

**Friends of Marple Memorial Park AGM
Monday 9th March 2009
Marple Library**

Present: Micaela Wood, Bob Wilson, Adrian Ellis, Jonathan Long, Peter Bardsley, Mark Whittaker.

1.0 Apologies: Sandra Ellis, Patrick O'Herlihy.

1.1 Minutes of the last meeting:

Item 3.3, the post meeting note reporting that the roundabout is now working properly was incorrect. Jonathan will follow up with Gareth in Playground Maintenance to ascertain the latest situation.

2.0 Annual General Meeting

2.1 Chairman's Report

Adrian thanked everyone for their support of the park over the last year and gave a report on the group's achievements during 2008:

- The BBC Breathing Places Project was completed. The project included landscaping; tree work; construction of wildlife habitats for birds, bats, hedgehogs and insects; planting of hedgerows, trees, shrubs and wildflowers; a new nature sculpture and an interpretation panel. The project was launched with a Storytelling Event organised by Library Services in September and confirmation of its completion was received from the Big Lottery Fund in January 2009.
- A special showing of the Railway Children film was held at the Regent Cinema to raise funds for the group's activities. This was a great success, largely due to the hard work put in by Micaela.
- The group also manned a tombola stall at the Carnival, the Food Festival and the Marple Christmas Cracker to raise funds. Adrian thanked Micaela for her efforts with this too.
- A French Boules Court has been constructed with the help of an O2 Community Grant and a tournament to launch it was held in August 2008. This was very well attended and enjoyed by all.
- Three commemorative seats have been purchased to go alongside the Boules Court with the help of Marple Civic Society and Mr. J. Louth. These will be installed in the near future.
- Ground sculptures were installed around the Owl sculpture.
- A BBC "Do One Thing" Event was held to plant wildflowers throughout the park.
- The War Memorial was cleaned and a wreath was laid on Remembrance Day on behalf of the group.
- A regular Bird Survey has been started.

- A wildflower survey has been arranged.
- The Coronation Bench has been repaired following vandalism.
- A new carved sign was fitted at the entrance to the Infants Play Area, with thanks to Playground Maintenance for installation.
- A fence has been constructed along two sides of the Basketball Court and more new chain nets have been fitted to the hoops.
- The War Memorial flowerbeds have been replanted.
- The group has held a task day every month except for December.
- The park won its 5th Green Flag Award.

2.2 Treasurer's Report

Mark confirmed that the McInnes Partnership, Chartered Accounts and Registered Auditors have examined the Friends' accounts for 1st January to 31st December 2008, and a certified income and expenditure sheet for the year was distributed with the agenda. This is the 5th year the McInnes Partnership has provided this service free of charge and the group extended thanks to them for this.

Our income during 2008 was £5,904; down on the £14,000 raised in 2007 but nevertheless an excellent achievement. Highlights include:

- £1,000 O2 Community Grant.
- £1,000 from Mr. J. Louth for a commemorative seat.
- £796 raised by the tombola stall at local events.
- £750 from Marple Civic Society, also for a commemorative seat.
- £743 from Brabyns Preparatory School (towards Infants Play Area)
- £562 raised by the special showing of the Railway Children.

Our focus in 2008 was on spending the money raised and we've done that extremely well, with outgoings of almost £12,000 including:

- £5,537 on the Breathing Places Project
- £3,362 contributed towards the Infants Play Equipment
- £2,869 on construction of the French Boules Court.

At the end of the year we had a bank balance of £4,956 with £3,782 of that committed, giving us a working balance of £1,174.

Since then our commitment to the Basketball fence has reduced due to savings and we have had a further £91 income (Quiz night & football competition) and £26 expenditure (basketball nets) giving us a bank balance of £5,021 and a working balance of £1,480. Commitments are:

- £915 for the Breathing Places interpretation panel
- £2,381 for commemorative benches (including installation).
- £192 for the basketball fence
- £53 for interpretation

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.

2.3.3 Secretary / Social Secretary

Jay, the outgoing Secretary, stopped attending part way through last year and this role has become vacant. As there were no other candidates Micaela agreed to combine the role of Secretary and Social Secretary and this was agreed by all present.

2.3.5 Committee

In accordance with requirements of the constitution, the following five members were confirmed as committee members:

Peter Bardsley
Micaela Wood
Patrick O'Herlihy
Bob Wilson
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 BBC Breathing Places Reading Area

An invoice for £915 for the interpretation board has been received and a cheque for this was signed during the meeting. This is the last item outstanding and once it is paid the project can be fully closed out.

3.2 Basketball Court

An invoice for the group's contribution towards the fence has been received but it is for the wrong amount of £433. Mark has spoken to Rebecca and confirmed that the correct amount is £191.32 and a revised invoice will be sent.

Resurfacing of the court was discussed further and Mark will ask Rebecca to revalidate the prices obtained a year or two ago so that we have a clearer idea how much money would be needed. Jonathan will also look into whether Parks would be able to find the necessary funding to resurface the court and have it marked out.

3.3 Infants Play Area

Replacement Graphics

Work is still outstanding pending warmer / dryer weather.

Apple & Pear Sculptures

Adrian has discussed siting the sculptures inside the Infants Play Area with Gareth, who was concerned that they would need to be treated as play equipment and surrounded by safe surface if they were positioned within the fenced area. There may also be insurance issues and it was concluded that they would be better sited elsewhere within the park.

The group accepted this and it was agreed to review suitable locations for the sculptures to be installed during the next task day on 28th March.

Roundabout

There is no new information since the last meeting as Gareth has been on leave. Jonathan agreed to follow this up and advise the group.

3.4 Boules Court.

Commemorative Seating

The three commemorative seats have arrived and are currently stored at the Brabyns Depot. Adrian is waiting for a Playground Maintenance Engineer to visit to take measurements and arrange for the fabrication of leg attachments to allow them to be installed.

An invoice for £2,051 covering supply and delivery by Broxap has been received from Rebecca. A cheque for this was signed at the meeting but before sending off Mark will check that the plaques are as ordered.

As the seats are being installed on soft ground Mark suggested that paving slabs should be laid in front of them to prevent the grass being worn away. Adrian and Jonathan agreed that this would be of benefit and will be included in the installation.

Locations for the seats will be agreed during the task day on 28th March.

Interpretation

No formal feedback has been received from Marple Business Forum regarding the request for help with funding of an interpretation board, although their February minutes indicate that they may make a contribution after considering their annual budgets.

Mark will develop a design for review at the next meeting.

Compaction

Nothing discussed.

3.5 War Memorial

Memorial Rockery Scheme

Work is now completed on the scheme, which was funded by a grant for Green Flag parks. As it matures it should provide year round colour to enhance the memorial, although Bob is concerned that some of the specimens are rather small and may struggle to survive. This will have to be watched and replacements sought if necessary.

One of the problems being experienced before the planting matures is people allowing their dogs to roam across the beds.

The benefit of installing a low chain link fence around the beds, possibly just along the grassed sides, was discussed. It was felt that this would enhance the appearance and may provide some deterrent to people cutting across the beds, even if it did not stop the dogs. Jonathan agreed to look into the cost and practicalities of doing this.

Micaela suggested that a new page could be added to the group's web site recording the progress that has been made on the War Memorial and beds and Mark agreed to do this.

3.6 Task Days

Last Task Day – 28 February

A low-key turnout this time, probably due to the weather, but a good amount of work was completed including the rearrangement of one of the beds in front of the Council Offices.

A very pleasant curry night was also held at the Kinaray!

Next Task Day – 28 March

It is proposed to give the sensory garden a good makeover during the next task day. In addition it is hoped to choose a site for the Apple and Pear sculptures and confirm the positioning of the seats near to the French Boules Court.

Mark will provide Micaela with 6 posters to distribute to local shops, submit the request for free parking and issue the email notification.

3.7 Bird Survey

Nothing new from Ian Hilton but Patrick has advised that Ian will be continuing the survey on a quarterly basis from now on.

3.8 Park Cottage/ Band Room Proposals

No new information has been received. It is understood that the process outlined by Sue Emery last month is proceeding slowly.

4.0 Fundraising Activities

A general discussion on fundraising and grants was held and the group would like to seek grant options to bring new money into the park during the coming year.

Jonathan advised that the Parks Development Team can often help to identify sources of funding and he will make enquiries with them.

It was felt that the Skate Park / Teen area would be a good target for funding and it would be helpful if the Parks Development Team could assist Bob in finding out what sort of improvements users would like to see. Some possibilities include extending the Skate Park and outdoor fitness equipment.

Bob advised that he would like to see new kerbs installed along the pathways near to the tree sculpture as the borders between the path and the shrub beds have become very indistinct. It was agreed that this would be a good improvement but it was felt to be a maintenance / infrastructure matter that should be funded by the council rather than the Friends group.

4.1 Status of Funds

Current bank balance:	£5,021	
Committed Funds:	£3,541	
Breathing Places		£915
Basketball Fence		£192
Commemorative seating		£2,381
Sundial & Shuttle panels		£53
Working balance:	£1,480	

Refer to item 2.2 Treasurer's report for further details this month.

5.0 Monthly Park Report

With the start of the Bowling season fast approaching Bob advise that this is his current priority, and that his bowling green mower had broken and needs to be repaired.

Bob has also been discussing with the lady who teaches gardening at the college about how the students might be able to help in the park.

Adrian advised that the beds of the Lock 17 display on Oldknow Gardens have been cleared and will be replanted in the near future.

Mark explained the difficulties that the Locks Heritage Society were experiencing with the inertia of British Waterways in trying to get the piece of stone from their yard near the aqueduct for mounting of Gordon Mills' dedication plaque. Adrian suggested that there might be some stone in the Brabyns Depot that could be used. Jonathan also has access

to some old stone and asked for the dimensions of the plaque so that he could see if any of it may be suitable.

6.0 Any Other Business

6.1 Letter to Wyevale Garden Centre

Mark confirmed that he has now written to the manager of Wyevale Garden Centre to ask if they would be interested in sponsoring the group by supplying tools or other items that would be useful in the park.

6.2 Improvements to Park Entrance

Micaela asked if it was possible to make some progress on a design for improving the main entrance to the park, possibly something like the raised bed at Torkington Park.

Adrian and Jonathan agreed that they could produce a design. Jonathan also mentioned that B&Q used to operate a scheme where they provided materials free of charge to community groups. Mark will investigate if this scheme is still in operation.

7.0 Date of next Meeting

Monday 18th May 2009 at 6pm in Marple Library.

List of reminders:

Jet washing of Tree Sculpture.
Outdoor Fitness Equipment.
Re-painting of Coronation Bench.
Senior Citizens bench proposal.
Re-painting of Bowling Green buildings.