

**Friends of Marple Memorial Park Committee Meeting
Monday 8th August 2005**

Minutes

Present: Peter Clarke, David Hoyle, Mark Whittaker, Kay Blair, Bob Wilson, David Brayshay, Jeannette Webb, Cllr. Chris Baker, Dave Burrows, Chris Armitt, Bill Ardern, Brian Nash, Michaela Wood, Peter Bardsley, Ken Wilson, Jay Havoleana
Apologies: Adrian Ellis, Malcolm Allcard

Minutes of Last Meeting: accepted by Peter Bardsley and seconded by Mark Whittaker. David Hoyle and Bob Wilson reported that they had not received a copy of the last minutes.

Park Cottage: Peter reviewed the situation as it stands – that various local groups were all pushing for some sort of community use and that a tearoom was felt to be the majority verdict. Kay had suggested a drop-in advice centre of some sort and a Heritage centre had also been mentioned.

Peter introduced David Brayshay – the temporary Head of Parks and Recreation.

Mr. Brayshay reported that a quick resolution was wanted although there was no final resolution at this stage– he was here to take away thoughts and recommendations for its future use. As the cottage is covered by a series of covenants and restrictions, meaning that it cannot be sold, a use has to be found.

Regarding the future use the Council need to know:

- Implications of them
- How it can be maintained with minimum input from the council
- Sustainable staffing
- It would need a sustainable business plan

Peter Clarke queried the Council's partnership with other groups i.e. in the running of the café at Etherow Park. Mr. Brayshay reported that the Council did have well-established partnerships with for e.g. a charitable trust company called Pure Innovations Ltd who staff Vernon Park Museum. He would be quite happy to roll out a further programme of that type in to Marple.

Peter Bardsley reported that the feeling from local residents was that tearoom would be well used in the Memorial Park.

Peter Clarke queried whether the cottage could be run as a private enterprise.

Dave Burrows queried whether there was a clause in the covenant that restricted commercial enterprise. Mr. Brayshay agreed that it might suggest that there could be no hard nose commercial enterprise however their Legal Services may find an argument to change it slightly.

As the Council has an excellent working relationship with Pure Innovations he would now have to approach them to discuss the possibility with them.

He did state that he felt there would be high starting costs for any project in the cottage and a way must be found to support it.

Peter Clarke asked for questions from the group.

Ken Wilson stated that he would be in agreement with an arrangement like Etherow as it had a spin off benefit in providing work for handicapped people.

Peter Bardsley felt that the new young people's area in the park would enhance its use as a tearoom.

Kay Blair queried whether the Council would have a Budget ear marked for such a project.

Mr. Brayshay reported that there would be nothing earmarked for it – they worked with an amorphous pot, which was not allocated per building. They had various programmes of work, which had to be prioritised. They would require a business plan for an outlet – self sustaining and recouping cost of investment.

David Hoyle said he felt the building would need substantial capital investment, but that to do nothing was not an option.

Mr. Brayshay agreed – it could be a good social enterprise if run like Etherow. However his first move would be to talk to Pure – they may not be interested although potentially it could be a great opportunity for them.

Kay Blair expressed her concern about the Budget element – a cost benefit and analysis would be done.

Mr. Brayshay commented that any future use of the cottage will have capital costs to start up – a figure needs to be found.

Dave Burrows stated that he felt a considerable amount of work was needed on the cottage before it could be put to any use.

Mr. Brayshay stated that there were major restrictions due to the clauses on the cottage use and that it would fall to the Council to solve it.

Cllr. Baker stated that it would appear to be a good position for a tearoom, which would be successful. A study was needed as to costs. The cottage has to be used and the decision would go to the Executive Member – he would mention it to her.

Mr. Brayshay did say that there were other models of Council partnerships other than Pure. Bruntwood Park has a different arrangement in that they have a lease arrangement with a private family.

Jeanette Webb, a local resident, reported that there seemed to be more and more holes appearing in the roof and there seemed to be some quite bad damage. The longer it was empty the more costs would be incurred – were any interim repairs being carried out?

Bob Wilson reported that interim repairs were carried out.

Peter Bardsley reported that it is not a listed building.

Kay Blair noted that we are already half way through the financial year and could not a full pot be earmarked for the building out of next year's pot?

David Hoyle felt that it would not be advisable to let the building decay over the winter. An assessment of repairs was needed and feedback to the group.

Mr. Brayshay said that there would be no problem with the group seeing a report on the building – it was not a private report. He would be in touch again once he knew where things were going.

Peter Clarke thanked Mr. Brayshay for his attendance at which point he left the meeting.

Matters Arising:

Coronation Tree – Mark reported that he had seen a suitable bench to fit around the tree on e-bay and that the firm who supply them have a continuous stock. If the bench fit the tree then a Grant could be applied for.

A plaque is to be fitted to explain the significance of the tree – could it go on the bench?

Graffiti Art Scheme – Peter C. reported that no progress had been made with this as it had not been possible to contact Andrea Nyland. He suggested that the group should progress with the application on our own.

Jim's Bench – Peter C. reported that there had been problems with the ordering of the bench due to out of date catalogues and the style of the bench chosen had meant a shortfall on funds. However the bench will now be ordered on Monday and a location for the bench needs to be decided upon. Peter suggested a location between the new and old play areas.

Jay reported that some ladies who attend a coffee morning at the library and who were friends of Jim's were not in favour of this and felt it should be more over towards where he lived. They felt they should be consulted over its location.

Mark Whittaker suggested that maybe his family should be consulted. Peter C. said he would contact Jim's family and maybe get them to come to the park and decide on a location.

Bird Boxes – Michaela has contacted the RSPB and the area behind the library was felt to be a good location for the boxes. Michaela's husband has agreed to make and provide the boxes although he needed to find the correct dimensions for sparrow boxes. Autumn is the best time to fit them. Bird tables were also mentioned.

Bob Wilson was asked whether he felt that to be a suitable area – he could see no problem.

Peter C. queried why the area by the canal was not suitable?

Mark Whittaker said Gill his wife would probably have the correct dimensions for the boxes.

Dave Burrows also suggested that the Wildlife Officer at the Town Hall could help with advice etc.

Play Area Update: - now open and being well used.

Peter C. reported on the original rocking horse which has had to be replaced after all due to modern legislation.

David Hoyle queried if it could be sold.

Dave Burrows felt that the Council would be hesitant to sell it because of Safety Regulations – he wondered whether it could be donated to the Friends group.

Kay Blair suggested it be incorporated in to the tearooms which was felt to be a good idea. Peter C. requested that Dave Burrows keep it safe for the time being.

Bob Wilson reported some problems with the new play area – the new horse's head had come off and nuts and bolts had been working loose off various bits of equipment.

Peter C. queried why this was happening and were the firm who had fitted it not responsible?

Dave Burrows said a pre-inspection should have been done and a snag list should have been produced.

Bob Wilson said that a snag list had been produced but he was not sure where things were now up to.

Peter C. said that it definitely needed sorting and should be monitored for the next meeting.

Jay queried the age groups, which should be using the areas.

Bob reported that a sign would soon be up and that he had experienced problems with youths using the area.

Peter C. stated that if people who were too old were using the areas then the police should be contacted so that a picture could be built up.

Kay Blair said it would be useful if it was reported to the Youth Offending Team as well for monitoring.

Peter Bardsley noted the increase in use of the park was creating problems with the opening hours of the toilets.

Ken Wilson agreed stating that the toilets were of no use if locked up – it is a Public service that doesn't happen.

Cllr. Baker agreed that the situation needs looking at.

AOB – Peter C. read out a letter from the Committee of the Locks Festival thanking the Friends Group for their help. David Hoyle also registered thanks to Dave Burrows for his help with the festival.

Bowling Green: Peter C. apologised for the next item being omitted from the Agenda.

Ken Wilson reported on the damage done to the Bowling Green by fertiliser being applied incorrectly. He asked for better consideration be given to the Green as 12 months ago it had also been damaged by an inexperienced park keeper using the mower incorrectly.

Peter C. reported that in this instance the member of staff had been told incorrectly what to do – however it had been taken on board and everyone now was aware of correct procedures.

Dave Burrows added his concern to the incident and reported that he would see staff about why it had happened.

Equal Opportunities Policy – everyone received a copy of the document prepared by Mark Whittaker. Peter C. proposed that it be accepted as the Friends Policy on Equal Opportunities. Ken Wilson seconded it.

Park Report – Bob Wilson reported that the Bowling Green is recovering well and is being worked on.

The Park is exceptionally busy at the moment and is being well used apart from a few exceptions who have caused Bob some problems.

The increased use of the Park has created more litter which has affected normal operations. Peter C. queried whether volunteers could help with litter picking and Dave Burrows said he could always get hold of more litter pickers which could be kept in the shed.

Bob stated that it was more the emptying of the bins rather than the picking up which was the problem.

David Hoyle said it was a problem of success.

Green Flag – Dave Burrows thanked the group for their help in achieving the award. The paper work for the next application has to be in by September. Dave asked Peter C. to look at this year's Action Plan with a view to updating it. Peter asked for the current Plan to be e-mailed to him.

Dave Burrows said that a date needs to be arranged for the raising of the Green Flag and the official opening of the new play area.

Task Day A possible task day was mentioned to plant Daffodils and Bluebells. David Hoyle suggested that the College students could help.

Red Ensign - Mark Whittaker reported that a flag had been acquired and paid for by the Area Committee. He also reported that the flagpole could do with alterations to erase the need to hire a cherry picker each time a flag is raised.

Goal Posts – David Hoyle stated how successful they had been resulting in the grass being worn away. Dave Burrows said the solution was to “move the goalposts”!

Notice Board: The Perspex for the Park notice board is on order.

Lights: Ken Wilson queried why the lights in the park were still not working. Peter C. reported that the Council was waiting for the Electricity Board to sort it. The old lights still need to be taken out.

Putting Green: Michaela queried whether any further thought had gone to installing a putting green in the park.

Peter C. said it was certainly a suggestion for the future and would probably be in the vicinity of Jim's house so the clubs and balls could be hired from there. The problem was that a putting green would create extra work for the Park staff so may be a Crazy golf course would be a better idea. Would be looked at once Jim's house is sorted.

Next Meeting Monday 12th September, 6.30 at the Library