

Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting

Monday 15th January 2007

1.0 Present: Dave Burrows (Chair), Micaela Wood, Jay Havoleana, Robert Wilson, Peter Bardsley, Bill Ardern, Lesley Wright (PCT), Chris Armitt, Adrian Ellis, Malcolm Allcard (Marple Locks Heritage Society), Mark Whittaker.

Apologies: Lesley Wright apologised for missing the last meeting – she had arrived early, thinking it started at 6pm, and the library staff advised her that the meeting had probably been cancelled as a number of ad-hoc meetings had already been held during December (for the Breathing Places application).

2.0 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted and approved.

3.0 Matters Arising.

3.1 Marple Locks Festival 2007

Dave Burrows welcomed Malcolm Allcard from Marple Locks Heritage Society, who came to the meeting to advise the Friends about this year's Locks Festival and to participate in the discussions about the Locks Flowerbed.

The Locks Festival will be held on 1st July 2007 with displays and activities in the park and along the length of the locks, following a similar format to previous years. Malcolm said it was planned for the Marple Bell-ringers to play on a canal boat whilst being transported down the locks. He advised that any local groups who would like to participate with a stall in the park would be most welcome. There will not be any charges for taking part but profit-making organisations were being asked to contribute 5% of their profits on the day towards the festival's running costs.

Malcolm agreed to provide an article about the festival for inclusion in the next Friends of the Park newsletter.

3.2 Marple Locks Flowerbed

The proposal to move the flowerbed from its present position was discussed and it was unanimously agreed that it should be relocated to Oldknow Gardens, adjacent to lock 13 on the canal, where it would be safer and also make an excellent feature to enhance the entrance to Marple from the direction of Strines.

Dave Burrows advised that the best price received for making metal replica lock gates for the flowerbed display was from Wayne Chaisty of Ironwood. This was £950 to supply or £1,200 to supply and fit. Dave agreed to obtain a written quote from Wayne for inclusion in a funding application. It was agreed that the best option would be for Ironwood to supply and fit the gates.

Mark advised that there are grants of up to £3,000 available from the Community Foundation "Stockport Fund", who may feel that this is a community project that they would be prepared to support. Mark agreed to submit an application to them before their current deadline of 22nd January for the costs of the metal lock gates, a plaque and other material costs associate with the relocation.

It was agreed that other than the lock gates the manual work to relocate the flowerbed could be carried out by the Parks and Recreation Team supported by volunteers from the Friends and from Marple Locks Heritage Society working together.

(Post meeting note: An application to the Stockport Fund was send by recorded delivery on Friday 19th January. Cllr Andrew Bispham has once again kindly agreed to act as referee for the group.)

3.2 Mosquito Deterrent Device

Dave Burrows advised that he had discussed the possible use of a "mosquito deterrent" device in the park at the council and the response had been unfavourable. There are no existing council installations of the devices in the Stockport Borough and there were concerns about human rights and discrimination against particular age groups. It is therefore unlikely that they would agree to an installation in the park and it is probably not worth pursuing.

3.3 Removal of old Flagpole

Dave Burrows advised that he had a price of £200 for disconnecting the electrics from the flagpole, which includes removal of the pole too. A price for disconnecting the electrics only has not been provided.

Mark advised that the Friends do not have the money to pay for this at present and reminded Dave of Myers Tree Care's offer to remove the pole free of charge if the electrics were disconnected.

Dave said he would check if he could fund the removal from the Parks & Recreation budget and if this were possible he would do so. If not, he will obtain a price for disconnecting the electrics only.

3.4 Task Days.

The next Task Day is on Saturday 20th January from 10am to 2pm. Mark handed round some posters to publicise the event and Micaela and Jay agreed to distribute them around Marple. The tasks will include levelling of the current site of the Locks Flowerbed display and installing the second interpretation board at the entrance to the park near Oldknow's Warehouse at lock 10.

The following task day is Saturday 24th February 2007, 10am to 2pm.

Mark advised that a list of agreed independent activities and events for Friends of Groups had been received from the council clarifying what could be carried out without a council officer in attendance and still be covered by the council's insurance. Copies are available on request.

3.5 Oldknow Memorial Plaque

Dave Burrows reported that objections to the memorial being placed outside had been received from Paul Hartley, the council's Conservation Officer. He was of the opinion that the memorial should be displayed in the church or, failing that, in the library.

Mark explained that unfortunately there is no room for the plaque in the church. The proposals to put it on public display already have the approval of the church council and Marple Area Committee. The snag is that the plaque is not made of material suitable for external use, hence the need to find an appropriate indoor location or construct a weatherproof and vandal proof display enclosure. Mark was doubtful that there was a sufficiently prominent location in the library but agreed to have a look.

(Post meeting note: The original reason for the proposal to put the plaque on public display is that the church council say there is no room to display it in the new All Saints' Church. In March 2003, following an approach by the Marple Website, All Saints' Parochial Church Council voted unanimously that Oldknow's plaque should be released for use as a public memorial, subject to approval of a final scheme by the Chester Diocese. In addition, Marple's Area Committee recorded their support for the proposal to display the Oldknow Memorial Plaque in a suitable and prominent public place in February 2003. Mark and Peter both feel that there is no site available in the library that would do justice to the memory of Samuel Oldknow and believe that this project is more likely to succeed if they pursue it independently of the normal activities of the Friends of the Park.)

3.6 Removal of Copper Beech Tree

Dave Burrows apologised for the lack of communication that resulted in the Friends not being notified of the removal of the Copper Beech tree near to Hollins House until after the work had started in December. He confirmed that the tree was unsafe and that due to the objections received it had gone to Area Committee on 3rd January, where its removal was approved.

Dave advised that the work was due to recommence this week and, weather permitting, it should be completed within a couple of days. Dave confirmed that limbs from the tree would be used in the park to form wildlife habitats and as mulch on the flowerbeds. He also advised that he had asked for the stump to be retained for a possible wood sculpture similar to the owl at Etherow Park and would report back on this at the next meeting.

Malcolm Allcard advised that he could supply galvanised wire and staples if needed to tie the logs together so they couldn't be scattered after the wildlife habitats had been formed.

3.7 Green Flag Application

Dave Burrows advised that he was currently working on the action plan for the Green Flag application and asked the group if there were any actions that they would like to see added to the plan?

Mark recalled that in the last report the judges were complimentary about the interpretation for the stocks and recommended there should be more like this in the park for the other heritage features. It was therefore agreed that the following actions relating to this should be added:

- Interpretation for the Marple Hall Sundial.
- Interpretation for Oldknow's Mellor Mill Headstone.
- A replica copy of the dedication stone inside the Bowling Green shelter now used as a tool shed, should be placed on the outside to make people aware that it had been built by Marple soldiers who returned from the Great War in memory of their fellows who did not.

Malcolm Allcard advised that there was a company in Macclesfield who may be able to make a fibreglass replica of the stone and he would try and confirm their details.

3.8 Primary Care Trust

Lesley Wright briefly explained that her role with the Primary Care Trust was to try and make it easier to for people of all ages to stay

healthy. Marple has a large elderly population and a major part of her work here is to find ways to help keep them fit, healthy, independent and to maintain their quality of life. The main issues are usually circulatory problems like heart disease and strokes, which are lifestyle issues that can be improved by physical activity.

Bob's Health Walks were acknowledged as an excellent contribution towards this and Lesley advised that she would like to see them expanded if possible.

Lesley agreed to put together a brief article about the Primary Care Trust for the next issue of the Friends' newsletter.

Lesley also added that she might be able to help with funding applications for activities that encouraged people to use the park and it was important that the young are able to use it but not spoil it for others. A number of issues were discussed in relation to this, the key ones being:

Infants Play Area – Since the burning down of the infants' playhouse the facilities for them in the park are extremely limited and it was felt it was very important to replace it. Unfortunately the equipment was not insured and had an expected life of 2 – 3 years remaining, so there are no provisions in existing budgets to replace it.

It was concluded that a scheme for new equipment and a new safe surface should be developed with a view to establishing what should be done and what the cost would be. It would then give a clear position from which sources of funding could be pursued. Dave Burrows agreed take this action up with the Parks & Recreation Landscape Team.

Teenagers Play Equipment – Part of the reason for the abuse of the Junior Play Area is that there are limited facilities for older teenagers. The skate park is certainly an excellent facility but does not appeal to all teenagers. Bramhall Park was quoted as an example of a local park that has equipment for older teenagers that is considered to be successful.

Adrian highlighted that there was a large piece of equipment available that was intended for Bruntwood Park but had proved to be too big. He understood that there was a cost of £3,000 associated with installing it and that he believed it would fit in Memorial Park. Dave Burrows agreed to investigate the details of this equipment and report back at the next meeting.

4 Monthly Park Report

Bob Wilson reported that:

- The area of wall between the park and the canal had now been repaired.
- The problems with the college students using the junior play equipment have improved significantly since last month and at present no further action would be necessary.
- The young person doing community service in the park is half way through his 8 hours and will be completing it over the next week.
- A memorial tree has recently been planted in the park and another is due to be planted soon.
- Complaints have been received about waterlogged grass in the park but there is little that can be done about this.
- There are several old lampposts still to be removed.
- He is concerned about the state of the bedding, especially around the war memorial. This is mainly attributable to the weather.
- Main tasks at present are weeding paths and general maintenance.

Bob also advised that ideas are still being sought for the entry to this year's Tatton Show, so if anyone did have any to let him know.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 AGM

Mark advised that the accounts were submitted to McInnes-Associates for audit at the beginning of January. It was agreed that the AGM would be pencilled in for March 2007 and confirmed at the next meeting after the discussions about Brabyns Park had taken place.

5.2 Newsletter

It was agreed that preparation for a new newsletter should commence. Mark will edit and produce again for the council to print. Bill Ardern will prepare an article about this year's carnival, the theme for which will be Science Fiction. Malcolm and Lesley will be preparing articles and any other material for the newsletter, including photos and graphics, should be sent to Mark.

5.3 Stockport Youth Services

Chris Armitt noted that Stockport Youth Services have not been represented at the meetings for many months and enquired if there was a new contact since Andrea Nylands had left. Dave Burrows agreed to contact SYS to find out.

5.4 Green Space Development Grant

Mark advised that the next Green Space Development grant deadline was the 1st Friday in February and the following one the 1st Friday in June. It was agreed that there was not time to submit one for February but if the result of the Breathing Places application in May is successful it may provide an opportunity to ask for the Friends' proposed contribution of £485 to free up existing reserved funds for other activities.

5.5 Breathing Places

Mark confirmed that a letter had been sent to Dr. Manton in response to his comments about the Breathing Places proposals and passed copies to Jay and Dave. It is believed that Dr. Manton is much happier with the revised proposals.

5.6 Marple Wine Club

Mark advised that Marple Wine Club have a web page on the Marple Website and over the last two years the Club has donated commission on sales through the web site to the Iron Bridge Restoration Project, raising over £54 towards match funding. Now that fundraising for the Iron Bridge is complete John Hulme, who runs the club, has agreed to donate the commission to the Friends of the Park. Mark encouraged any wine buffs in the group to check out the web page as a great selection of wines were available at good prices and they could now be helping the park as they drink it!

5.7 Park Keeper's Cottage

Not discussed at the meeting as the library was closing but Mark has received an update from David Brayshay advising that there is no real change to the situation reported in more detail at previous meetings. David is keen to find a use for the cottage that would benefit the park and local community but has not had any new contact from parties interested in making use of the building. Hopefully this can be discussed further at the next meeting.

6.0 Date of next Meeting.

Monday 12th February 2007 at 6:30 in Marple Library.