meeting with Malcolm and Adrian to discuss the possibility of doing something about this.

5.2 O2 Community Grant

Mark provided everyone with a copy of the guidelines for the O2 Community Grant scheme and asked if they would consider ideas that might be suitable to apply for up to £1,000 to be spent in the park.

5.3 Green Flag Award

Adrian advised that the Green Flag Award application for 2008/09 had been completed and submitted. It is not yet known when the inspection will be held.

5.4 Lights out

Bill Arden complained that many of the lights were not working in the park and he had counted eight out of order this evening.

5.5 Security Cameras

Micaela raised the fact that so much money had been spent in the park in recent times and wondered if it would be possible to install security cameras to deter vandalism and abuse of the equipment. Patrick was enthusiastic about this idea and undertook to raise it with the Marple Business Forum and report back.

6.0 Date of next Meeting (AGM)

Monday 17 March 2008 at 6pm in Marple Library.

List of reminders:

Write to Wyevale Garden Centre regarding sponsorship
Spring task – jest wash and oil the log bench
Spring planting and plaque for Lock 17 Flowerbed
Park leaflet update

Friends of Marple Memorial Park – AGM

Venue: Marple Library

Date/Time: Monday 17th March 2008 6.00pm

Agenda

1. Apologies

2. Minutes of the last meeting

3. Annual General Meeting

3.1. Chairman's Report

3.2. Treasurer's Report

3.3. Election of Officials:

3.3.1.1. Chairman

3.3.1.2. Treasurer

3.3.1.3. Secretary

3.3.1.4. Committee

4. Matters arising