

**Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting
Monday 11th August 2014
Marple Library**

Present: Patrick O’Herlihy, Terry Wood, Micaela Wood, Bob Wilson, Mick Thompson, Joyce Reed, Adrian Ellis, Mark Whittaker.

1.0 Apologies: Lorraine Thompson.

2.0 Minutes of the last meeting: Agreed.

3.0 Matters Arising

3.1 Registering as a charity

Ian Walmsley, the council’s Greenspace Manager, has written today to clarify the council’s statutory obligations with regard to parks and open spaces and confirmed that the Friends of the Park do not relieve the council of any of these. The letter has been forwarded to the Charity Commission and their response is awaited.

(Post meeting note: On 13 August the CC accepted that what we do is charitable for the public benefit but has advised that we will need to amend our current objects and also adopt their model constitution. A new draft constitution has been issued back to the CC with a request to confirm that this is satisfactory. If it is, it can be distributed to trustees for review prior to being agreed and adopted at the next meeting.)

3.2 Anti-Social Behaviour / Additional CCTV Cameras

ABS Logs submitted since the last meeting covering 12 reported incidents were distributed with the agenda. An additional 3 have been submitted up-to today.

Recent incidents include:

- Repeated reports of youths using the bowling green for football and deliberately kicking the ball at buildings to cause damage and at people to intimidate them.
- Abuse of bowlers and park users, drinking, swearing and drug use.
- Riding bikes on the bowling green.
- Drug dealing.
- Weekly collection of drug packets and paraphernalia from around the park.
- Damage to grass caused by BBQ and extensive littering.
- Graffiti to notice boards and buildings.

A report on Operation Aventura was received from East INPT Inspector Palmer. This was distributed with the agenda and discussed at the meeting – there have been no arrests and no offences witnessed, with culprits usually making off when the police arrive. Youths have been spoken to and alcohol seized on one occasion.

A similar report on a special operation we were told about by the Community Safety Team has been requested several times. Insp. Palmer has advised today that this was postponed due to resource issues and is to take place when resources are available.

One of the reported incidents involving youths abusing a bowler and park users with young children was particularly traumatic for the victims and was reported to the police at the time. They later called the victims back to apologise that they were not able to attend because they were too busy. This really isn’t helpful, as it will encourage the culprits to think they can do what they like with impunity.

The Community Operations Safety Manager responded to the reporting of this incident by reiterating the actions taken to address ASB in the park to date:

- *Location added to Operation Adventor (Police Op) – daily Police visits to Burglary and ASB hotspots at various times where capacity allows.*
- *Dog Wardens – additional patrols to control dog fouling – Fixed Penalty Notices to be issued by Wardens/Police where perpetrators can be identified.*
- *Location added to the 2014 Safe 4 Summer operation (includes x 5 locations across the East of Stockport)– Friday night patrols by Police, ASB Officers and other relevant SSP partners to address ASB in the Park. Also various diversionary activities (sports) organised. Operation duration 6-weeks over summer holidays.*
- *Location discussed at monthly East area Joint Action Group (JAG) meetings with relevant partners who make a joint effort to respond to any issues raised.*
- *A CCTV Options paper was submitted to the Marple Area Committee earlier this year and deployable CCTV camera was not recommended as a viable solution for various reasons. These included the lack of a suitable camera post and the amount of funding required to install a bespoke post in one area of the Park (the size and layout of the Park makes it impossible for one camera to be suitably positioned to view all potential ASB hotspots).*

On dog fouling, which is rife in the park, Mark has asked that we be advised how many Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued in the park since the additional patrols were introduced, and, has the Dog Warden talked to the Park Assistant to obtain intelligence to help catch repeat offenders? Replies are awaited from the CST.

On cameras, we've previously expressed our disappointment at the content and the handling of the "CCTV Options Report", which muddled the issues of deployable and permanent CCTV options. One of the key points made in this report was that only 13 ASB logs over a 12 month period had been received - this has changed significantly suggesting that either there is a huge increase in anti-social behaviour in the park or many incidents previously went unreported.

Friends of the Park still believe that there is a very strong case for installing the three additional permanent CCTV cameras on the existing Council Offices system as per the options identified by SSK at a cost of £2,172 in January. We believe that this scheme can be adapted to effectively monitor the bowling green and buildings, the infants play area, the front of the library and the toilet block. It would be interesting to compare the cost of repairs carried out (and still waiting to be carried out) to the damaged roofs of the bowling huts caused by the deliberate kicking of footballs against them that has been repeatedly reported. Friends of the Park believe that it is only a matter of time before more serious damage is done to buildings or the fabric of the park by vandals that could make £2,172 seem like a great investment.

Joyce highlighted that a TV programme recently aired about dangerous dog owners. This revealed that it is common practice to train these dogs by encouraging them to attack young trees, as has been done in our park recently. It has also occurred in Cromwell Avenue Park in the past with similar attacks on park equipment.

Mick advised that he witnessed what appeared to be a Youth Services group with gazebo, table and portable BBQ one evening last week alongside the main path into the park, although he didn't notice them engaging with youths in the park. This was probably Friday evening and was presumed to be the Community Safety Team.

3.3 Park Benches

General Bench Maintenance

The Coronation Bench was cleaned up and painted during the last task day. It will benefit from a second coat of paint and we can hopefully do this soon.

Town Centre Benches

Risk Assessments have been prepared and submitted to the council. Jane has advised that these are acceptable but because the work is in the District Centre and involves power tools she cannot approve them. She has passed them onto the District Centre Team to deal with but they are on holiday. They are due back this week, so hopefully they will soon be able to approve a task day covered by council insurance for us to complete a trial bench. This will allow us to identify the costs and extent of work involved in doing the others and put together a proposal for the funding needed.

Patrick has identified a number of businesses interested in adopting a bench.

3.4 Treatment of Sculptures & Wooden Features

Stabilisation of "Midnight" Tree Sculpture

The £1,000 grant from Stockport Homes has been received in the bank.

Consolidation of the stump has been completed and the council has issued an invoice to cover the £1,100 cost of the work. A cheque was signed at the meeting.

The sculpture needs another application of preservative before winter.

Infants Play Area Fence

Painting of the inner blue and red fence around the swings and the rest of the swings area were completed during the last task day. Bernard and Mark painted the main entrance gate during an ad-hoc task day last week.

Jet washing of the outer fence was going well but a seal blew on the new Jet Wash causing water to leak from the body. After contacting Karcher via Social Media it was repaired free of charge at Stockport MCC last week. We should finish preparations for the Challenge Network task day on Monday 18 August later this week.

Play Area Swings

The council has responded promptly to our reporting of the repairs needed to the Infants Play Area swings and new plywood structural panels have been fitted.

3.5 Park Buildings

Repairs

Repairs to the roofs and gutters of the bowling buildings are still awaited and the situation is getting worse as vandals continue to deliberately kick footballs at them, breaking more tiles and gutter supports. The work has been issued to Carillion but the council is unable to advise when it will be done, which is very disappointing.

Repair to the Mess Room window is still outstanding too after months of requesting this to be done because it presents a security risk.

Tool Store

Painting of the Tool Store door is still to complete. *(Post meeting note: Patrick has now completed this during an ad-hoc task day since the meeting.)*

Library Notice Board

The notice board refurbished by the group a couple of years ago has been broken by vandals and needs a new sheet of 3mm Perspex at a cost of £21.14. The council have been asked if they are able to supply this and a request has been issued to Carillion. Unfortunately the council cannot tell us when it will be done or if Carillion will supply only or supply and fit. If it's not done by the next meeting we will do it ourselves.

3.6 Skatepark Development Project

Latest Skatepark Project News

A draft copy of the minutes of the last skatepark meeting held on 17 July was distributed with the agenda. The tender scoring with skatepark users went very well. Ian Walmsley and Cllr Kevin Dowling kindly attended the meeting at short notice to ensure that it could proceed because regular council officers were not available.

The users identified a favourite design via the scoring system and this was consistent with the results of the consultation with users during Marple Carnival. The remaining criteria have also been scored with the council and they are now in the process of getting to the stage when we can nominate a contractor and talk to them about finalising the design and putting together a planning application.

We have great news on the community funding front as our application to the CDL Fund via Forever Manchester was successful and we were awarded a £2,500 contribution towards the project. This sum of money will be held by Forever Manchester until we raise the balance of funding needed for the project.

Fund Raising Status

Money needed:	£100,000 (approx)
Community Funding:	£19,243 (£757 short against a target of £20,000)
Commuted Sums:	£22,000
Total funds available:	£41,243
Funding to find:	£58,757 (plus 10% tax on landfill grant if successful).

Our application to the Vernon Jubilee Fund was rejected for the third year running.

We are now targeting to make a submission to the new landfill trust identified by 3 October 2014, which is pretty tight. It is hoped that we will have a planning application submitted by this time, even if it is not yet approved.

Marple Fire Station Open Day – Cancelled

Unfortunately Marple Fire Fighters had to cancel their Open Day due to unforeseen circumstances. Hopefully they will be able to reschedule for another date.

Better news is that Joyce's idea for us to ask Kathryn Procter to knit us a Fireman Sam was successful and we have him ready for the future. Some great publicity photos were taken with Sam and the Fire Fighters before the cancellation happened.

Family Cycle Ride along the Middlewood Way – Sunday 24 August

Jason's plans for a cycle ride along the Middlewood Way followed by a fun day at The Marple Tavern continue to make good progress. Tentative arrangements have been made for first aid attendance, The Marple Tavern is preparing risk assessments with

the council's help and insurance is in place via Friends of the Park for the cycling part of the event. Tickets are £5pp or £15 per family of 4 and can now be purchased on-line (plus fees). We now need as many people as possible to come along.

Mark appealed for volunteers to help at The Marple Tavern after the cycle ride and we plan to have a raffle for a knitted skater (donated by Kathryn Procter), Splat the Rat and skatepark displays giving the latest news.

3.7 World War I Centenary Commemorations

Possible Silhouette Art Project

Terry has made more progress with Alan and Gary, the chaps he has been talking to about helping with this project, and they were proposing to prepare a design for us to consider. Terry will chase them up to see how they are progressing.

Joyce provided contact details for a ceramic artist who may also be able to help.

WWI Guided Walks

The two walks led by Andy Cook on 27 July and 3 August were successful and have received great feedback. A third walk is scheduled for next Sunday 17 August.

£154 was collected during the two walks for the British Legion Poppy Appeal.

Three more walks are scheduled for 21, 28 September and 5 October. These are expected to take a different route and talk about different men. Mark is waiting for a meeting with Andy to review the new walk before publicising them to the community.

Timeline Commemoration

Steve Condliffe has been in touch to suggest putting crosses in the park for each man named on the war memorial. This idea was bounced around and it was felt that it would be good to add something to the park on the 100th anniversary of each man's death, building up a timeline of their loss over the period up to 2019. This could possibly be a cross with name and date or maybe something else featuring a bit more detail about each man. We have some time before the first anniversary towards the end of October to consider different ways and locations for developing this idea and it was agreed to discuss it further in the park during the next task day.

3.8 Task Days

Last Task Days – 12 and 26 July 2014

Lots of work on the flowerbeds, pruning and weeding, preservation of benches and painting of the Infants Play Area fence was carried out.

Next Task Days – 16 and 30 August 2014

Details to be decided nearer the time. Mark will send out parking requests and emails.

Special Task Day – Monday 18 August with Challenge Network

A special task day is arranged with the Challenge Network, who will bring a team of up to 12 young volunteers with supervision to work with us in the park between 11am and 3.30pm on Monday 18 August 2014. *(PMN: This Task Day has now been registered and approved.)*

Saturday Task Days scheduled for 2014

Registered: 16 and 30 August, 13 and 27 September and 25 October.

To register: 29 November and 27 December 2014.

Ad-hoc Daily Task Days

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

Risk Assessments / Training

With 11 volunteers having attended the risk assessment training there are no more training requirements anticipated in the immediate future.

SSK Support for Task Days

No further news. *(Post meeting note: A response from Cllr Candler to the ePetition concerning SSK Support for Task Days has been posted on the council web site:*

The petition was submitted to the Executive Meeting on 12 August 2014 and in response the Executive Councillor (Communities & Sustainability) (Councillor Martin Candler) made the following statement:

"I have just taken over responsibility for this area of work and I would like to say that I am determined to bring about a new era of trust between volunteers and the Council. I find it very sad that relationships appear to have broken down in some places and that is most unfortunate for all who care about our parks and green spaces.

Firstly, as I said to the Greenspace Forum recently, whatever impression was gained before, for whatever reason, I on behalf of the Council, appreciate and value the contribution that volunteers make and I want them to know it.

I have taken steps to ensure that the Council will provide as soon as possible

- *Risk assessment training for volunteers*
- *Employee liability insurance cover for task days and signpost financial support for event insurance*
- *A revised events application process*
- *A new task day application process*

Also, the Council will through its Greenspace Team work closely with volunteer groups and help them access grants from third parties, support event applications and assist with the provision of materials and equipment for their task days.

I have asked officers to look into how we might further improve the offer to Friends of Groups in terms of Solutions SK staff supporting volunteers during the working week within the limits of existing resources.

I will, as promised, be coming back to a further meeting of the Greenspace Forum in September with worked up proposals to address some of the issues highlighted by them earlier.'

Fulltime Park Attendant

There are rumours that the decision by Cllr Stuart Bodsworth when he was Executive Member that Memorial Park should continue to have a fulltime park attendant is to be reversed in the near future. It was agreed that this was highly undesirable and would be extremely detrimental to the park's well being. It was suggested that the decision might have been made at the time simply to smooth the way during local elections.

Mark will write to Cllr Candler to express the group's views on this matter.

(Post Meeting Note: A letter sent on 12 August had been acknowledged by Cllr Candler and a full response is now awaited.)

4.0 Funding - Status of Funds

Balance on last statement for 22 July 2014 is £18,573.08

Income since last meeting includes:

£1,000.00	Stockport Homes.
£21.89	Collected in the Park.
£50.00	Donation from Marple Carnival Committee.
£200.00	Marple Senior Citizens' Association.
£100.00	Challenge Network
£1.70	Interest

Expenditure since last meeting includes:

£10.91	Paint brushes, mop, ladles (for paint).
£32.40	Photocopying for Skatepark Meeting with users.
£63.16	Flagpole replacement halyard.
£8.94	"Lest We Forget" Flag.

Expenditure pending (not yet claimed back):

£2.97	3 x Garden Leaf Grabbers.
£7.92	8 x sets of 5 paint brushes.

Committed funds in account are: Skate Park Fund £16,744, Flowerbeds £165, Tree Sculpture Consolidation £1,100 and Paint £100 leaving a working balance of £610.

Cheques for £1,100 covering Tree Sculpture Consolidation and £100.11 for paint for the Infants Play Area were signed at the meeting.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 Repairs to Flagpole and WWI Commemorative Flag

The money paid to the supplier of the undelivered replacement halyard and flag was recovered via Paypal dispute and new suppliers found. The repairs to the flagpole have been completed and the new "Lest We Forget" flag is being flown on the pole nearest to the war memorial. Our 10-year celebration flag has been moved to the repaired flagpole nearest to the council offices.

5.2 Food and Drink Day – Saturday 13 September 2014

Micaela has begun distribution of the letter about tombola prizes to local businesses and shops and is comfortable that everything is going to plan.

Mark passed over prizes donated by Stationery Supplies.

5.3 Fund Raising Walk

This idea was put on the back burner for the time being to focus on the F&D Day.

5.4 Waste Bins

Mark has had discussions with the council about replacing 3 of the old bins and hopefully we will get a new one in the Infants Play Area, one near the Junior Play Area and one near to the Bowling Green. Mick suggested that one is also needed towards the top end of the park but this will have to be followed up separately.

6.0 Date of next Meeting

Monday 8 September 2014 at 6pm in Marple Library.

Meeting dates scheduled for 2014 (library booked):

8 September, 13 October, 10 November and 8 December 2014.