

**Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting
Monday 9 May 2022
Marple Library**

Present: Mick Thompson, Lorraine Thompson, Cllr Malcolm Allan, Di Jackson, Joyce Reed, Patrick O'Herlihy (part-time), Mark Whittaker.

1.0 Apologies: Micaela Wood, Bob Wilson.

1.1 Minutes of last meeting 10 January 2022: Agreed.

3.0 Matters Arising:

3.1 Antisocial Behaviour / CCTV / Police

ASB Update

There had been a noticeable decline in ASB since the last meeting in January, although we did experience further damage to the Infants Play Area fence (repaired last week); breaking of beer and vodka bottles against the Bowlers' Hut gable end; more windows broken in Hollins House and the Scout Hut and damage to the roof of the Bowling Pavilion. This was mostly during January and February.

Leading up to and including Easter the police worked overtime to increase patrols in the park. This appeared to have the desired effect of reducing ASB and matters improved during March and early to mid-April. More recently there have been off-road motorbikes in the park and on the skatepark, and a mountain bike was taken from a young person by a group of youths on mopeds. This is quite worrying and it is unclear what we can expect going forward into the summer.

Meeting with Police/ Crime Survey

One good thing arising from these problems is that we have managed to forge a better relationship with the police. We've met with them several times and were able to encourage them to conduct a Crime Survey (undertaken on 3 March) which revealed a number of areas that need addressing and several key observations.

The CCTV in the park is mostly broken, not working or of inadequate quality. The one good camera that we had appears to have not functioned correctly since it was relocated. We believe this information was kept from us for months (and probably council officers too who we think were fobbed off by their Control Room contractor).

The council are now in the process of switching CCTV / Control Room contractors. We understand this is ongoing and recently asked for a progress update but received no response from the council to our request and Cllr. Allan hasn't heard either.

Generally it feels like we have built a better relationship with the police but not yet with the council's senior officers, who continue to be unresponsive.

Key recommendations from the Crime Survey

Repair Hollins House windows: this has been ongoing for the last week or so and good progress has been made but the upstairs windows and those above the front door have not been done yet. Mark will ask the council for an update.

Repair fencing at Infants Play Area: we put pressure on the council to do this and also offered to assist with a financial contribution towards the costs, committing £500 of our funds. The work was completed last week and is a big improvement.

Add a waste bin to the area by the picnic benches: the council refused to add a new bin but did agree to relocate an existing one. We recommended a bin to be moved and this has been done. We're uncertain about the new location and have agreed to keep this under observation and request a further move if necessary.

Add a sign about the risk of broken glass to young children: this has been awaiting the repair of the fencing and can now be pursued further.

Consider adding artwork to the Bowlers' Hut gable end as a deterrent from throwing bottles: we've begun looking into this and are considering a low-cost option to recycle material (and possibly artwork) from the School Gardens Project.

CCTV improvements: we haven't seen a council response to this yet or even any formal acknowledgement of the Crime Survey. We will continue to pressurise through Marple's local councillors, who are very supportive.

Feedback and comments

Cllr. Allan advised that there has been news of arrests related to recent ASB but of course the police cannot release much details of these for general consumption.

Mick has suggested several times that local councillors should contact school organisations about ASB in the park. Cllr. Allan agreed to follow this up and see if there is a Headteachers Consortium or similar group that councillors could speak to.

Patrick suggested that police vehicles regularly parked behind the Station (access from Park Field Ave) would contribute a deterrent to ASB if they were parked more visibly in the main car park in front of the Station. Mark will suggest this to police.

Other suggestions were a "window police officer" at the library like you see in some supermarket stores and the playing of classical music, which is probably not practical.

Skatepark repairs

A permanent repair to the arson damage at the skatepark remains outstanding – this still awaits a response from Canvas Spaces to a request for pricing first submitted by the council in January. We've often been disappointed at how long Canvas Spaces take to respond to enquiries but this is particularly poor even by their usual standards.

Repairs are also needed due to wear and tear of the grind rails on the original jump-box. Canvas were asked to price for this in January too but is also still outstanding.

This is very disappointing. Mark will discuss options with Richard Booker.

3.2 Bowling Green and Buildings

Pavilion Art Project Phase II: Project is progressing really well.

Full height mock-ups were created and it was agreed to proceed.

The framework has been installed.

Boards have had their first-fix and been passed to Art Stop.

Artwork has been approved and first board is currently being printed and glued.

Jet-washing and painting of ceiling is complete (thanks mainly to Bernard Kelly).

The following payments have been made: Initial payment £500; 3 x board £210; 1st draft artwork £1,000; artwork approved £750; + £90 for frame materials = £2,550.

Outstanding payments: Artwork ready £750; Artwork installed £869 = £1,619.

It is hoped that artwork can be installed by late May / early June.

3.3 100th Birthday of the Park

Marple School Gardens Project

Two schools are onboard – All Saints' and St. Mary's, Marple Bridge.

A project method statement has been agreed by the council.

£500 funding has been awarded from Local Giving "Magic Little Grants" towards infrastructure (backboards, sleepers, soil etc.) and £500 from Stockport Hydro for

plants and art materials to be used by the schools to create their gardens.

Backboards have been obtained (£115.49), prepared and delivered to schools.

School Build Days have been agreed for week commencing 11 July. Schools have provided their risk assessments and PLI details and we need to submit a task day application for the Build Days. *(PMN: submitted 11 May, now with council for review.)*

We need to order sleepers, fixings, and topsoil and build the beds before 11 July.

Family Treasure Hunt – 23 July 2022

The Treasure Hunt will follow the established format. A professional face-painter is onboard, as is Sarah at Coffee Bean Dream for drinks and refreshments.

Diane and Mark are just starting promotion and seeking sponsorship.

We will need volunteers on the day to help and we need to submit an event application. *(PMN: Submitted on 10 May, now with the council for review.)*

Picnic in the Park with the Brass Bands of Marple – 24 July 2022

Marple and Hawk Green bands will conduct a Brass Band Concert on Sunday 24 July 2pm to 4pm. It will be similar to the successful event in 2018.

The Senior Citizens' Hall is booked in case of bad weather and an event application was submitted by the bands on 29 April that is with the council for review.

We will need volunteers on the day to help.

MLHS Exhibition – 22 to 30 July 2022

Marple Local History Society is helping us to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the park with an exhibition in Marple Library from 22 to 30 July.

The theme is the Park's place in our community over the last 100 years.

The library staff and Marple Bands are also getting involved in creating displays.

Marple Carnival – 18 June 2022

We have been invited to lead the Carnival Parade with a banner advertising the Treasure Hunt and Picnic in the Park. The Carnival Team will pay for our banner.

We could also take part and open-up our new artwork for public viewing and raise funds for projects in the park. We would also need volunteers to help with this.

It was also agreed that this could be an opportunity to recruit volunteers too.

Diane suggested that we should consider recreating the Dedication Day programme as a new souvenir. Mark and Di will investigate this further.

3.3 Task Days

We've been getting back into the swing of things with our last Saturday of the month task days and it is proposed to start up the second mid-month task days commencing with Saturday 14 May. The dates will be two weeks back from the last Saturday.

2022 dates going forward will be: 14, 28 May; 11, 25 June; 16, 30 July; 27 August; 10, 24 September; 15, 29 October; 12, 26 November and possibly 31 December.

Stockport CAN Fund

We have made a successful grant application to the Stockport CAN (Climate Action Now) Fund for £1,550 to replace our petrol driven equipment (including lawn mower, hedge trimmers, long-reach hedge trimmings and strimmer) with Makita battery powered equipment. The existing equipment will be recycled.

We hope to received the money soon. *(PMN: Grant award has been received, equipment purchased and delivered and old equipment taken by scrap man.)*

4.0 Funding - Status of Funds

The 2021 year end accounts have been audited by the McInnes Partnership and are ready for the AGM when scheduled. The current status of funds is as follows:

4.1 Main Bank Account (Barclays): Balance = £18,025.68 at 5/5/2022.

A cheque payment for £782.39 is pending, giving a real balance of £17,243.29.

£446 cash from card sales (£211) and collections (£235) are pending deposit.

2022 totals year to date: Income: £2,391.33; Expenditure: £6,130.45

Income this year to date:

£1,116.00	50-50 Club Draw income.
£140.00	50-50 Club prizes donated back to the park.
£437.37	Local Giving, including a big backlog of Gift Aid.
£500.00	Stockport Hydro (School Gardens Project).
£100.00	Donation from Chris Hague.
£22.96	Easy Fundraising.
£75.00	Marple Band Room garden maintenance payments.

Income awaited (not in above totals):

£500.00	CRT contractor contribution for using Lock 17.
£398.00	MAC Flexibility Fund grant for gazebo.
£1,550.00	Stockport CAN Fund grant.

Expenditure this year to date:

£2,550.00	Pavilion Art Project Phase II.
£459.95	New gazebo (part funded by £398 award from MAC).
£161.20	Public Liability Insurance.
£143.24	Boards and paint for School Gardens Project.
£123.69	Tools and materials.
£57.38	Plants and seeds.
£13.99	Numbers disks for 50-50 Club draw.
£1,775.00	Contribution to new springers in Play Area.
£750.00	Purchase of One Stockport Frog (donation to St. Anne's Hospice).
£96.00	Local Giving annual fee.

Committed future spends:

- c£1,620 on Pavilion Art Project Phase II.
- £10,000 Ring-fenced for Exercise Equipment.
- £856 for the School Gardens Competition.
- £500 for Infants Play Area fence repairs (from CRT donation).

Unallocated working balance: £4,267.29

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 Canal Frog

The Frog has now been paid for and was installed in the Reading Circle in February and then planted up. It looks brilliant in this location, like it was designed for it.

Thanks to Bernard Kelly plus Mike and Paul Whittaker for help with installation.

Great news is that the library have said they will be using the Reading Circle for story time during the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and hopefully more often going forward.

5.2 New Springers

The new springers have been installed and we have paid our share of £1,775.

5.3 Exercise Equipment

After meetings and correspondence with Friends of Brabyns Park concerning a joint exercise equipment project, this has not worked out and we will continue on our own.

We've ring-fenced £10k for this project and will make it our main fund-raising objective until completed. We will need around £20-25k for suitable equipment.

A £10k grant application to the Stockport Fund was unsuccessful as the scheme was over-subscribed. Our project was considered to have merit and at a recent meeting with Thad Barker from the council, he said there may still be ways they can help.

Mark met with Richard last week and agreed that we will prepare a brief for a design competition tender in a similar way that we did for the skatepark project.

5.4 Makers' Market – Saturday 21 May 2022

We've been invited to sell our handmade crafts at the Makers' Markets. The first opportunity will be on Saturday 21 May. Gill will sell her cards and Di her jewellery.

We have purchased a new gazebo plus sides using funds from Marple Area Committee for use at the Treasure Hunt, Makers' Markets, Carnival and Food and Drink Festival.

We have submitted our PLI and risk assessment to the organisers.

Mark will purchase some new name banners for the top of the gazebo.

5.5 Decoration of Coronation Tree / Bench

Marple Youth Project leader Helen Middleton is running a decorated tree trail as part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations using trees on Market Street and local gardens.

Mark has advised Helen about the history of the Coronation Tree and she is keen to include this in the project too. Mark will check if the council has any objections.

There were no takers for helping with this so Mark will liaise with Helen.

We will ensure that the bench is freshly rubbed-down and painted in advance of this.

5.6 Community Hub Scheme

No recent news on this but we have added for reference and future discussions.

Although we haven't seen any drawings or diagrams it is understood that the layout has been reorientated to avoid destroying the woodland. This may have been influenced by our suggestion that the scheme should be sited on the Play Area.

The general feeling is that we are fed up of waiting for positive developments on this scheme and it has been going on for far too long without further consultation or positive news. Cllr Allan advised that MAC now having regular monthly meetings on this and he is hopeful that details of a new scheme will be consulted on soon.

5.7 Drainage Problems

The drains behind the library regularly overflow and leak sewage into the park, a health hazard and very unpleasant. It happened again last week following heavy rain.

The council has investigated this in the past and considered it to be UU's responsibility to resolve as they believe the facilities are shared but nothing has been done.

We need to maintain pressure via local councillors for a permanent solution.

(PMN: The blockage was recently cleared by UU but they say that the drains are used

by council properties only and it is therefore a private system. UU said they would be reporting this back to the council and further investigations will be necessary.)

Cllr. Allan also noted that there is a drainage problem in the car park between the library and the police station that he hopes to take a more detailed look at.

5.8 Use of weed-killer in the park

The council has recently carried out their usual spraying of the grass around trees, borders, lampposts and many other fixtures within the park. The consensus of the group is that this is unsightly and environmentally unfriendly. It was agreed that we should ask for a discussion with the council with a view to stopping this practice in our park and tackling any problems in alternative more eco-friendly ways.

5.9 2022 Mayoral Award

On behalf of the group Mick thanked both Mark and Gill for their ongoing effort and commitment to looking after the park that has contributed to Mark's award from the Mayor of Stockport "in recognition of his outstanding community spirit, exemplified, amongst other things, in his leadership of the Friends of Marple Memorial Park".

6.0 Next Meeting

Monday 13 June 2022 at 6.15pm in Marple Library.

Future meeting dates scheduled for 2022 (library booked):

Mondays: 11 July, 12 September, 10 October, 14 November & 12 December.