

**Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting
Monday 23rd July 2007
Marple Library**

Present: Adrian Ellis (Acting Chair), Bill Ardern, Rebecca Nedeljkovic, Linda Paton (Part time) Micaela Wood, Jay Havoleana, Robert Wilson, Mark Whittaker.

1.0 Apologies: Dave Burrows, Chris Armitt, Brian Pendlebury.

2.0 Minutes of the Last Meeting:
The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

3.0 Matters Arising.

3.1 BBC Breathing Places Reading Area

Library Display

Linda Paton, Senior Librarian from Stockport School Library Service who helped the Friends prepare their successful grant application, showed the group a new display prepared by library staff about the Breathing Places project. This will be located near the sitting area downstairs in the library looking out towards the woodland. Linda asked if it would be possible to update the display with new information as the project progresses to show "the story so far" and the Friends agreed to help with this.

Tree Work

Rebecca advised that she would be visiting the site with Tree Officer Jim McGarrie tomorrow and the work would be done either the last week in July or the last week in August. The budget was confirmed at £1,000 maximum and may come in slightly under.

Landscape Work

Three prices have been received with one contractor coming in significantly below the others, giving a saving of around £800 against the budget of £3,360 for landscape works. The lowest price contractor will start as soon as the tree work is completed. The saving can be used as a contingency against other areas overspending, although any changes greater than £200 or 10% within agreed budgets must be approved by the Big Lottery Fund.

Sculpture

Rebecca has met with Andrew Frost and he has agreed to schedule some time during December. The principle of a design that can incorporate hanging bird feeders has been agreed but the details will be subject to the raw material that can be sourced for the job. Savings in other areas such as the landscape work may mean that the £1,000 budget for the sculpture can be increased, subject to agreement with the BLF.

Bird & Bat Boxes

Micaela confirmed that the David Lewis Centre would be able to make the bat boxes as well as the bird boxes. Numbers and locations need to be confirmed before placing an order.

Jay has not yet had any success in contacting either the Bat Conservation Trust or the RSPB High Peak Group to see if they would be able to come to a meeting to give advice on how best to encourage bats and birds to use the woodland area but will continue trying.

Hedge Packs

Mark has written to the Scouts inviting them to become involved in the project and asked them if they would be prepared to order 8 free hedge packs from the Woodland Trust 'Tree for All' scheme for the Breathing Places area and 7 packs for the border near the cinema.

Mark has also discussed the proposal to plant a hedgerow along the park side of his perimeter wall with Dr. Manton and confirmed that this is acceptable to him.

Interpretation Board

Although this will not be completed until the later stages of the project Rebecca agreed to try and firm up the price to confirm if our budget of £1,000 is adequate.

3.2 Task Days

3.2.1 Last Task Day

Considering the poor weather the last Task Day on 30 June was well attended. The Friends helped to move Marple Local History Society's display boards into the Scout Hut ready for the Locks Festival and carried out litter picking throughout the park.

The Youth Offending Team and a group of young people under their supervision also attended the Task Day. Despite the weather they worked well with Bob and planted up one of the flowerbeds near to the library.

Mark read out an enquiry from Brian Pendlebury of the YOT, who was unable to attend the meeting, asking if the group were happy with the attitude and involvement of the Young People on the previous task days they had attended. It was agreed that there had been no significant problems and particularly positive comments were made regarding the YOT supervisors. Mark will pass these back to Brian.

3.2.2 Future Task Days

The next Task Day is on Saturday 28 July and the Youth Offending Team will be in attendance again.

Adrian and Bob advised that tasks would include finishing the soiling up of the War Memorial beds, cutting back of shrubs and weeding.

Mark enquired when it would be possible to plant up the War Memorial flowerbeds and Bob advised that the ideal time would be to place an order for plants in September.

3.3 Teen Rotator

Adrian advised that the installation of the Teen Rotator was delayed due to the chosen contractor being unable to commit to a start date because of his current workload. Gareth from Playground Maintenance has therefore approached a different contractor who is due to finish working in Gatley in the next fortnight and will hopefully be able to undertake the installation.

It was agreed that some information should be added to the Friends' notice boards about the Teen Rotator as people may wonder what is going on during the installation.

3.4 Basketball Court Improvements

The planning application submitted by Rebecca for the fencing proposal has been returned. It will be resubmitted this week with the additional copies of drawings required and Rebecca will add an access statement plus details of both weld mesh and chunky fencing options.

Once planning permission is received the group will try to formulate a strategy to fund the work. It is likely that it may have to be done in stages.

Mark advised that there was still no response from Des Oakley regarding funding options despite Dave Burrows chasing him up as requested last month.

One of the new chain nets recently purchased by the Friends has gone missing from one of the basketball hoops. Mark has spoken to some of the youngsters using the court, who said that they did not know who had removed it but admitted that they had moved the remaining net to the hoop they used most often. Mark advised them that the Friends would probably be prepared to replace the net but cannot do so repeatedly. It was agreed that two more nets would be ordered giving a replacement and a spare. If these do not last for a reasonable period of time it is unlikely that the group will sanction further spending on more chain nets.

3.5 Beech Tree Sculpture

Andrew Frost started the tree sculpture during the Locks Festival, as hoped, and the work has continued intermittently due to the poor

weather. The sculpture has received a hugely positive response from local people and the group are very pleased with the work to date.

Unfortunately the owl was vandalised by someone who sprayed it with black paint soon after the Locks Festival but thankfully this has not caused permanent damage and virtually all traces should be removed by the time Andrew has finished.

The main sculpture will always be vulnerable to the determined vandal and a discussion took place about whether the positioning of the ground sculptures near to the tree would encourage groups to congregate in the area after dark, increasing the likelihood of damage being inflicted upon it in the future. The consensus of the group was that the plans to site the ground sculptures near to the tree should still go ahead.

3.6 "Lock 17" Flowerbed

Planning approval has been received for the project and an order for the replica lock gates has been placed with Wayne Chaisty of Iron Wood. Delivery is expected within around six weeks.

3.7 Infants Play Area

Adrian, Rebecca and Mark met with Paul Battye, Area Sales Manager for Playdale on Friday 6th July. A second meeting will be held on Friday 3rd August when Paul will present the group with design proposals and costs for replacing the vandalised equipment and filling in the former model boating pool.

One of the key decisions agreed is that because the boating pool was donated in 1960 by a local businessman in memory of his wife it should not be completely obliterated by the new work. It is proposed that the new scheme will highlight the perimeter of the former boating pool in the surface and coloured images of boats and fish will be incorporated to maintain the theme of a pool without the obvious hazards.

Mark has exchanged emails and had a discussion with Cllr. Chris Baker regarding possible funding for the replacement play area. These were very positive and there are a number of options being investigated by the council that may provide some or all of the funds needed. It is proposed to approach local councillors again once the costed proposals are available.

During the Locks Festival Peter Bardsley was approached by a lady connected with Brabyns Preparatory School who suggested that the school might be able to help with funding of the play area and asked that the group write a letter to her about this. Mark has done this and a response is now awaited.

Rebecca advised that the resurfacing work associated with the play area was on a list of projects that may receive funding from a council resurfacing budget, although no decisions have been made at this stage.

Rebecca will investigate whether it will be necessary to obtain prices and designs from more than one company to satisfy council procedures.

3.8 Woodland Trust “Tree for All”

Mark has submitted an application to the Woodland Trust for £100 funding towards a Community Tree Planting Event. This has been acknowledged by the Trust and we should learn if it is successful within the next few weeks.

If awarded it is proposed to use the money to purchase 121 trees to be planted in the park during an event to be held on Saturday 27th October 2007.

3.9 Carnival / Locks Festival

The Locks Festival was a great success, despite the weather, and the Friends displays and stall received a good response from visitors. There was a lot of interest in the Tree Sculpture and the Infants Play Area in particular.

The Tombola at the Locks Festival and the Carnival a couple of weeks earlier raised a combined total of £395.61. The group acknowledged the considerable effort Micaela and husband Terry had put in to organising this.

An additional £24 was raised for the Friends via sales of Gordon Mills' videos and DVDs and prints donated by local artist Georgina Hargreaves.

Micaela also passed over £7 from the sale of the model canal boat prize that was not won during the Locks Festival.

Letters of thanks have been distributed to the local shops and businesses that donated a fantastic array of prizes for the carnival event and it is hoped that they will want to support us again next year.

3.10 Notice Boards

Prices are still awaited from Playground Maintenance for refurbishment of the existing notice board near the main entrance to the park and for a new board to go near the entrance to the park at Lock 10.

(Post meeting note: New Boards: £250 supply / £300 fitted but no plans to make any until the turn of the year at the earliest. Refurbishment: £10 for new pin board / £40 for replacement Perspex.)

3.11 Park Cottage

Tom Wilson contacted Mark after he read of the concerns over the delays to the flat roof repair in the last minutes, so a formal letter of complaint was not written. Tom has recently advised that the work has now been ordered and has promised to get back to Mark with further details of when the work will be carried out.

3.12 Child Protection Policy / CRB Checks

Mark has written to Iain Bate, Parks Development Officer, asking for advice regarding alternatives to the extremely complex child protection policy and associated documents kindly provided by Lynn Good of Friends of Ladybrook Valley. A response from Iain is awaited.

3.13 Green Flag Award

The park's receipt of a Green Flag Award for 2007/8 has been confirmed, although feedback and scores have not yet been received.

Adrian and Mark will attend the Green Flag Awards Ceremony at the Armoury in Leeds on Thursday 26th July to collect the award.

Mark asked Adrian to request if Dave Burrows could organise a similar flag raising ceremony in the park to previous years, inviting Cllr. Shan Alexander as Executive Member for Leisure.

3.14 T Shirts / Sweatshirts

Bill Ardern passed round colour samples for polo shirts and sweatshirts from Leisure Designs, who supply the Carnival Committee with their branded clothing. Mark also passed round an updated version of the Friends logo and it was agreed that Bill would request a sample of this using green and black thread on the yellow polo shirt material.

3.14 Status of Funds

Current bank balance:	£11,362
Commitments:	£9,945
Working balance:	£1,417

The above figures exclude the £485 Green Space Development Grant, which has been confirmed but not yet received. Up to £500 of the working balance is earmarked for the replica stone for the Bowling Green pavilion or heritage interpretation and £395 has been raised towards the Play Area.

4.0 Monthly Park Report

Bob reported that the weather has been causing delays on many fronts in the park and there was now a backlog of work, particularly pruning and weeding. The task days will help to recover some of these delays.

Bob also advised that the Stockport display at the Tatton Show this year, based on the theme of the Twin Rivers of Stockport, had won a Silver Guilt Medal.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 Replica Memorial Stone for Bowling Green Shelter

Mark passed around a photograph of the memorial stone inside the council tool shed and advised that he has asked Rebecca to look into options and costs for creating either a stone or cast metal replica to place on the outside of the building. Rebecca will try to do this before the next meeting.

It is intended to fund the replica from the £500 donated by The Marple Website / Marple Promotions but Mark will also speak to Peter Clarke, who is the local representative of the War Memorials Trust, about possibly applying for one of their small projects grants of £250.

(Post meeting note: unfortunately the WMT have advised that they will only fund repairs to existing memorials and not replica items.)

5.2 Ring o' Bells Quiz Nights

The first of two scheduled quiz nights for the Friends at the Ring o' Bells is to be held on 22nd August. The second will be on 26th September.

Mark asked for a good turn out by the Friends, as this was a great source of funds for them and many other local groups.

5.3 Bowling Green Fees

Mark advised that a member of the Bowling Club had highlighted to him that visiting bowlers regularly use the green at weekends without paying fees. In normal hours Bob collects these but there are no arrangements to collect them during the weekend. Adrian explained that the practicalities of collecting the money outweighed the advantages, especially when the money was not put back into the park itself anyway.

5.4 Merchant Navy Day Ceremony

Mark advised that there would be a flag raising ceremony organised by Ron Singleton in the park on Sunday 2nd September similar to the first one held in 2005, when the Friends purchased the Red Duster Flag with money provided by Marple Area Committee. The event will begin at 2pm with music from Hawk Green / Marple Bands and the service will commence at 2.30pm.

After being raised at the ceremony the flag will fly for the rest of the week.

6.0 Date of next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 20th August 2007 at 6:30 in Marple Library.