

Friends of Marple Memorial Park (AGM)
Monday 9th July 2012
Marple Library

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

1.0 Apologies: Lorraine Thompson, Adrian Ellis.

2.0 Minutes of the last meeting (AGM): Agreed.

3.0 Matters Arising.

3.1 Park Benches

Two Benches NW of Bowling Green (No. 4 & 5 on survey)

The first of the two benches is refurbished with new hardwood and ready for return from the David Lewis Centre workshop. However, the centre's H&S people have advised Terry that the bench is too large and heavy for his pupils to work on, so he is having problems arranging for it to be transported back to the park.

The council have been asked to collect the bench but SSK appear to be refusing to do this. Adrian has advised that Jonathan is looking at other ways to arrange it.

It was agreed that we would make our own arrangements to collect the bench and the second one will be rebuilt in the park to avoid these issues again.

(Post meeting note: the bench was dismantled, returned to the park and reassembled on Sunday 15 July by Terry, Patrick, Mark, Rick, Tom and Paul, with thanks to Paul Whittaker Plumbing for use of his van. The second bench was also disassembled ready for sandblasting of the cast iron and fitting of new hardwood slats.)

Refurbishment of other benches

Fantastic progress has been made on the refurbishment of other benches in the park since the last meeting in April and by the end of the last task day on 30 June all but one of the Streetmaster benches have been completed, plus the three concrete benches on the main path in front of the Bowling Green hedge.

One Streetmaster bench near to the Park Cottage has still to be sanded and treated. Patrick will take the lead on getting this done. He would also like to give a second treatment of preservative to the ones that have been done already.

It is also planned to sand and treat the three Boules Court benches in-situ.

A local lady who contacted Mark about a bench to commemorate her late husband has agreed to replace the last old concrete bench available for adoption. This is the one near to the driveway and opposite the Senior Citizens' Hall. Mark has also met with Anthony Crook; SMBC's Senior Arboriculture & Habitat Officer, to discuss this seat and the council's long-term plans for standardising park benches. He is waiting for final details from the family about what they want and has asked Anthony to advise if the council will remove the old bench and install the new one free of charge.

The concrete framed Co-Op benches will be refurbished using timber from the ones that have or will be replaced. Patrick and Terry will take the lead on this.

3.2 Diamond Jubilee Project

Planning Permission

Full Planning Permission with conditions was granted for the project at the end of May 2012. The conditions require a schedule of materials of external construction to be submitted for approval and samples to be made available for inspection on site. A fee of £85 is also required on top of the £170 already paid.

Wayne Chaisty has provided a list of materials and samples for the sculpture. A list of materials for the hard landscaping and an anticipated start date are awaited from contractor Bramhall Paving before the submission can be made.

(Post meeting note: schedule of materials and anticipated start date of Friday 20 July or w/c 25 July, subject to weather, was submitted to the Planners on 13 July 2012.)

Plants

Plants are at the college being grown on. The council placed the order originally agreed too late for it to be fulfilled and only plants to the value of £287.86 were available (compared to the original quote of £963). Due to this problem it will no longer be possible to achieve the original design. Additional plants have been purchased from Four Oaks Nursery by the college to supplement those received from the council order at a cost of £327.91. So, total spent so far is £615.77, which gives a saving of around £584 against our original budget of £1,200.

Budgeted Costs

Phase 1 – landscape works, sculpture, plants, notice board, and planning fees, including additional planning costs and savings on plants is now: £5,408.

Phase 2 – a display panel explaining the project: £880.

Additional Option – a bespoke metal bench depicting achievements and technological changes during 60 years of the Queen’s reign: £1,650.

Total budgeted costs are now £7,938, including 10% contingency allowance.

Funding Status

Our grant from Stockport Homes was approved and a notification of a BACS transfer for £1,000 to our account has been received, taking the funding total to £6,275.

A grant application for £1,000 towards the bespoke metal bench has been made to the Vernon Building Society, which is running a scheme to fund Diamond Jubilee projects across the borough of Stockport. The total amount of funds allocated to the scheme is only £5,000, so expectation of success has to be fairly low.

Funding needed:

To secure Phase 1:	Achieved
Phase 2:	£13
Phase 1 and Phase 2:	£13 (effectively achieved)
Including optional bench:	£1,663

It is looking unlikely that we will be able to afford the bespoke bench unless the Vernon bid is successful or another significant source of funding can be found.

3.3 Infants Play Area Fence

The fence was jet-washed and prepared for painting in time for the Operation Spring Clean on 20 May and good weather and a good turnout of volunteers for this enabled us to paint the whole of the inside of the fence in cream.

Since then the weather has been suitable for painting on two of our task days and we are approximately 75% complete on the cream to the outside of the fence. The final 25% plus the red and blue will be done as and when the 'summer' weather permits.

Additional tins of cream paint have been required and the total cost so far is around £250. No invoices for materials have been received from the council yet.

Everyone agreed that the fence is looking great but it is a bigger job than originally anticipated and it will be good to get it finished!

Patrick advised that David Sumner of Friends of Rose Hill Station had suggested a possible 'reciprocal' arrangement where they could help us with tasks in return for us helping them. The group were receptive to this and it would be great to get some more help painting the Infants Play Area fence. Patrick will follow this up.

Repair is needed to a small section of rot on the inner fence around the swings before it can be painted. SSK have suggested that they would rather remove the whole inner fence to save on the cost of repair. The group would prefer the inner fence to remain, so Terry will take a look at how easy it would be for us to do the repair ourselves.

3.4 Treatment of Sculptures

Patrick has retreated all the sculptures and they are looking good.

He is concerned about woodworm on the Owl sculpture and it was agreed to take a closer look at this after the meeting.

Patrick has also used an environmentally friendly green algae removal solution on the tree sculpture and the stocks, so the results of this can be inspected too.

3.5 Wildflowers for Breathing Places Area

Joyce reported that wildflowers are growing well in the woodland border area, the square bed next to the library and also in the bed in front of the toilets.

A tree in the woodland area came down in the storms earlier this year and this has been dealt with by cutting back the exposed roots and planting in front of it.

Work has been done during task days to reduce the dominance of certain species of plants in the area to allow a more diverse growth of wildflowers. A lot more work is needed on this and it will be a good opportunity for future task days to come.

There is some tree work to be done in the area and there is concern that vehicles may need to access the site, so we will wait until this is done before undertaking any further new planting in the area. *(Post meeting note: there is only one dead branch to be removed and the council have agreed to access the site on foot and leave the branch in the woodland area to rot down.)*

3.6 Skate Park

The big challenge remains to find a way to obtain around £75,000 of funding to enable the project to move forward. Due to the ongoing demands of the Diamond Jubilee Project Mark has not had the opportunity to focus on the skate park and it will have to remain on the backburner until the Jubilee Project is completed.

3.7 Park Cottage

There is not much to report. The Bands are making some progress with soundproofing but are still waiting for land registry regarding the sale of their plot of land that would enable them to complete the project.

3.8 Task Days

Previous Task Days

Saturday 28 April, 12, 20 & 26 May, 9 & 30 June 2012

Since the last meeting the group have held six task days, including the Operation Spring Clean on 20 May. Tasks have included weeding and planting of the ornamental beds, War Memorial beds and council offices beds; preparation and painting of the Infants Play Area fence; planting and management of the Woodland Breathing Places Area; sanding, refurbishment and treatment of park benches; jet-washing and treatment of sculptures; planting and management of the flower bed in front of the toilets; removal of graffiti from refurbished benches.

Some plants provided by the group have been stolen from the woodland and other areas of the park, which is very disappointing.

Next Task Days – 14 and 28 July 2012

Work will continue on refurbishment of benches, painting of the Infants Play Area fence and weeding and planting of flowerbeds as required.

Mark will send out the parking request for specified vehicles and the task day emails.

Future Task Day Dates for 2012

14 July; 28 July; 11 August; 25 August; 8 September; 29 September; 27 October; 24 November; 29 December.

4.0 Funding - Status of Funds

Current bank balance is £8,793 including the BACS transfer of £1,000 from Stockport Homes. Other income since the last meeting includes Mr Senior's regular donation of £5 per month and £20 from the Railway Public House for use of an image from the Marple Website Virtual Tour.

Expenditure in the same period is £327.91 on plants for the Jubilee Project.

Committed funds are £6,997, including £5,947 allocated to the Jubilee Project, £800 on the Senior Citizens' bench refurbishment and £250 (approx) on paint for the Infants Play Area. This leaves an uncommitted working balance of £1,796.

Patrick has a number of expenses to submit receipts for not taken into account in the committed funds above, as does Mark. The latter includes disposable gloves £4.99, buckets and cleaning materials £14.05 and bamboo canes £1.78.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 Puddle at main entrance

The council have installed a new drainage soak-away at the main entrance to the park and as far as it goes this is working well. Unfortunately part of the path does not fall to the drain and an unsightly puddle is still forming when it rains. Adrian said he would mention this to Jonathan but no further feedback has been received yet.

5.2 Notice Board

The manufacturer's representative has not yet replaced the seal on the display case that is leaking so Mark will chase them up about this.

5.3 Scout Hut

Micaela wrote to the Scouts about improving the appearance of their hut and they have started to make some progress on this by painting the doors.

5.4 Foods and Drink Day

The Food and Drink Day is on Saturday 22 September this year. It was agreed that we would like to have a stall again for our tombola to raise funds for the park and Mark will contact the organisers to establish if this will be possible.

5.5 Tree Work Required in Park

Mark has discussed the tree work in the park with Anthony Crook, who has agreed to issue the report for review before the work is undertaken.

It is known that the dead Conker tree near the ornamental beds is to be removed and sadly the Hawthorn between the ornamental beds and the Bowling Green also needs to be felled due to a large crack in the trunk. A large Oak near the cinema is a problem and is likely to need felling. Mark has asked for the trunk of this to be left so that it can be assessed for a potential sculpture after it has been removed.

5.6 Japanese Knotweed behind the Senior Citizens' Hall

Mark discussed this with Anthony Crook during their meeting in the park and it appeared that treatment of the infestation has started.

Bob advised that he and Tom have been spraying it with weed killer on Adrian's instruction but Adrian has also advised that it is scheduled to be stem injected during the late summer by a dedicated team treating knotweed across the borough. He says they have already started in Heaton Mersey. Mark will clarify situation with Anthony.

5.7 Free Bulbs

Joyce has obtained some free bulbs from Lyme Park and plans to split them three ways with the park, Friends of Rose Hill Station and Cromwell Avenue Park.

6.0 Date of next Meeting

Monday 10 September 2012 at 6pm in Marple Library.

Future meeting dates booked in 2012:

10 September, 8 October, 12 November, 10 December.