

**Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting
Monday 13th October 2014
Marple Library**

Present: Terry Wood, Micaela Wood, Joyce Reed, Anne Frazer, Patrick O’Herlihy, Bob Wilson, Mick Thompson, Cllr Geoff Abell, Mark Whittaker.

1.0 Apologies: Adrian Ellis, Lorraine Thompson, Cllr Martin Candler.

2.0 Minutes of the last meeting: Agreed.

3.0 Matters Arising

3.1 Registering as a charity

Following further verbal responses from the Charity Commission last month suggesting that they are still concerned the group may be relieving the council of its statutory duties by maintaining wildlife areas and preserving the park’s heritage and their unwillingness to discuss the situation on the phone the application process was placed on hold. This has now been discussed with all committee members and it has been agreed that we will continue as we have for the last 10 years and no longer pursue registration of the group as a charity.

The history of the process and the issues arising were summarised for the benefit of Cllr Abell. These are covered by previous minutes so are not repeated here.

3.2 Anti-Social Behaviour / Additional CCTV Cameras

ABS Logs submitted since the last meeting covering 22 reported incidents (a new record) were distributed with the agenda. Recent incidents include:

- Ongoing collection of drugs packets and paraphernalia.
- Evidence of fires lit under bowling pavilion canopy.
- Repeated reports of youths playing football on the Bowling Green and abusing park users.
- Two windows smashed in the Senior Citizens’ Hall.
- Repeated breaking open of tap security cover.
- Deliberate blocking of both toilets.
- Extensive graffiti damage at Bowling Pavilion, Mess Room, Bowlers Hut and Skatepark.

It was noted that Rob did a great job of cleaning off the graffiti on the buildings (it took 6 hours of effort) and the team that pressure-washed the skatepark responded quickly and also did a great job – thanks were passed on via the CSU Team.

Mark met with Ronit Bowman (CSU) on 23 September to discuss sign locations. We have asked for signs not to be installed on the former Bowling Pavilion (now store and mess room) because it is a registered War Memorial. Freestanding signs were suggested to the CSU but we’ve had no feedback on this yet. We’ve since reiterated to Jane Bardsley that we don’t want signs added to the Bowling Pavilion but will be happy for them to be placed on the newer Bowlers’ Hut building.

Three “Section 59” signs are also to be installed at park entrances. We have asked for the one at the main entrance not to be fitted until after our silhouette artwork project is completed and have suggested a leg of our entrance notice board as an alternative.

Mark also met with Cllr Martin Candler and Ian Walmsley on 24 September to discuss a number of issues. On ASB Cllr Candler indicated that local councillors are keen to do something positive and support our campaign for cameras but have limited funds.

Cllr Candler asked if our preference would be for money to be allocation to cameras or to other projects in the park if any sums can be identified. Mark responded that we would have a strong preference for it to go towards cameras but there is concern that both Ronit and Inspector Palmer have suggested the scheme proposed by SSK earlier in the year and costing just over £2,000 may not be adequate for identification and prosecution purposes. Mark reiterated that we and the council still need a proper feasibility study that looks at all of the constrains, objectives and requirements to produce a series of fully costed options and recommendations. We believe this was not addressed properly the first time it was asked for because everyone was too concerned about where the money would come from to do it properly.

Cllr Candler responded positively to this and we wait to hear more about what will happen next. He is also proposing to talk to Marple Senior Citizens Association about their issues and the possibility of a collective solution to ASB in the park.

Inspector Palmer has indicated that the park is currently the local Police's number one priority and it was noted that there was a large Police presence at the park entrance this evening as we were arriving for the meeting. *(Post Meeting Note: CSU have advised that this was an arranged Police activity in which a couple of arrests were made and names taken of those behaving in an antisocial manner.)*

Anne highlighted that with few establishments, such as coffee bars, catering for young people, limited youth club facilities in the area and sometimes those that are provided seeming "uncool", means there are limited places for young people to meet up. It's also difficult for larger groups of friends to meet in homes, so it's no surprise that they tend to use the park as a meeting place. This was acknowledged and it was agreed that the problem is not that young people use the park but the litter, damage, destruction and abuse that often seems to come with it that is the problem.

It was also suggested that we may look at providing more facilities in the park – perhaps a better area to play football in would deter use of the Bowling Green for example. It was agreed that this was something that we could look at further after the skatepark project – which is a facility for young people that we are already trying to achieve – however, there are covenants and bylaws prohibiting football and certain other "organised" team games in the park. It was because of these that the single goal was added to the park several years ago rather than a full 5-a-side pitch.

It was agreed that it was not possible to provide new facilities as a short-term solution to the current ASB problems but a first step towards this would be to gain a better understanding of the covenants and bylaws to determine what we may or may not be able to do in the future.

Cllr Abell highlighted that changes in the laws concerning ASB are afoot with new powers under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 meaning that fixed penalty fines of £90 (with discount for early payment) will come into force in the near future. It is not certain how soon these will be implemented in Marple but it will be interesting to see if this can be a useful tool to help tackle ASB in the park.

3.2 Dog Fouling

We've had no contact from the Dog Warden or the council on our dog fouling questions. The Dog Warden has put up additional signs and spoken to the Park Attendant about intelligence but with limited success we understand.

It's extraordinary that with the amount of dog mess in the park a fixed penalty notice has never been issued to anyone and we will have to follow this up when time allows.

Cllr Abell advised that if photographic evidence of a person not picking up after their dog can be obtained the council will fine them.

3.3 Park Benches

General Bench Maintenance

We have not managed to give the Coronation Bench a second coat of paint due to the weather and it will probably have to wait until next year now.

We've had delivery of 4 tins of preservative from the council and will notify Jane Bardsley when we need more. 4 tins is the most economical quantity to order.

Cllr Abell complimented the group on the maintenance of park benches and said that the park is generally looking really good for our efforts.

Town Centre Benches

We now have agreement in principle from the council that we can remove town centre benches (without the use of power tools) and take them off public / council owned land for refurbishment then bring them back for refitting.

It is proposed that we see if we can do one as a trial this year, if we can manage it, with a view to seeking funds to refurbish the rest of them next year. Before that we need to prepare a Risk Assessment and get a task day for the removal approved.

We will need to choose the best location, look into transport aids – maybe a trolley - obtain the security tools necessary to remove the benches and make sure that we don't leave any tripping hazards when a bench is removed.

3.4 Treatment of Sculptures & Wooden Features

Infants Play Area Fence

Unfortunately it has been too wet to finish painting the rear entrance to the play area so far and it is likely that this will have to wait until next year now.

3.5 Commemorative Plaques

During the meeting on 24 September with Cllr Candler and Ian Walmsley they outlined council concerns over the long-term responsibility for maintenance of plaques like the one we have recently installed – they are worried that this will fall under the council's responsibility if the Friends group was to cease activities in the future.

Ian Walmsley agreed to instigate the drafting of an agreement for plaques that they would be happy with and that we could ask potential donors to the park to sign.

Until available we will not undertake to do any more plaques funded by the public.

3.6 Park Buildings

Repairs

Jane Bardsley regularly seeks progress updates on the repairs to the Mess Room window and bowling building roof tiles and gutters but cannot advise when they will be done. A security screen has been ordered for the Mess Room windows but cannot be installed until the small repair first highlighted to the council in February is done.

It was suggested to Cllr Abell that whilst the policy of getting Carillion to carry out repairs that are safety related on an urgent basis was understandable the fact that non-safety related issues never seem to get done and the council can never advise when such repairs will be carried out even when they have been issued for many months is unsatisfactory and should be reviewed by the council.

Library Notice Board

A case in point, the Carillion order placed several months ago to repair the Perspex in the notice board damaged by vandals was cancelled because we could not obtain a forecast of when it would be done. The group has now done the work instead. The Perspex was obtained at a cost of approx £10 by ordering it with the Correx display boards for the WWI Timeline display, saving on the delivery cost.

3.7 Skatepark Development Project

Latest Skatepark Project News

Issues remain over the parent company guarantee provided by the chosen tenderer. Apparently it is not considered to be robust enough so the council's procurement and legal service providers are drafting an agreement that they are happy with. The problem is that this has dragged on for 3 months now and we cannot obtain any advice or commitment on how much longer it is going to take to resolve. Stockport Council's Audit Team are also reviewing the project and the processes that it has been through and we do not know how long they are going to take either.

From our perspective the project has lost all momentum and we are extremely concerned at the council's inability to resolve this in a timely manner. At present we do not know if it will be sorted out next week, next month or even next year. We are very concerned at the potential impact of these delays on the viability of the project.

We do not understand why Stockport Council are struggling so much with this issue because the proposed contractor recently completed or is currently working on seven skateparks for six different local authorities across the country.

Mark discussed this with Cllr Candler and Ian Walmsley on 24 September and asked them to get involved to try and move things along to a realistic timescale and allow the project to get back on track. Cllr Candler agreed to do that and has been making efforts to do so. However, from a telephone update provided today, he has so far been unable to establish a timescale for the matter to be resolved.

We had been holding off making any public updates on the project in the expectation that this issue would be resolved soon but due to the protracted delays on 2 October an update was issued to the Skatepark Project Team and User Group advising them of the situation. A copy of this was distributed with the agenda.

(Post Meeting Note: since then an update has also been published on the web site and Face Book page explaining as best we can why the project is being delayed).

Fund Raising Status

Fund-raising wise we are in very good shape to make a grant application to a landfill trust if we can overcome the delays described above and get work with the selected tenderer underway and then obtain planning permission for the chosen design.

We've received a second donation of £250 from Romiley and Marple Lions, taking their total to £500. We also raised £864 at the Food and Drink Day. These excellent contributions mean that we've now surpassed our initial target of £20,000 and have proposed to continue raising funds until the end of the year to see if we can match the

£22,000 contribution from Commuted Sums. Unfortunately the current uncertainty about the way forward on the project and lack of momentum makes this difficult.

Money needed:	£107,000 (including landfill taxes)
Community Funding:	£20,787
Commuted Sums:	£22,000
Total funds available:	£42,787
Funding to find:	£64,213 (proposed landfill trust grant application).

Food and Drink Day – Saturday 13 September

As mentioned above, a total of £864 was raised at this event: £674 from the Tombola (a new record) £67 on Guess the Sweets and £123 from Splat the Rat plus donations.

A big thank you was recorded for Micaela and Terry - as the primary organisers of the Tombola their hard work in preparing for the day is crucial to its success. The support of the other volunteers who came along to help out during the event was great too.

3.8 World War I Centenary Commemorations

Possible Silhouette Art Project

Excellent progress has been made on this thanks to Terry's efforts.

A small-scale replica has been made from laser-cut steel and a meeting held with Gary and Alan to for initial discussions. They will be obtaining materials, labour and laser cutting as donations at no cost to us. A photographic image of the silhouette in-situ has been mocked-up too and the council's Green Space Team has approved the proposal to install it on the main entrance "goalpost" frame. Jane Bardsley will issue a briefing note to Area Committee formally notifying them of the project.

Terry has made a full-size plywood mock-up. This has been installed on the frame and a second meeting held with Gary and Alan to firm up dimensions, how it will be fixed into the frame and a drawing produced. Some adjustments to the brackets are necessary and the frame will need to be rubbed down and painted.

Target for delivery of metal artwork is end of October to give us a chance to install it before the Remembrance Service on 9 November, which is pretty tight.

We need to look at details like security bolts and have a closer look at how it will be installed. It is probably going to need marking in situ and taking off-site for drilling.

It was agreed to hold a special task day this coming weekend to paint the frame.

The council has suggested that we could put a silhouette on the other goalpost at the rear of the park too. This would be great to do now or later and we have asked Alan if he can find out how much a second one would cost. We may be able to afford it if the costs are low or we may need to find new sponsors before we can proceed.

WWI Guided Walks

The series of WWI walks led by Andy Cook is now completed. A total of £400 was collected for the Poppy Appeal and Mark will speak to the local reps to get a receipt.

It is possible Andy may choose to repeat the walks in the future or maybe do some different ones. He has also been talking about a doing a guided tour of All Saints' Church Graveyard as a number of soldiers are buried or remembered there.

We will endeavour to support any new walks that Andy decides to do.

Timeline Commemoration

Marple Area Committee has approved the timeline project, the railings have been painted and the first section of the display and two wreaths have been installed.

Everything is ready for the first man (Fred Atkinson) to be added to the display on 24 October, 100 years after the date he was officially recorded as killed in action.

A grant application has been submitted to the 2014 group for £300 to cover the cost of materials for the project but they do not meet again until 29 October, so we have proceeded at risk. The following has been spent from our reserves:

- £45.33 on black Correx sheets 8' x 4' x 2
- £15.98 on a cut scale / straightedge for cutting Correx sheets.
- £2.04 on cable ties
- £2.95 on double-sided tape
- £6.17 on a ream of premium white card.
- £16.96 on 200 x A5 laminating pouches.

Making a total of £89.43 so far.

3.9 Task Days

Last Task Day – 27 September 2014

A variety of tasks including maintenance of flowerbeds, planting of bulbs from Lyme Park, crown lifting of trees along the canal / woodland walk.

Next Task Days – 25 October 2014

More work on flowerbeds will be needed to get them in shape for the Remembrance Service, painting of entrance frame if we don't manage this weekend and work is needed on the cinema beds too. Parking is arranged.

Ad-hoc Task Day – Saturday 8 November 2014

A final tidy-up of the flowerbeds before Remembrance Sunday is planned.

Saturday Task Days scheduled for 2014 / 15

Registered: 25 October, 29 November, 27 December 2014, 31 January, 28 February, 28 March, 11 and 25 April 2015.

To register: remainder of 2015.

Ad-hoc Daily Task Days

Daily Task Days are registered on the council's system until 31 December 2014 for gardening tasks, painting and treatment of benches and sculptures.

Risk Assessments / Training

Risk assessments and training are currently up to date with 11 volunteers having attended the RA training. It is hoped for further training to cover power tools in the future (see below).

SSK Support for Task Days

A copy of the Greenspace Forum minutes was distributed with the agenda. These indicate that the council are now working with SSK towards a solution that will allow the use of light power tools. SSK are also looking at employing a volunteer support

person. This is good news and Mark has written to Ian Walmsley to ask what the anticipated timescale for action is. He has replied that this is in the hands of SSK.

Mark has submitted a list of power tools that we would expect to need to use on occasion in the park to Richard King on the Greenspace Forum team.

(Post Meeting Note: The Greenspace team / SSK are now looking to form a Core Team of users to train: Mark has distributed this to our members likely to be interested and will submit a confirmed list of volunteers once responses are received.)

4.0 Funding - Status of Funds

Balance on last statement for 22 September 2014 is £19,119.70

Income since last meeting includes:

£250.00 Romiley & Marple Lions.
£864.00 Raised at Food and Drink Day.
£26.00 Collected in Park.

Expenditure since last meeting includes:

£42.81 Listed as pending in last minutes.
£89.43 On timeline materials broken down earlier in these minutes.
£10.00 Perspex for Library Notice Board.
£3.96 4 x hand cultivators.
£10.00 Entry donation to St Martins Christmas Tree Competition.

Committed funds in account are: Skate Park Fund £18,288 and Flowerbeds £155 leaving a working balance of £531.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 New Waste Bins

This is currently with the District Standards Officer – Jane has requested an update.

5.2 Emptying of Green Waste Area

Unfortunately SSK's tractor is off the road at present. Once it is fixed they will empty the Green Waste area. In the meantime they have piled the waste back on top to create more room so that we can continue to use it.

5.3 Zip Wire in Junior Play Area

Installation of a new Zip Wire has been arranged with an external contractor and the council are now waiting for an installation date from them.

5.4 Cargo Net in Junior Play Area

The cargo net on the climbing frame was recently removed because of wear and tear. SSK has requested a price for a replacement and due to tight budgets it will be sent to Ian Walmsley for approval. We await the outcome of this process.

5.5 Remembrance Service

Terry will lay the wreath on behalf of the group. This will be collected from the RBL on 25 October. The WWI Timeline will have started and hopefully we will manage to have the silhouette artwork installed.

Mark asked the council to repaint the metal railings and handrails on the memorial before the service but they have declined saying that Carillion have inspected it

recently and found it to be sound, other than the surface corrosion that we have highlighted. This is very disappointing and makes you wonder what paint is for if not to prevent surface corrosion.

5.6 Incredible Edible Marple

Gill and Mark attended a networking meeting at the Navigation on 8 October. There may be opportunities to make joint bids with other local groups and we hope that it will help us to obtain some fruit trees and shrubs to plant along the woodland walk.

The next meeting is spring 2015. Minutes will be distributed once received.

5.7 St Martins Christmas Tree Festival

We will enter the Christmas Tree Festival again and a cheque for £10 entry / donation was signed at the meeting. The theme will be WWI and no pressure on Micaela, Lorraine and Gill but of course we are looking to win again!

Anne suggested that we could include a leaflet for people to take away with the details of next year's task days in the hope of getting more volunteers.

5.8 Rotary Christmas Collection

Marple and Goyt Valley Rotary have asked if we would support them again with their Christmas collections at the Co-Op. The arrangements would be as last year, with funds shared out based on the proportion of hours contributed to the collecting.

Mark will distribute the rota once available.

5.9 Rose Hill / Marple Stations

Joyce mention that Friends of Marple Station are proposing to put together a "Welcome to Marple" leaflet explaining to visitors what's on offer in Marple. We will be pleased to contribute to this if asked and Mark will be happy to help with his Marple Website hat on too.

Joyce also mentioned that Friends of Rose Hill have published a new leaflet detailing walks that can be started and finished at the station.

5.10 Christmas Lunch

Micaela proposed that we have our Christmas lunch before Christmas this year. This was discussed and there are various views. Terry suggested we could have a smaller one in December for volunteers only and then a larger one in January as usual. It was agreed that might be popular and the Hare and Hounds at Mill Brow was suggested. *(Post Meeting Note: after further discussion at the 25 October task day it is proposed to have a volunteers only meal at the Ring o' Bells on Sat 6 December, subject to enough volunteers wishing to attend.)*

Date of next Meeting

Monday 10 November 2014 at 6pm in Marple Library.

Meeting dates scheduled for 2014 (library booked):

10 November and 8 December 2014.