

**Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting
Monday 14th January 2008
Marple Library**

Present: Dave Burrows (Acting Chair), Robert Wilson, Micaela Wood, Rebecca Nedeljkovic, Jay Havoleana, Peter Bardsley, Bill Ardern, Patrick O'Herlihy, Mark Whittaker.

1.0 Apologies: Adrian Ellis, Chris Armit.

2.0 Minutes of the Last Meeting: Agreed.

3.0 Matters Arising.

3.1 BBC Breathing Places Reading Area

Landscape Work

The landscape contractor has started work in the woodland area today. There is a saving of £790 against the approved budget for this work.

Sculpture

Rebecca has spoken to Andrew Frost and he has asked the group to reiterate their brief for the sculpture. It was confirmed that we would like it to compliment the nature, wildlife and books theme of the existing sculpture and incorporate hanging bird feeders that the library staff can fill to attract birds to the area.

Rebecca has sourced the raw material for the sculpture and Andrew will produce sketches based on the brief.

It was proposed that we seek permission from the Big Lottery Fund to spend the savings of £790 from the landscape work on the sculpture by increasing the budget to £1,800. Mark will submit a request to the BLF Project Officer.

It was felt that the position of the sculpture should be reviewed and agreed during a daytime site visit when the landscape works were more advanced. The edge of the reading circle was probably most suitable.

Interpretation Board

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

Bird & Bat Boxes

Terry Wood has agreed that the David Lewis Centre will make 12 bat boxes to the design provided by Wayne Bardsley for the fantastic sum of £40. Terry will try to have these ready for the 26th January task day. The boxes will be installed 3 per tree, as shown in the urban handbook, on 4 trees to be selected during the task day. Dave advised that for safety reasons Adrian and his team would have to fit the boxes.

Hedgehog Boxes

Mark passed round a design for an "All-in-one Hedgehog Nestbox" approved by the Hedgehog Preservation Society. These are available for £35 to £40 via the Internet.

Micaela will ask Terry if he will be prepared to make these at the David Lewis Centre and to look at how much he would have to charge for them. If necessary the group could order one that could be used as a template. Between 2 and 4 may be viable and possibly others elsewhere within the park.

Wildlife Habitats

Dave advised that Adrian has obtained a large amount of material for constructing natural wildlife habitats. This is probably best left until after the landscape work is completed and could probably incorporate the hedgehog boxes.

Review of costs and other items

Mark passed round a table showing the BLF approved budget allocations for the Breathing Places Project. This shows that we currently have a surplus of around £1,900 due mainly to the savings on the tree work and landscape work. Variances of more than £200 from these budgets must be agreed with the BLF.

It has already been agreed to request an increase from £1,000 to £1,800 on the tree sculpture and proposals need to be developed for spending the remaining surplus that can be submitted for approval.

Suggestions included:

Under-storey planting: Dave will investigate what shrubs would be suitable and how many could be obtained for a budget of £100.

Bee and insect habitats: Mark has found details for Bumble Bee nests, ladybird mansions and Solitary Bee hives. Dave expressed concerns about children being stung by bees, so Mark will investigate further concentrating on other insects.

Willow Bundles: These are available for £30 per bundle (15 x 20cm willow rods). *(Post meeting note: Mark will ask Dave to see how much the council can get these for.)*

The group agreed to purchase a copy of the Urban Handbook last month. Mark passed this and two other small books about managing woodlands for wildlife to Jay, who will review them for further ideas. It was suggested that we might be able to use the Breathing Places funds for books of this type and Mark will ask the Project Officer if this would be acceptable.

Mark will speak to Linda Paton regarding further details of the removable seating / mats proposed by the library and establish if they have the funds in place for these.

The reporting deadline for the project is 12th June 2008, so it was agreed that we must target for all work to be completed by the end of May 2008 to give time for a report to be produced.

3.2 Beech Tree Sculpture

Mark has now submitted the report for the Stockport Council Arts grant and confirmation that it is acceptable is awaited.

With Adrian on leave it was uncertain whether he had discussed the installation of the ground sculptures with Gareth of Playground Maintenance. Dave will check with Adrian when he returns. The group are keen to get the ones around the main sculpture installed as soon as possible.

Andrew Frost has agreed to replace the stolen apple sculpture free of charge and a section of the beech tree has been supplied to him for this purpose. At this point it is not known if he has made any progress and Mark will ask Adrian to tactfully follow it up with Andrew.

The apple and pear are to be installed in the infants play area.

3.3 Boules Court.

A site visit was held on 2nd January and the location of the Boules Court agreed. It will be placed to the north of the Bowling Green, just off the main path.

Rebecca has obtained a price of £2,240 from the landscape contractor doing the Breathing Places work but it is not possible to fund the court from commuted sums because it would not be classed as children's play.

The Friends currently have some funds that could be put towards this but not the full amount. Alternative sources will therefore have to be sought. Patrick O'Herlihy will raise this with the Marple Business Forum and the Regeneration Partnership to see if they would be able to help.

There is an issue over whether the court should be constructed to British or International Pentanque sizes. Rebecca will seek advice to resolve this matter.

3.4 Basketball Court Fence

Rebecca advised that the cost of the fence installation would be £3,375. This does not include the steps down to the teen shelter area, which will be priced by the contractor doing the disabled path to the Bowling Green in the near future.

The scheme that has been granted planning permission includes fencing along the two downhill sides of the court. The fencing is 2m high rising to 3m local to the north end basket.

Patrick expressed concern that the 2m sections may not be high enough and perhaps the fence should be 3m high all round. Patrick agreed to discuss this with users of the court and perhaps bring some of them along to a meeting to talk about it. If necessary, he will also speak to local councillors about a change in height for the fence and submit a formal amendment to the planning permission to cover it. Rebecca will email the details to Patrick for these purposes.

Rebecca confirmed that this would be a suitable use for the £4.7k commuted sum available and explained that she would have to submit a report for consideration by the Marple Area Committee to get it approved.

It was agreed to allow Patrick time to resolve the concerns over the fence height before proceeding further.

3.5 Infants Play Area

The preparatory work is now complete ready for delivery of the main equipment. This is due in the near future but a confirmed date is not yet available. Work will slow down now until the deliveries begin.

Rebecca passed over details of the standard benches proposed to replace the existing ones in the play area. She will obtain a price for supplying and installing 3 of these plus the Wicksteed play-table, and also some small mushroom type seats in the grassed area if the group's budget of £3,362 would cover these too.

Rebecca will also obtain a price for relocating the existing benches to the Skate Park area.

Micaela and Bob will be visiting Brabyns Preparatory School on Monday 21st January to be presented with the cheque for £743 raised by the school's sponsored bounce.

Dave confirmed that the painting of the fence will be coordinated with the playground installation works and finished off afterwards.

3.6 Task Days

Next Task Day – 26 January

Bob advised that there would be plenty of work in the park for task day mulching the shrub beds. If Terry is able to complete the bat boxes Adrian and his team can also fit these. Mark passed some new posters provided by Richard Booker to publicise the task day in local shops.

War Memorial Flowerbeds

Dave advised that he has discussed the scheme for the Memorial beds with Adrian again and he should now be able to draw it up once back from holiday.

Car parking during task days

Mark has received an email from Richard Booker today advising that Cllr. Alexander has been successful in arranging free parking for up to six vehicles on task days. The procedure required is to email the registration numbers to the council a few days in advance of the event. Mark will do this for the task day on 26th January.

The group are pleased that Cllr. Alexander has been able to achieve this for them and acknowledge the effort she has put in to doing so.

3.7 Fundraising Activities

Micaela recapped how Marple Cinema had helped the Mellor Rose Queen charity raise funds by screening the Sound of Music last year and that Mr. Lillis had agreed for the Friends of the Park to hold a similar fund-raising event this year.

Micaela has spoken further to Mr. Lillis recently and he has confirmed that any Sunday in April would be possible. The films available and considered suitable had been narrowed down to two, The Railway Children and the Wizard of Oz. After discussion it was decided to choose the Railway Children and Sunday 27th April was selected to maximise the time available for publicising the event.

There are 252 seats in the cinema with a cost of £4.50 downstairs and £5 upstairs. The group would receive the proceeds of all ticket sales and would have to pay for the hire of the film and the cost of ushers. A raffle could also be held to raise additional funds on the day.

The next steps will be to finalise the times and details for selling tickets and begin publicising the event as widely as possible.

3.8 Park Cottage

Mark reiterated the details included in the post-meeting note of the last minutes – That on 18th December a request for the group to make a pre-application to the Playful Ideas scheme in time for a deadline of 31st December was received from Vanessa Brook. After careful consideration Mark declined to undertake this due to the lack of time available before the Christmas holidays.

It is hoped that opportunities to work with the council to find funding for the restoration of the cottage would be available in the future, after some of the groups ongoing projects were completed.

The general proposal is understood to be to turn the cottage into a drop-in play centre but Dave had no news of any costs or further details of proposals to pass on to the group at present.

3.9 Pets' Memorial

As Adrian was on leave the action on him to try and find out details of the scheme for a Pets' Memorial in one of the council's other parks that Micaela and Mark heard about at the Green Space Forum was carried over.

3.10 Status of Funds

Current bank balance:	£10,985		
Committed Funds:	£9,975		
Breathing Places		£6,945	
Tree Sculpture		£358	
Sundial & Shuttle panels		£53	
Raised for Play Area		£2619	(£3,362*)
Working balance:	£1,009		

* After Brabyns School cheque for £743 is received.

Income since the last meeting includes £1,000 from the Marple Website. £16.86 has been spent on the woodland books that is not included in the above figures.

The McInnes Partnership has confirmed that they will prepare the groups financial statement for the AGM free of charge for a fourth year.

4.0 Monthly Park Report

Bob advised that things were busy in the park with both the playground work and the Breathing Places project now ongoing. 160 tonnes of filler material has now been spread in the former paddling pool ready for installation of the equipment.

The Stockport Volunteers will be helping in the park tomorrow for the first time and they will help Bob prepare the shrub beds for mulching, which will be continued on the next task day.

Bob will be on holiday for much of the remainder of January but will join Micaela on Monday 21st to collect the cheque from Brabyns School and will also be attending the task day on 26th January.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 Outdoor Fitness Equipment

This was only mentioned briefly and will have to be discussed further at the next meeting.

5.2 Park Action Plan

Dave distributed a copy of the updated park action plan for inclusion in the next Green Flag Award application and asked for comments by Wednesday 16th January from members of the group.

5.3 Birthday Surprise!

The group presented Mark with a card for his 50th birthday tomorrow and a copy of the book "The Trees that made Britain", which was gratefully received, thank you!

6.0 Date of next Meeting

Monday 11 February 2008 at **6pm** in Marple Library.

List of reminders:

Write to Wyevale Garden Centre regarding sponsorship
Spring task – jest wash and oil the log bench
Spring planting and plaque for Lock 17 Flowerbed
Park leaflet update