

**Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting
Monday 9 September 2019
Marple Library**

Present: Lorraine Thompson, Mick Thompson, Joyce Reed, Micaela Wood, Terry Wood, Mark Whittaker.

1.0 Apologies: Bob Wilson, Patrick O'Herlihy, Cllr. Malcolm Allan.

2.0 Minutes of last meeting: Agreed.

3.0 Matters Arising

3.1 Teen Area / Skatepark Phase II / MUGA

Since the last meeting there have been several discussions on tweaks to the design. These culminated in a meeting on site with Canvas's Design Engineer on Friday 23 August and a revised design has now been agreed. The changes were submitted to Planning on 28 August as a minor amendment. The outcome of this is awaited before attempts to firm up a start date with Canvas, who are very busy, can be made.

Costs have increased by £2,500 and although there is still enough money there is now limited contingency. Mark agreed with Richard Booker that he would ask the group to consider ring-fencing £2,500 of our existing funds as extra contingency. This money may or may not be needed but will be held in reserve until the project is completed. This was agreed and the money will be allocated in our accounts.

3.2 Bowling Green and Buildings

Pavilion Art Project: Mark has spoken with Tracy and she has said that she will write-up the grant application for us to discuss and comment on and then we can submit it to the Community Lottery. This is expected to be received soon.

Painting of Pavilion Building: Mark and Bernard have discussed a winter project to clean-up and paint under the canopy so it is ready for the art project to proceed.

Fitting out of Mess Room: After chasing this up several times, and getting the ball rolling to scrounge a second hand wall unit, the council has confirmed today that they have the budget to pay for the full refit of the kitchen at £1,600+VAT.

(Post Meeting Note: As the quote is now out of date Mark will be meeting with Wayne and the contractor to revalidate the quote on Thursday 26 September.)

3.3 Benches

Park benches general: Patrick and Terry have repaired the two benches along the main path that were damaged. One has a new slat fitted from our spares and the other just needed the slat turning around and sanding.

Several of the bases in the same area need some work and Mark has asked Wayne to look at replacing the cracked concrete base for the bench at the end of the Boules Court. For the other one Wayne has been asked for a replacement 600x900 slab and we will do the work. However, it may be possible just to turn two of the slabs though 90 degrees. *(PMN: Bernard and Mark completed this on the 14 September task day).*

Terry has repaired the nature post near the library and it's ready to be reinstalled.

Town Centre benches: The last Town Centre benches have now been refurbished.

We still need to treat all benches ready for winter and an email has been sent out seeking volunteers to help. It looks like we will be there to do this on Tuesday 10th and Thursday 12th September *(PMN: Completed Tuesday 10th and Friday 13th September.)*

Policy for replacement of existing commemorative benches:

Notices are ongoing until October 2019, so we have just one month to go to satisfy the council's policy to spend 12 months seeking the original donors.

During this time we have been contacted by one original donor family and 2 or 3 other people who are interested in funding future opportunities to replace them.

In October Mark will write to the council to confirm the situation and make it clear that we plan to replace the benches when appropriate without further notices. We will also make it clear that we do not plan to replace them until it is no longer practical to maintain and repair them, so it may be several years before replacement is necessary.

Setts in front of Danny Winter bench:

This idea was raised and discussed during a recent task day in the park between Bernard, Mick, Gill and Mark. We all thought it would be a great improvement to provide a hard-standing surface in front of the bench using cobbled setts to replace the worn grass and compacted soil that is currently featured.

Wayne obtained a price of £741 for 100 x 100 mm cobbled setts for us.

Mark met with Danny Winter's family to discuss options and it was agreed to go ahead. Danny's family have donated a generous £400 towards this via Local Giving, the balance will be paid from our general park fund.

We have asked Wayne to place the order and requested that the work be completed in good time for Remembrance in November. *(PMN: Work is ongoing 24/25 September.)*

3.4 Park Buildings and Infrastructure

Replacement of Midnight: As mentioned last meeting, we now have access to 6 or 7 oak logs free of charge courtesy of Myers Tree Care that may be suitable for this.

Ideally we need to develop a theme - maybe talk to schools like we did before, and also talk to some tree sculptors. There are several locally. They all seem to be called Burgess and further investigation shows they are actually brothers.

Mark asked if anyone wished to take the lead on this project as he is happy to do so but has too much on to pick it up at present. There were no takers at the meeting, so Mark will address this project when time allows.

Info board near to Lock 10: Mark will look at creating replacement artwork as soon as time allows. We also need to take a closer look at refurbishment of the lecterns.

Mick and Lorraine proposed that we have a look at cleaning the display panels during the next task day. *(PMN: This was done but with limited success as the protective surface on several of them is starting to lift, allowing water and dirt to ingress.)*

Breathing Places Reading Circle: This work is now 8 weeks overdue. Mark has complained to Wayne and recently suggested that we should talk to alternative contractors unless we can get a commitment from TLC. The problem is that although they were the cheapest price they seem to be over-stretched and unreliable. In the first instance Wayne has said he will apply pressure to obtain committed dates.

Painting of Infants Play area fence: The Jet-washing risk assessment was submitted and has been approved. The activity is now covered by our normal task day applications and we can tackle it at any time. However, we have been struggling to find time so far this year and will probably have to delay until 2020 now.

Possible refurbishment of Park Toilets: Scheme on hold while the built area of the park is considered for the location of a new community centre / swimming pool, as described in the Marple Neighbourhood Plan and announced at Marple AC.

Steps near library: Patrick has progressed with the application of yellow safety paint to the edges of the steps near the library and will also do the Bowling Green steps.

Brickwork walls between Asda and the park:

Cllr. Allan has advised that the council has inspected and tidied up the loose brickwork near the Asda steps to make it safe and has written to Asda to ask for it to be fully repaired. There has not yet been a definitive answer on ownership but it is believed that everything is Asda's responsibility up to the line of the path into the park.

Possible Water Fountain / Bottle Station:

We have received supply and installation costs from Stockport Homes via Wayne to install on the outside wall of the gents' toilets in the park as follows:

Option 1: £789+VAT for the combined drinking fountain / bottle filler unit.

Option 2: £1,015+VAT for the separate drinking fountain and bottle filler units.

These prices are within our budget and we would like to go ahead. However, as explained in some detail at the last meeting in July, the council has raised lots of issues and concerns and they are not supportive at the moment.

Cllr. Allan has been trying to get information from Bury Council on how they managed to overcome such issues but so far has only received generic links to news articles that we have already seen and are not of much help.

Mark has managed to obtain some information from the Regional Rep of Refill.org that maybe more helpful, although it doesn't cover everything. He would now like to talk with Cllr. Allan to consider the best way forward to make progress on this project.

There is another group who would like to do this in Heaton Moor Park and they are also struggling with the same issues, so it may be good to share information.

3.5 Skatepark Development Project

Relocation of CCTV: The privacy assessment has now been completed.

A report was expected to be considered at Marple Area Committee in July but that did not happen, nor in August. We now understand that the report will go to Marple AC on Wednesday 25 September and it will include a request for the funds needed too.

Complaint about Skatepark: A resident of St Martin's Road has sent a complaint about the skatepark to the council, Marple Area Committee and ourselves. The complaint primarily concerns mess / litter, vandalism and noise and makes what the resident claims are "simple, practical suggestions for ways to manage these issues".

These are identified in bold with a summary of initial comments under:

1. Install CCTV cameras on the street-lighting poles around the skatepark, along with overt signs drawing attention to them.

As per item above, we have been campaigning for the CCTV camera to be relocated due to ASB at the skatepark since December 2017. We appear to be close now. (PMN: Marple AC approved funds for the relocation on Weds 25 September 2019.)

2. Schedule regular PCSO patrols. These probably won't be needed before, say, 2 o'clock because it's parents and younger children before that time.

Obviously we would support this and local councillors have already been talking to the police about extra patrols since the Fire Brigade had to attend recently.

3. Regularly tape-off the skatepark for a day, declaring it shut because of "health and safety reasons". Post photos of the mess by the "Closed" signs.

This is not something that we would be prepared to do ourselves but would support the council if they chose to do it. The council's initial response is that if there was a real health and safety need they could temporarily restrict access to the skate area with security herras fencing but there would not be a practical way or cost effective way of regularly closing the facility. Access is not restricted at any of their other

wheeled sport facility's in the borough.

4. Post photos of the closures and the mess on social media sites.

People do this regularly when they see it. We don't have a problem with it but don't believe that the message reaches those responsible for making the mess.

5. Plant more trees between the skatepark and the canal to act as a sound barrier. Previous trees have been vandalised and destroyed.

"Previous trees have been vandalised and destroyed" is a misleading statement. One tree has been vandalised with the centre being broken but is still growing. The Yew trees that were planted and lost died during the drought last summer and were replaced by the Scots pines that are currently in place. However, we would be happy to support more new trees being planted as part of the Phase II works.

(PMN: Four new trees donated by a local resident were planting on 28 September).

6. Put the planned extension of the skatepark on hold while local residents views are actively sought and listened to.

The normal way to engage with neighbours on a project such as this is via the official planning process. Residents' views were actively sought during the two formal planning applications for Phase I and Phase II. Comments received from residents, particularly during the Phase II application have been carefully reviewed, considered and acted upon. In fact the project has been significantly delayed and the design changed / compromised in order to address some of the comments received.

If we delay Phase II further then we will run into more cost and planning issues, and we do not consider that the Phase II improvements will make the situation any worse for residents and may even make it somewhat better. Delaying the works will also deprive genuine skatepark users, sports facility users and young families, more so than idiots who set fire to shopping trolleys.

Mark has forwarded the complaint to local councillors for Marple North Ward and to Greenspace, and requested a meeting with them to discuss a fuller response.

(PMN: A meeting is arranged for Monday 30 September).

Mark has also written to Marple Hall School seeking their support on litter and ASB issues. The school has responded very positively, saying that they will discuss the matters raised with their students and would also welcome being part of further discussions with other agencies to work together to resolve these issues.

3.6 World War I Centenary Commemorations

Announcements: Arthur Cresswell is the penultimate man due to be announced on the 100th anniversary of his death on Monday 14 October 2019.

3.7 Task Days

Last Task Day – 13 & 27 July, 17 & 31 August 2019:

Four task days have been held since the last meeting. Lots of good work has been done and we are receiving more comments than ever about the flowerbeds.

Ad-hoc Task Days: Town Centre benches will be retreated on Tuesday and Thursday this week if weather permits so that they are complete before the Food Festival.

Next Task Days – 14 & 28 September 2019:

Parking has been approved. Email reminders will be sent out when due. On 14 September we will break off around midday to watch the Tour of Britain go past.

Task Day Registration / Risk Assessments:

Task Day registration is covered until 31 December 2019. Jet-washing RA is now approved and added to our general task day activities, so we can do anytime.

Scheduled Saturday Task Days in 2019: 14 & 28 September, 12 & 26 October, 9 & 30 November & 28 December.

Training: Awaiting new dates from Wayne Bardsley.

Tools / Power Tools: Friends of Oldknow's Lime Kilns have enquired about the possibility of purchasing a half-share of our Pullerbear. Mark has advised that we are not keen to do that due to potential issues over ownership and possible damage, but has offered to give them a demo and pull some saplings with them so that they can decide if a Pullerbear would be a good investment for their group.

4.0 Funding - Status of Funds

Current balances Barclays: £8,720.51 + Santander: £460 = £9,180.51. Committed funds are £1,000 for the Reading Circle, £741 for Setts in front of Danny Winter's bench and £2,500 ring-fenced for the Skatepark, leaving a working balance of £4,941.

Income since the last meeting:

£152.80 Local Giving.
£30.00 Brass Bands of Marple (Garden Maintenance).
£16.49 Refund from Jersey Plants (stock not available).
£32.75 Donated by John Oldham Plastering (via Marple Website).
£195.70 Collected in the Park over several task days plus Gill's cards.

Latest news, Marple Beer Run has donated a generous £250 plus Gift Aid via Local Giving. This is not yet in accounts and not included in the figures above.

Expenditure since the last meeting:

None

50-50 Club: The Club is now launched and on-line forms for registration are live. So far we have 29 expressions of interest with 16 numbers fully registered.

Hopefully they have all set-up their standing orders but we can't tell until payments are received. One member has paid for a full year by cheque.

Di has been distributing posters to shops and stood in Asda for 2 hours handing out leaflets and engaging with people during our last task day.

We will be promoting the Club at the Marple Food and Drink Festival. If anyone can help with this please let Mark know. 1,000 A6 flyers have been ordered and received from HB printing at a cost of £45 in preparation for the event. These can also be distributed by volunteers to friends, neighbours and family.

The first draw will be at the next meeting on Monday 14 October. We will use a random number generator App that can be programmed to select 3 numbers and to omit any numbers that have not been paid for. Mark gave a brief demo.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 Lock 11 Compound / Wild-flower Meadow

We had been waiting for CRT to complete the tilling and seeding of the compound area and were nagging Wayne to find out when they would be complete. CRT had visited to carry out the work but had to stop because their machinery was sinking due to the wet ground and causing large ruts. So we were waiting for them to come back.

However, we were recently approached by a volunteer who wanted to create a wild-flower meadow in the park and to involve local school children in the project.

Mick and Mark had a provisional meeting with the volunteer and then a further meeting took place between Mark, Wayne Bardsley, the volunteer and a local

landscaper. The meeting seemed to go well and it was agreed that the compound area would be a great location. The plan is to grass approximately a third (as it is used by Marple Carnival) and to sow a wild-flower meadow in the remaining two thirds.

Following the meeting Wayne asked CRT to stop work and look at the value of the work they still had to do and the seed that they were to provide with a view to donating this value of funds to the project. In the meantime the volunteer and the landscaper would start developing the project and look at funding opportunities.

It is understood that CRT will still be paying separately for the supply of replacement trees to be planted in the woodland area during the autumn, as previously explained.

It was suggested during the meeting that the wild-flower meadow could possibly be mown with paths or even a maze and we will look further at this idea too.

5.2 Possible Play Area Improvements

It was highlighted that over a year ago we raised the idea of combining and enlarging the two existing play areas into a single larger one. This was inspired by our visit to Queens Park in Rochdale, which has a great play area with a large wooden fort.

It is also noted that in the past a number of people have suggested (and continue to suggest) adding a water-play feature in the park. We have previously asked questions of the council about water-play and these have not yet been fully answered. We should therefore explore this suggestion further as part of this potential new project.

It was intended to wait until the Skatepark Phase II / MUGA was completed before trying to make any further headway on these ideas. However, with Phase II being hit by continued delays that seem to be beyond our control, the time could be right to try and get this ball moving. That is because it may be particularly timely to factor this in while the council is consulting on the potential relocation of the swimming pool to the park and considering the possibility of building new community facilities too.

To this end Mark has written to Richard Booker to ask for clarification of the council's thoughts on water-play and to see if we can develop these ideas further with him.

(Post Meeting Note: Richard has said that he has a number of big projects being delivered over the next 8 weeks but after that he would be able to put some time into developing this with us. In the meantime, he has suggested taking a look at Heaton Park in Manchester, which has an innovative landscaped feature that channels and temporarily holds rainwater for children's play).

6.0 Next Meeting

Monday 14 October 2019 at 6.15pm in Marple Library.

Future meeting dates scheduled for 2019/20 (library booked):

14 October, 11 November, 9 December, 13 January 2020, 10 February, 9 March, 13 April, 11 May, 8 June 2020.