

**Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting
Monday 24th September 2007
Marple Library**

Present: Dave Burrows (Acting Chair), Peter Bardsley, Robert Wilson, Adrian Ellis, Jay Havoleana, Micaela Wood, Mark Whittaker.

1.0 Apologies: Chris Armitt, Bill Ardern and Rebecca Nedeljkovic.

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
Tree Work**

The tree work has now been completed but unfortunately considerably more work has been done than expected. Mark expressed the group's disappointment in the results and asked for an explanation of why the work has been so extensive compared to the brief given by Rebecca.

It was known that other work to trees interfering with the library would be carried out at the same time but it was understood that this was as described in the tree management plan produced last year. Mark and Jay have reviewed this before the meeting and concluded that far more work has been undertaken than identified in the plan, with many of the trees listed as having 'no work required' being trimmed extensively.

It is considered that the work to the trees at the rear of the woodland (along the perimeter adjoining the properties on Parkfield Avenue) has been particularly excessive and unnecessary. This has resulted in an unattractive view of the houses on Parkfield Avenue from within the park and of the post office building beyond. Meanwhile the residents of Parkfield Avenue now have a virtually uninterrupted view of the grey concrete library building.

Complaints about the impact of the work have been received via email from Dr. Manton, whose property backs on to the woodland and via a telephone call from Mr. Roberts, who lives on Parkfield Avenue. Copies of email correspondence were distributed to attendees.

Dave advised that Jim McGarrie, the Tree Officer responsible, was still on leave and was not due to return until the beginning of next week. Therefore, although there have been several meetings on site to discuss the concerns, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive response to the issues raised until his input is received following his return to work.

The group are concerned that the Big Lottery Fund will be unhappy with these developments, particularly as there have been complaints from

residents who had previously been consulted about the project. It is felt that the BLF must be advised of the situation as soon as the council has provided a proper response to all the questions raised.

Due to the prolonged wait for satisfactory answers Mark proposed that the project be put on hold until they are available and the BLF have been consulted. This would enable the option of declining to pay for the tree work, cancelling the project and returning funds to their providers. Placing the project on hold was agreed, although it is hoped that cancellation is an extreme option that will not be necessary.

Dave will seek to obtain responses to the issues raised as soon as possible and will also discuss options for improving the situation by planting of new trees and shrubs with his managers. In the longer-term the hedgerows to be planted by the Scouts will also help to improve matters as far as the views are concerned.

Landscape Work

Dave will ask Rebecca to place the landscape works on hold.

Sculpture

Work currently scheduled for December.

Interpretation Board

The artwork and ordering of the board will be done later in the project.

Bird & Bat Boxes

Mr. Griffiths of the High Peak RSPB group has returned Jay's calls just before today's meeting. Jay will contact him again and try to arrange for him to speak to the group at the October meeting.

The Bat Conservation Trust are trying to find a local representative who would be able to come and talk to us about the best ways to attract bats to the woodland area.

Dave also suggested the possibility of carrying out a bird survey in the park and will look into this.

Hedge Packs

The Beavers have ordered free hedgerow packs from the Woodland Trust and planting is scheduled for the 24th November Task Day. This can go ahead even if the Breathing Places project is cancelled.

A small amount of preparatory work will be needed before the planting is carried out. Dave will discuss this with Bob.

Other Breathing Place matters

A letter has been received from BBC Breathing Places asking for an update on the project. A response will be sent once the issues relating to the tree work have been answered.

Nick Smith-Baker of the BBC Natural History Unit has contacted Jay recently. He is looking for projects to feature in 90-second slots during Autumn Watch and Spring Watch and requested photographs of our project to see if it was suitable. A set of photographs has been sent.

3.2 Teen Rotator

The contractor has installed the safe surface for the teen rotator but has been unable to install the rotator itself as a component is missing. A replacement has been ordered and the work will be completed as soon as it arrives.

3.3 Basketball Court

A decision is due to be made on planning permission for the basketball fence on Wednesday 26th September.

3.4 Beech Tree Sculpture

Andrew Frost has advised that he intends to return to complete the ground sculptures on Wednesday 26th September and expects to complete the work by Friday 28th.

Mark asked Adrian and Bob to get in touch with Andrew and confirm that he was still coming and that everything he needs will be available.

Bob will confirm the maintenance regime for the sculptures with Andrew while he is in the park.

3.5 Lock 17 Flowerbed

Wayne Chaisty has now installed the replica lock gates and Dave advised that the soil has arrived and the plants are here.

Weather permitting, Adrian will be organising for the landscaping works to be completed this week ready for the Friends and the Locks Society to plant up on Saturday 29th September.

3.6 Replica Memorial Stone

Mark advised that the stone has now been ordered and is on a 10 – 12 week delivery, which means it will be due around the end of November.

Mark also advised that it was now proposed to install the stone on the end gable of the building above the double doors, where it would be more visible and safer from damage. There were no objections to this.

3.7 Infants Play Area

Cllr. Alexander and David Brayshay have advised that a sum of £32,000 has been allocated to the infants play area. There is also a commuted sum of £4,752 available, giving a total of £36,752. This is a substantial contribution to the total cost of the proposed new equipment and the group is extremely pleased.

Mark advised that Marple Website has pledged the profits from its 2008 Marple and Mellor calendar to the play area, which will be at least £1,000. In addition the Friends have raised £770 to date and believe that they can also commit £1,000 towards the new equipment.

The above will provide a sum of £38,752, which is very close to the total amount required.

There remain a few technical issues that Rebecca is dealing with before an order can be placed. These include obtaining 3 prices due to the large amount of funding being provided by the council.

Gareth of Playground Maintenance has made a few recommendations about the equipment included in the proposed scheme. He has said that the wavy mirror and musical panels should be excluded and suggested that the money saved be spent on a larger roundabout.

Gareth has also suggested that the Playhouse should not be included in the scheme.

The Friends are happy to accept the recommendations regarding the panels and roundabout but unanimously agreed that it is not acceptable to exclude the Playhouse. This has been by far the most popular item requested by people consulted over the play area and is considered to be an essential item.

Removal of bark and brick edging

It has been identified that a saving of £2,350 could be made if we remove the bark from the former boating pool and also the brick edging from around the perimeter. This saving would mean that we could also afford to replace the existing benches and play table.

Dave, Mark and Jay have discussed this on site and Dave confirmed that he is going to go ahead and organise for the probation service to do the work. He hopes to have the area cordoned off later this week to enable an early start to be made.

Petanque (French Boules) Court.

Mark advised that a lady who uses the Senior Citizens' hall approached him for help during the Food Festival on Saturday. She explained that her late husband had been trying to organise the construction of a

petanque court in the park for several years and asked if the Friends would be prepared to take this on following his passing away.

Mark felt that with the bark from the play area becoming available this was an almost 'heaven sent' opportunity to put it to good use. It was agreed that a boules court would be a good asset to add to the park and the idea should be investigated further.

There is a location to the north of the Bowling Green alongside the main path that seems to be ideal for this purpose when looking at the plan of the park. Adrian will look into the dimensions required for a court so that it can be determined if the location is suitable. It is understood that there is an existing court in Bramhall Park that could be visited if necessary.

(Post meeting note: Rebecca has the dimensions for a boules court)

3.8 Woodland Trust "Tree for All"

There has been quite a lot of interest in the tree-planting event and we need to be prepared for a good turn out. A lady from Scunthorpe has even delivered 10 horse chestnut trees that her children have grown from conkers!

Adrian will confirm with Jacky Budd that the trees will be available for the event on the 27 October Task Day. *(Jacky has confirmed)*

Posters have been prepared and Micaela has begun distributing them to local outlets.

3.9 Task Days

Last Task Day – 25 August

The War Memorial beds and ornamental beds and pathways near to the memorial were tidied up ready for the International Merchant Navy Day ceremony on 2nd September.

A photo-shoot with local councillors also took place to commemorate the Green Flag Award for 2007/8 and the photos are now on the web site.

Next Task Day – 29 September

The next task day will see the Friends join forces with Marple Locks Heritage Society to plant up the Lock 17 display.

If there is a good turnout it may also be possible to make some headway on other tasks in the park, including the bark removal from the infants play area.

Tools

Dave advised that he has purchased some new pruning tools for the Friends to use and will hand them over after the meeting.

War Memorial Flowerbeds

Dave has decided on a planting scheme for the War Memorial beds following discussions with Bob and Mark at the last task day. It was agreed that Adrian would obtain the details from Dave and draw up the scheme to formalise the work to be done.

Car parking during task days

Dave has not had any success in negotiating any free parking arrangements during task days but will look into it further. The recommendations at the moment are to park on the path near to the Bowling Green buildings if there is enough room, or to pay £1.50 for a full day if there is a danger of going over the normal two hours.

3.10 Fundraising Activities

The Ring o' Bells quiz night on 22 August raised £90 towards the Play Area funding. The second quiz will be this Wednesday 26th September. Dave, Adrian and Bob will be entering a park's team in the quiz. *(Post meeting note: Another £90 was raised on 26th).*

Micaela and Terry organised another tombola at the Marple Food Festival last Saturday. It was very successful and sold out by 2pm, raising £207 towards the Play Area funding.

The next opportunities for similar fund raising are at the "Marple Cracker" and Marple Bridge "Winter Wonderland" Christmas events on 1st and 8th December respectively.

Micaela asked if another letter could be written for her to distribute to local shops and businesses requesting for prizes to be donated again.

Micaela also mentioned the market stalls used at the Food Festival that are being given away. It was agreed that one of these could be stored in the Brabyns compound for the Friends so Mark will ask Craig Wright if there are any left.

3.11 Notice Boards

Refurbishment of the main entrance notice board has been completed.

3.12 Park Cottage

The flat roof repair has now been completed.

Dave advised that there would be a visit to the cottage by an organisation interested in putting it into use on 2nd October. Dave has discussed the offer made by Tony Donovan last month with David Brayshay and it is hoped to be able to take advantage of this.

Mark is concerned that Tony Donovan did not receive the minutes from last month as the email bounced back and asked Adrian to confirm the correct address so that they could be sent out again.

3.13 Park maintenance activities

Dave advised that he had agreed a large amount of painting and other maintenance work with Tony Donovan during their walkabout last month. This includes the infant's play area fencing, the teen shelter, the bowling green buildings and boards and the benches in the park.

Mark asked if the Ian Rice bench next to the canal entrance near lock 12 could be re-stained if it wasn't already on the list.

Dave could not advise timescales for this work but would ask Tony.

Dave also suggested that the log seat near the main entrance could be jet washed and then oiled to improve its appearance. This is probably best left until the spring now.

3.14 Status of Funds (Excludes money raised at Food Festival)

Current bank balance:	£10,322	
Committed Funds:	£9,416	
Breathing Places		£6,945
Tree Sculpture		£1,358
Memorial Stone & plaques		£500
Miscellaneous		£50
Raised for Play Area		£563
Working balance:	£907	

Income in the last month has included £90 from the quiz night, £44 donated by a winner of Mark's football competition and £2 commission from one of Ann Hearle's books sold at the Mellor Dig.

4.0 Monthly Park Report

Bob advised that general maintenance was continuing and there had been a special tidy up of the garden attached to the park cottage in preparation for the visit next week.

The bowling season finishes soon, which will allow the green to be weeded, spiked and top dressing applied in preparation for the autumn and winter seasons.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 Students misusing the play equipment

Following the return to college the problem of students misusing the infants and junior play equipment in the park has arisen again. Bob did manage to get on top of this last year with a lot of effort but it is

stressful and he does not feel properly supported by the community police officers.

Dave directed Bob to have a word with the community police and ask them to make a point of visiting the park in the lunchtimes and moving the students off the equipment. If this is not successful Dave will take the matter up at the area police meeting.

5.2 Friends' Christmas Dinner

Micaela proposed to organise a Friends of the Park Christmas Dinner at the Ring o' Bells again this year and passed round the menu, which will cost £11.95 a head. Everyone present was agreeable to this and a date of 29th November was selected with a proposed 7pm start.

Micaela will make a provisional booking and confirm numbers and take a £5 deposit with menu choices at the next meeting.

5.3 Carnival presentation night

The Friends have been invited to attend the Carnival Committee presentation night at Marple Cricket Club on Friday 12 October, starting at 7.30pm. Mark hopes raise a team of 4 to form Friends of the Park quiz team. Adrian is hopeful that he will be able to attend too.

6.0 Date of next Meeting

Monday 15 October 2007 at 6:30 in Marple Library.