

**Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting (AGM)
Monday 8th May 2017
Marple Library**

Present: Adrian Ellis, Joyce Reed, Bob Wilson, Bernard Kelly, Mark Whittaker.

1.0 Apologies: Cllr Malcolm Allan, Patrick O'Herlihy, Micaela Wood, Terry Wood, Lorraine Thompson, Mick Thompson, Ann Frazer.

1.1 Minutes of the last meeting: Agreed.

2.0 Annual General Meeting

2.1 Chairman's Report for 2016/17

Successes and achievements since the last AGM in April 2016:

The Skatepark Project has remained our priority and following our most successful year of fund-raising (over £24,000 in 2016) we passed our target of £50,000 community funding plus £50,000 match-funding and the new skatepark was completed and opened on 29 March 2017.

Mark will give a full report on skatepark funding but notable highlights in 2016 include Local Giving schemes, Christmas collections in Asda and money raised at local events; donations from Marple Area Committee, Marple and Goyt Valley Rotary, The Marple Website, Marple Hall School and the Rotary Club of Stockport; Town Centre bench sponsorship, the 2nd Skatefest music night, the Julian Wadden Treasure Hunt, the Art Auction and William Wragg's charity of the month.

In addition to the £100,000 funding raised for the project, we have recently had some extra support from Life Leisure, who contributed £11,750 to enable us to concrete the lower section of the existing skatepark where the tarmac was beginning to break up.

The second JW Treasure Hunt in the park built on the success of the first in 2015 and was very popular and well attended. The third on 29 April was even more successful.

Our WWI Timeline Display is almost halfway across the railings now. There are 62 men's details on the display with another 79 to be added over the next 2 - 3 years. It's been great to see so many people reading the display, including schools at Remembrance time. We hope to turn the timeline into a permanent display and will be seeking funds to do this soon.

Thanks to our campaigning new swings have been fitted in the Infants Play Area and the Wendy House replaced with a musical pirate ship funded from commuted sums. The areas around both new equipment items were also covered with new safe surface carpeting. In addition, new gates are to be fitted to the Infants Play Area soon.

We have refurbished 12 of 13 Town Centre benches on Market Street and Derby Way. They have each been sponsored by a local family or business with new plaques fitted. Surplus income from this work was allocated to the Skatepark Project. We hope to continue with refurbishment of the 5 remaining benches later this year.

We took over the Christmas Collections of Marple and Goyt Valley Rotary Club in Asda and made it our own this year. Hopefully this will become a regular fundraiser for us.

We installed a stone featuring Marple's WW2 Warship Week plaque in the park after it was donated to Marple Local History Society. We received great support from Stockport ECO Centre, Marple Blasting Services, GT Landscapes and Construction and Benring Ltd, so costs were kept very low and covered by a MLHS member donation.

We established our own Health and Safety Policy.

We were approached by Marple Bands to maintain their Bandroom garden and now have a standing order in place that boosts funds for the park in return for our help.

We replaced Perspex in library and skatepark noticeboards after vandalism.

Logs around the Midnight Tree Sculpture were taken away for us by Myers Tree Care and we have become aware of the need to develop plans to replace the sculpture because it continues to decay. We are not certain of timescales at this stage. The Pear sculpture has also had to be removed as it could not be refitted after being knocked over due to decay.

Ann Frazer, one of our regular volunteers, produced a very professional video showing our activities to care for the park. Ann has also completed a Warship Week video.

We purchased tools and materials to the value of £500 with the Equity Fund grant we were awarded at the back-end of 2015.

Working with the Veterans Bowling Club, we reluctantly supported proposals to fence the Bowling Green, primarily to protect it from youths who persist in playing football on it and people practising golf. We have agreed that public benches will be relocated outside the fencing boundary so that they will remain accessible to all. Work was expected to start this month but has been delayed until 5 June.

We've worked with Marple Civic Society and Civic Voice to ensure that the War Memorial, the Bowling Pavilion and Danny Winter's bench are registered on the War Memorials Online website and condition surveys have been completed. We still need to apply for statutory listing of the main War Memorial.

The legal constraints around providing an enhanced football/multi-sport facility in the park were finally resolved this year after more than two years of procrastination by the council.

We have won an award of £200 from Stockport Hydro for the purchase of Bee Friendly plants and shrubs. We also had an award of £300 from Anchorpoint Stockport for this.

A total of 20 regular and ad-hoc Task Days were held in the park during 2016.

- The main focus has been maintenance of the flowerbeds, shrub beds and woodland areas throughout the park.
- Our programme of bench maintenance has continued to ensure that all benches in the park are in the best possible condition.

The group attended Marple Food and Drink Festival with their Tombola and Marple Carnival, Hawk Green Maypole and Mellor Mill Fun Day with a stall to raise funds.

The Tombola has now raised a total of £6,270 for the Park, so a big thank-you to Micaela and Terry for organising these.

Social events have been held at the Torrs, Roman Lakes and Samuel Oldknows.

Disappointments

While 2016 has been a hugely successful year for the group, with record-breaking fund-raising, achievement of a major funding milestone, and we have successfully completed our largest ever project, we are still extremely disappointed not to have kept the full time Park Attendant role that we were promised this time last year.

After the overwhelming response to the public consultation on park cuts we were told that funding for a Full Time Attendant would NOT be cut from the budget. We were promised that we would receive the same Full Time Attendance in the park as the previous year yet that has not happened.

We thank Cllr Malcolm Allan for his persistence in investigating this issue and confirming that those promises were made.

Although we can't allow this to define our year, we remain deeply disappointed that promises have not been kept and still await a satisfactory conclusion to this matter.

Adrian finished by thanking everyone for their efforts to look after the park.

2.2 Treasurer's Report for 2016

The McInnes Partnership audited our accounts for the year 1 January to 31 December 2016 and a certified income and expenditure sheet was distributed with the agenda. The McInnes Partnership has provided this service free of charge for 13 years.

Our income during 2016 was £24,134, taking the total money raised since the group began to £98,752 at the end of the year. We have now broken through the £100,000 milestone and (as I always point out) this doesn't include the funding from Stockport Council or Living Spaces for the two play areas or the basketball fence from commuted sums or the £50,000 for the skatepark or £11,750 from Life Leisure. It is just the money raised directly by the group and passed through our own account.

The main income highlights in the year were:

£2,776 Christmas Collections in 2015 and 2016, £2,500 Forever Manchester, £1,985 Grow Your Tenner, £1,900 Town Centre bench sponsorship, £1,500 Marple Area Committee, £1,185 Marple & Goyt Valley, £1,120 Skatefest nights, £1,096 raised at local events, £1,050 misc Local Giving donations, £1,000 Stockport Homes, £1,000 The Marple Website, £941 Treasure Hunt, £856 Art Auction, £600 Marple Hall School, £588 Easter Collection in Asda, £500 Rotary Club of Stockport, £420 Hatters & All Things Nice and £400 from William Wragg's Charity of the month.

We also collected £385 in the park.

Other contributions detailed on the report total up to £2,332.

Income via Local Giving

Contributions coming in via Local Giving have been significant with a net total of £3,034. This is broken down as £2181 donations, £595 match-funding, £429 Gift-Aid, less £171 transaction fees. So the £72 annual fee has been very worthwhile. This year we have renewed for £36 (50% off) but next year costs are going up to £98 PA.

In the year we spent £5,090, taking our total spending on the park to £47,996.

The biggest outgoings in 2016 were:

- £3,150 Pavilion fencing and gates.
- £732 on town centre bench refurbishments.
- £449 on tools and materials (Equity Grant).
- £296 on public liability insurance.
- £463 on various smaller items.

At the end of the year we had a bank balance of £50,756 with £50,446 of that committed to various projects, giving us a working balance of £310.

Commitments were made up of: £50,146 on the skatepark, £128 on the WWI display, £28 on Town Centre benches and £143 pending (Halyard and J Ashley plaque).

Report on 2017 to date:

Since the turn of the year our income has been £4,291 and expenditure £50,637.

This takes our total income to £103,042 and our "spends" to £98,633.

Income highlights this year to date are:

- £1,423 sponsorship of Woodville benches.
- £1,077 Local Giving.
- £1,011 so far from the 2017 Treasure Hunt (in region of £450 to come).
- £500 for Bee Friendly Plants.
- £140 from Inner Wheel.
- £73 collected in the park.

Expenditure highlights this year are:

- £50,000 on the skatepark.
- £396 Bee Friendly Plants.
- £181 on tools and materials.
- £60 on skatepark pop-up display.

Our bank balance on the last statement for 21 April 2017 was £53,047 and is calculated to now be £4,409.

Funds remaining in the bank for the skatepark totals £1,304. Other committed funds are £128 on the WWI display, £28 on Town Centre benches, £104 on Bee Friendly Plants and £1,423 on the Woodville benches. This leaves a working balance of £1,442.

2.3 Election of Officials

2.3.1 Chairman

Adrian advised that he is happy to continue acting as Chairman until he and Sandra move away from Marple, probably towards the end of 2017. 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 and act as the key contact.

2.3.3 Secretary / Social Secretary

Micaela advised that she was happy to continue as Secretary and Social Secretary.

There were no other candidates and this was agreed by all present.

2.3.5 Committee

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

- Adrian Ellis
- Patrick O'Herlihy
- Bob Wilson
- Micaela Wood
- Terry Wood
- Gill Whittaker
- 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 Better Football Provision

Additional Goalposts

The general location on the field behind the play areas has now been agreed with Greenspace. They will double-check this with SSK regarding mowing and then deliver the goalposts to the park for the group to install.

We will install so that they can be moved around to spread the wear on grass.

Long-term improvements

Canvas Spaces has promised delivery of the top level skatepark design scheme with price plus integrated MUGA drawings by 16 May 2017. We should then be able to combine this with the MUGA costs already provided by Richard and investigate suitable funding opportunities that are currently around.

3.2 Fencing of Bowling Green

We were expecting this to start early to mid-May and take around 5 to 6 weeks but Richard has recently advised that the start has been delayed until 5 June.

3.3 Play Areas and Play Equipment

Infants Play Area Gates

Richard has confirmed that the gates have now been delivered and he is seeking to agree installation dates with SSK.

3.4 Park Attendant

As agreed during discussions at the last meeting, Mark has advised Cllr Allan that the group believe the only satisfactory solution to this matter now is for the sum of money that was left in the budget to accommodate keeping the full-time attendant be identified and recovered from SSK so that it can be reinvested in the park.

3.5 Park Benches

Terry is to raise an invoice to cover a donation of £25 to David Lewis for the repairs and transportation of the refurbished picnic bench.

Three donors have been found to support the refurbishment of the three old Woodville benches and an order has now been placed via the council. Delivery is 3 to 6 weeks.

3.6 Town Centre Benches

Wilson's has been approached for a third and last time with no response.

Next step is to prepare a new Risk Assessment and get task days approved.

3.7 Park Buildings and Infrastructure

Myers Tree Care is still on the lookout for replacement logs and a suitable trunk for the longer-term replacement of Midnight.

Painting of the bowling pavilion woodwork and metalwork will follow on from the bowling green fence installation.

3.9 Skatepark Development Project

Latest Skatepark Project News

A further £56.40 has been received via Local Giving and £56 was collected during the Celebration Jam on Easter Monday, which was very busy.

We have paid our £50,000 to the council and have a current balance of £1,304. It is planned to put this towards an event during Marple Carnival with Team Extreme.

The Team Extreme cost is between £1,900 for 2 demos and competitions and £2,250 for 4 demos and competitions. An application has been submitted to Marple Area Committee requesting help with the balance of funds but it is not clear if they will be able to consider this before 14 June, just a couple of days before the Carnival, due to meetings being cancelled because of the elections. It is therefore proposed to allocate £600 of the money raised during the Treasure Hunt to this so that we can commit to it going ahead even if AC cannot help. It may also be possible to get sponsors.

We will need prizes for the competitions and it looks like Canvas Spaces will sponsor these and come along to the event.

Outstanding things to do:

Steel benches (FoMMP):

These have now been collected from Marple Blasting Services after blasting, priming and undercoating. They are now ready for top-coat and stencilling.

Blockwork, screed to old quarter-pipe (council):

The council has chosen a contractor and work started today. FoMMP will paint and stencil after the screeding is completed.

Astroturf in difficult to mow locations (council):

The council seems to be having second thoughts on this due to funding availability.

Paint vertical sections on old ramps to match new (FoMMP):

To follow on from benches / quarter-pipe painting.

Landscaping / topsoil and seeding (council / FoMMP):

Awaiting a meeting with council / SSK.

Repairs / tarmac to pathways (council):

Work ordered by council and promised complete before Marple Carnival.

New bins (council):

Awaiting the council. We've had many people asking about the overflowing bins and we've been asking them to contact the council about this.

Complains about the skatepark

The skatepark has been hugely well received and we've had a great deal of positive feedback. However, we have also received complaints from three sources living on St Martins Road. The list of complains from one of them is extensive. Cllr Allan has also visited another resident on St Martins Road who has complained directly to him.

Mark has documented the complaints received by us and shared the responses given at the time with the Greenspace Team, local Police and Cllr. Allan. The document was also shared with the agenda for this meeting so that attendees were familiar with the details. Some of the complaints are reasonable and where this is the case we have addressed them with the Greenspace Team: for example, encouraged the council to

improve the litter bins, to get the landscaping works completed as soon as possible, to block-up the old quarter-pipe and to investigate the feasibility of turning the street lighting off at a set time.

In many instances the complaints are about general anti-social behaviour, often not directly linked to the skatepark at all. In the case of any ASB we have encouraged the complainers to report matters to the police and to take them up with local councillors if they do not feel that they are being dealt with satisfactorily.

A couple of the complaints are clearly unfounded, which is unfortunate because it casts doubt over the truthfulness of others from the same sources too. Two particular complaints have been looked into closely and appear to be completely false:

One complaint cited a "reliable source" who told them that hundreds of needles are regularly being found in the park from drug taking. This is simply not true. The Greenspace Team have had no reports of any being found in recent times and Bob confirmed that you could count the number he found during 10 years as full-time attendant in the park on one hand. Several of those were diabetes related too. In 14 years of little-picking in the park our volunteers have not found a single one.

Another complaint received in an angry manner from two residents during the Easter Monday Celebration Jam was that someone had suffered a serious spinal injury since the new skatepark had opened and had to be taken away by the air ambulance. A lot of effort has been put into trying to establish if this accusation is true. The council has no record, the police have no record and the NW Air Ambulance Service's legal team has confirmed that they have no record of attending an incident in the park since the new skatepark was opened on 29 March. The only conclusion we can draw is that this accusation is malicious, or, perhaps more generously, the complainers are confusing it with the time in July 2016 (before the new skatepark was built) when the air ambulance did attend after a child hurt his leg on the old skatepark.

Anyone wishing to make a complaint will be encouraged to report specific concerns about the skatepark to the Greenspace Team, about anti-social behaviour to the police on 999 if an ongoing emergency or 101 if less serious. People will also be encouraged to speak with local councillors during their Saturday morning surgeries if they are dissatisfied with the way that their complaints are being dealt with.

3.10 World War I Centenary Commemorations

Timeline Commemoration

Additions since the last meeting are George Fielding, Albert Ferns, Alfred Sutton, George Miller, John Tefft, John Brown, John Bennett and Harold Cooper.

Next is Burt Morris on 7 June.

We will start to look at options for making the first half of the display permanent.

WW2 Plaque

Anne has now completed her film about the Warship Week plaque. It's really good and is available on Youtube and also featured on the group's web site.

War Memorial Registration and Survey Workshop

We have still to apply for statutory listing of the war memorial.

3.11 Bee Friendly Plants and Shrubs

We've made a number of new purchases recently:

£48.39 on seven flowering shrubs from Grasslands.

£17.44 on a Golden Hop plus 5 x Hawthorn.

£69.39 on 12 more items from Grasslands.

£73.50 on another 1,000 snowdrops from Eurobubs.

£143.99 on 100 x bare-rooted Hawthorn for around the war memorial beds.

This makes a total spend of £396 so far, leaving a balance of £104 to spend.

3.11 Task Days

Last Task Day – 15 April 2017

We were joined by volunteers from Marple Co-Op again. The bandroom garden was tidied and work done on flowerbeds.

£56 was collected in our donations bucket, which included some plant sales.

29 April – Task Day + Treasure Hunt

The Treasure Hunt was a great success. Around £1,400 was raised in total plus £37 donated in our own bucket too. A very big thank you to Di Jackson and Julian Wadden for their efforts on behalf of the park to raised this fantastic sum of money and to Micaela for covering the First Aid requirements.

Task Day work was mainly on the flowerbeds, war memorial beds and sensory garden.

Next Task Days – 13 and 27 May 2017

Parking is arranged and emails will be sent out nearer the time.

27 May Task Day

Mark and Gill will not be able to attend, so Bernard will take the lead and Bob agreed to support if he's there. We can agree tasks nearer the time.

Task Day Registration / Risk Assessments

Everything is up-to-date and we are covered until 30 June 2017.

Saturday Task Days scheduled for 2017

15 & 29 April, 13 & 27 May, 10 & 24 June, 15 & 29 July, 12 & 26 August, 16 & 30 September, 14 & 28 October, 11 & 25 November, 30 December.

Training

Several dates have become available but unfortunately do not suit Micaela or Lorraine. Mark will notify the organisers and ask to be kept updated on future dates.

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

Power Tools

No change.

4.0 Funding - Status of Funds

Covered by item 2.2.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 Naming of driveway into the park

We understand Cllr Abell has been pursuing this but unfortunately he recently suffered a family bereavement. We can wait for an update when it's convenient for him.

6.0 Next Meeting

Monday 12 June 2017 at 6.15pm in Marple Library.

Future meeting dates scheduled for 2017/18 (library booked):

12 June, 10 July, 14 August, 11 September, 9 October, 13 November, 11 December 2017, 8 January 2018, 12 February, 12 March, 9 April, 14 May, 11 June 2018.