

**Friends of Marple Memorial Park Meeting  
Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2014  
Marple Library**

**Present:** Terry Wood, Micaela Wood, Joyce Reed, Mark Whittaker.

**1.0 Apologies:** Patrick O’Herlihy, Adrian Ellis, Bob Wilson, Lorraine Thompson, Mick Thompson.

**2.0 Minutes of the last meeting:** Agreed.

**3.0 Matters Arising**

**3.1 Registering as a charity**

Following the letter issued by Ian Walmsley, the Charity Commission accepted that what we do is charitable and for the public benefit but advised that we would have to amend our current objects and adopt their model constitution. A draft constitution was prepared using the model and the object proposed by the CC and they confirmed that this would be acceptable. The draft constitution was circulated with the agenda for review last week. The object proposed by the CC for adoption is:

TO PROVIDE OR ASSIST IN THE PROVISION OF FACILITIES FOR RECREATION AND OTHER LEISURE TIME OCCUPATION IN THE INTERESTS OF SOCIAL WELFARE WITH THE OBJECT OF IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE OF THE PUBLIC BY PROVIDING RESOURCES AND SUPPORT FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF MARPLE MEMORIAL PARK IN GREATER MANCHESTER (WHICH ARE ANCILLARY TO THOSE PROVIDED BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY)

This object is very broad and would cover everything the group does but doesn’t really tell people reading it what it is that we do. Subsequently, Mark asked the CC if we could add additional objects clarifying the work we do on task days (flowerbeds etc) and relating to the heritage of the park, particularly in respect of it being a War Memorial Park. The CC were asked for their views on the following additional objects (based on the objects of other existing registered charity Friends of Park groups) and help in wording them correctly:

TO PRESERVE AND IMPROVE THE FLORA AND FAUNA OF MARPLE MEMORIAL PARK FOR THE BENEFIT OF PARK USERS, INCLUDING NATURAL WILDLIFE AREAS, ORNAMENTAL FLOWERBEDS AND SHRUB BEDS.

TO PROMOTE AND PRESERVE LOCAL HERITAGE ASPECTS OF MARPLE MEMORIAL PARK, IN PARTICULAR WITH RESPECT TO ITS ORIGINS AS A WAR MEMORIAL PARK DONATED TO THE COMMUNITY AFTER WWI.

The CC telephoned to say that if the group wished to adopt these additional objects they would have to ask even more detailed questions to ensure that we are not relieving the council of their statutory duties. They advised that certain words (promote, preserve, heritage etc) had special meaning and referred to their on-line guidance for explanation rather than give any help on the telephone. They also declined to discuss examples of our activities but clarified that if just one thing that we do is not considered charitable then we could not become a registered charity.

This was discussed at length and the conclusion of the members present was that we should carry on as we have done over the last 10 years, rather than continue seeking to become a registered charity. The application process will therefore be put on hold and discussed with other members who could not attend today’s meeting.

### **3.2 Anti-Social Behaviour / Additional CCTV Cameras**

ABS Logs submitted since the last meeting covering 11 reported incidents were distributed with the agenda. Recent incidents include:

- Further reports of youths playing football on the bowling green and abusing bowlers and other members of the public from multiple sources.
- Ongoing collection of drugs packets and paraphernalia including bongs and nitrous oxide containers.
- Two attempts to break into the Mess Room by kicking in the windows.
- Smashed glass around the bowling hut.

By chance Mark met with Inspector Palmer during the 16 August task day and a positive discussion took place about trying to combat ASB. Correspondence with the Community Safety Team (copied to local councillors) has continued and copies were published with the agenda. Key points arising are:

- The Community Safety Team have met with Inspector Palmer, councillors and other key partners and agreed the following action plan:
  1. Look at installing signage for the park in relation to the bowling green.
  2. Review the effectiveness of the signage for a 3-month period after installation (Reduction in ASB incidents reported to GMP or FoG.)
  3. To revisit plan and look at perimeter options if signage is not significantly effective.
  4. To monitor ASB levels up to Spring of 2015.
  5. If there are no significant improvements at that point we can reopen discussions around CCTV options.
- The CSU will look at signage in relation to the use of motorbikes in the park and have forwarded bylaws to legal team for advice regarding their enforcement.
- A unified message is now being given by GMP / council staff that the bowling green is for bowls only and under no circumstances should football be played on the green(s). Any youths found on the green by GMP and CSU staff will be asked to provide their details to enable them to take any action deemed appropriate at the time, before they are moved on.
- It has been highlighted to the council that the (very expensive) need to remove an asbestos ceiling at the rear entrance to the council offices was due to the youths who use the bowling green for football. They had been kicking the ball as hard as they could against the entrance and smashed the ceiling. A large specialist contractor squad was working on this all day on Saturday 16 August.
- Events were held in the park to engage with youths on 22 and 29 August.

A recent report from the CSU about the events held in the park was shared too – these were not well attended due to poor weather but youths were spoken to, intelligence gathered and a youth was arrested for possession of a class B drug.

A meeting is awaited to discuss the location of signage once the wording is agreed. It was felt essential that signs relating to the bowling green are displayed nearby, not at the park entrance as has provisionally been suggested by the council.

Some of the members present felt that graphical signs may get the message across better than words (or just words), for example a football with a red cross, a bowler with a green tick. Mark will suggest this when meeting with the CSU.

### **3.2 Dog Fouling**

We've now had a response to our enquiries about the frequency of Dog Warden visits and how many fixed penalty notices have been issued. We were told visits had been increased earlier this year as part of a clampdown on ASB following our complaints.

It was: "No FPNs have ever been issued despite numerous visits to the park."

This suggests that the visits are totally ineffective. We have asked for information on how the patrols are conducted, has intelligence been sought from the park attendant and who is the contact to discuss matters further.

### **3.3 Park Benches**

#### **General Bench Maintenance**

We still need to give the Coronation Bench a second coat of paint if we get chance before the weather turns against us.

Jane Bardsley agreed to order more preservative for us last week, so hopefully this will be available soon.

#### **Town Centre Benches / Use of Power Tools**

There have been developments with the proposals to refurbish the Town Centre benches that mean this project will have to be shelved for the immediate future.

The issue surrounds the use of power tools and generator to enable us to sand the benches down – the council's insurance does not cover for this.

It has been suggested that we do this manually without power tools but with 17 benches in the district centre it will increase the time and effort required significantly and we do not believe that it is a practical proposition to do them all in-situ this way and achieve a suitably high standard of finish.

We could obtain our own insurance covering the use of power tools by joining TCV (The Community Volunteers) for a cost of around £260 PA. This compares to £182 PA we currently pay for public liability insurance only. However, the council are saying that as landlords, even with our own insurance, they could not currently allow it.

Mark distributed a copy of an email from Ian Walmsley to Patrick reinforcing this message and advising that although it seems small-minded and counter productive to both promote volunteer involvement and to have such obstacles in the way, the use of power tools is not permitted. Ian does say that they are working towards offering volunteer training to enable this to be done but they "are not there yet".

This also raises the issue of using power tools in the park, which we have done in the past. The agreed task list was re-issued with the agenda for the meeting and Mark stressed that until this matter is successfully resolved we will avoid the use power tools in the park. This was accepted, albeit with a degree of frustration, and it was agreed to write to Ian supporting efforts find a way to permit power tool usage.

### **3.4 Treatment of Sculptures & Wooden Features**

#### **Stabilisation of "Midnight" Tree Sculpture**

The invoice has been paid and the council have forwarded a copy of the contractor's invoice too. The sculpture was re-treated during the 16 August task day.

## **Infants Play Area Fence**

A very productive task day was held with the Challenge Network on Monday 18 August, when 14 young people made fairly short work of painting the outer fence.

Some touch-up will be needed and the rear entrance gate still needs painting. Hopefully we will be able to do this soon, weather permitting.

It was noted that the project to paint the fences would not have been practical without preparation by jet washing of the fence to clean it of dirt, algae and loose paint. This is the second time this has been carried out in 3 years but it cannot be done again until the issues concerning insurance cover for power tools are resolved.

## **3.5 Park Buildings**

### **Repairs**

Repairs to the roofs and gutters of the bowling buildings are still awaited. The work has been issued to Carillion. Repair to the Mess Room window is still outstanding.

### **Library Notice Board**

It is still not clear when Carillion will provide Perspex for the display case to be repaired so we will do it ourselves – the order can be placed with some of the black Correx needed for the WWI timeline project and the delivery costs combined, so it will only cost approx £10. Mark will ask Jane to cancel the Carillion order.

## **3.6 Skatepark Development Project**

### **Latest Skatepark Project News**

We are currently waiting for the council to confirm selection of the contractor who was clear winner of the tender scoring process in July. This is being delayed due to the need for a parent company guarantee. We were told it was ready for sign-off over a week ago but now understand that the matter has been raised with "legal".

The delays are frustrating and the project is losing momentum. It means that we can no longer target to submit a grant application by the 3 October deadline we were aiming for because it is now too tight to get a planning application in place. We will now have to wait for the landfill trust to publish their submission dates for 2015.

In the meantime we need to get working with the chosen contractor as soon as possible to get the design finalised and a planning application submitted. The only benefit is that it will allow us more time to prepare a quality bid but we cannot move forward now until the contractor is confirmed.

### **Fund Raising Status**

£380 was raised at the Charity Fun Bike Ride organised by Recon Cycles and The Marple Tavern / Woodstock Pizza, which proved to be an excellent event. We also received a further donation of £50 from Jason at Recon Cycles, taking his contribution so far to £210, which is fantastic for a small local business.

Money needed:	£107,000 (including landfill taxes)
Community Funding:	£19,674 (£326 short against initial £20,000 target)
Commuted Sums:	£22,000
Total funds available:	£41,674
Funding to find:	£65,326

It would be good to reach our target before November, which will be the second anniversary since we started raising funds. We have an excellent chance to do this at the Food and Drink Day on Saturday. Romiley and Marple Lions have also offered more support if we don't quite make it.

Jason has also advised that there are plans developing for a music event at the Navigation Pub to support the project – more details when available.

### **Food and Drink Day – Saturday 13 September**

We've been given a prime location by the organisers. Set up will be from 8am and we need as much support as possible – Mark will send out an email asking for help.

Micaela advised that she's had a great response from Marple shops and businesses and preparations for the Tombola are going well. We will also have a guess the sweets competition and our new Splat the Rat machine.

## **3.7 World War I Centenary Commemorations**

### **Possible Silhouette Art Project**

Terry has spoken further with Alan and Gary and they are now developing a design that features an aluminium sheet sandwiched between two sheets of steel. The silhouette, poppies and lettering would be laser cut into both sides revealing the aluminium, which sounds really effective and would also resolve the problem of the lettering being readable from both sides.

Terry is hoping that they will issue the plans for our review later this week. Once we have a viable design we will need to obtain council agreement to using the notice board frame in this way before we can proceed.

### **WWI Guided Walks**

The first series of three walks led by Andy Cook is now complete. They were very well received and also £256 was collected for the Poppy Appeal.

The second series of walks are scheduled for 21, 28 September and 5 October. These will take a different route and talk about different men. Mark has met with Andy and preparations are ready for the new walk.

### **Timeline Commemoration**

The original idea by Steve Condliffe has developed into plans for a timeline to be displayed on the railings in front of Hollins House. A card about each man on the War Memorial will be added on the anniversary of his death. Full details are explained in the 2014 Fund grant application for £300, which was distributed with the agenda.

The grant application has been submitted to the 2014 group but they do not meet again until 29 October. With the anniversary of the first man falling on 24 October we need to start earlier than this and Mark has highlighted that to the group and asked if there is a way that they can discuss earlier. It was agreed that if they cannot do this we would proceed to purchase the first materials at risk with existing funds.

The council is supportive of the project and they have submitted a report to the next Area Committee Meeting on 24 September recommending formal approval.

We also have permission to rubdown and paint the railings, which we need to get on with at the earliest opportunity. We would only need to have the first section painted by October but it would be good to get the whole lot done as soon as we can.

### **3.8 Task Days**

#### **Last Task Days – 16 and 30 August 2014**

Treatment of benches and sculpture, maintenance of flowerbeds, crown lifting of trees, a tidy-up of the canal wall boundary and cutting back of ivy on toilets.

#### **Next Task Days – 27 September 2014**

Hopefully we can finish off some of the painting jobs plus normal gardening tasks.

Joyce advised that we need to get the daffodil bulbs from Lyme Park planted and she would like to put them near to the Lock 10 entrance to the park. This was agreed.

#### **Special Task Day – Monday 18 August with Challenge Network**

A very successful day with the Challenge Network was reported on earlier in minutes.

#### **Saturday Task Days scheduled for 2014 / 15**

**Registered:** 27 September and 25 October.

**To register:** 29 November, 27 December 2014, 31 January, 28 February, 28 March, 11 and 25 April 2015 (*PMN: all submitted and approved 17/09/2014*).

#### **Ad-hoc Daily Task Days**

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

#### **Risk Assessments / Training**

Risk assessments and training are currently up to date with 11 volunteers having attended the RA training. It is hoped for further training to cover power tools in the future (power tool issues discussed earlier under Town Centre Benches).

#### **SSK Support for Task Days**

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."*

The group agreed that this was very positive, although there was some confusion over the bullet points included in the statement covering RA training, liability insurance and revised application processes. We had understood that these had already been done.

### **Meeting with Cllr Candler and Ian Walmsley**

Over the weekend a request was received from Ian Walmsley asking if he and Cllr Candler could be invited to one of our future meetings – or that they could have a meeting with Mark if that is not possible. Ian was advised of today's meeting this morning, which was obviously very short notice, and it was suggested that the next meeting on 13 October would be more suitable – a reply is awaited.

One of the things they wish to discuss is our plaque sponsorship scheme, which the council has concerns about. Mark has put off a couple that were due to visit today to discuss a new plaque until the council's concerns are understood and addressed.

### **Fulltime Park Attendant**

A copy of a letter sent to Cllr Candler on 12 August on behalf of the group was distributed with the agenda along with Cllr Candler's reply. The letter sought assurances that there were no plans to do away with the full-time park attendant role in Marple Memorial Park and explained how detrimental to the park's well being the group felt that this would be. Cllr Candler replied as follows:

*"Further to my message of 12th August, 2014, I am happy to confirm that there are currently no plans to reduce the number of park attendants and in particular at Marple Memorial Park. However, I have to tell you that the Council is facing a reduction of £39.5 million in next year's budget and a similar sum (or worse) may well be required in the following year. You will appreciate that some very difficult decisions affecting Council spending will be required going forward."*

Mark responded on behalf of the group to thank Cllr Candler for his reassurances that there were no plans for us to lose the permanent park attendant and asked for the group to be consulted should the situation change at any time in the future.

With regard to the future budget cuts mentioned, it was added that our parks have taken their fair share of these over the last 2 to 3 years and the council should be looking to other areas unless it is their wish to turn parks into problem spaces abandoned by park users and plagued by vandalism. There is growing national concern about this issue and it would be wise for local and national government to take note because our local green spaces are vital for everyone and every community, and for all age groups and interests.

### **4.0 Funding - Status of Funds**

Balance on last statement for 22 August 2014 is £18,763.70

**Income since last meeting includes:**

£21.98 Easy Fundraising.  
£22.71 Collected in the Park.  
£50.00 Recon Cycle Repairs.  
£380.00 Charity Fun Bike Ride.  
£1.18 Local Giving (Gift Aid)

**Expenditure since last meeting includes:**

£100.11 Paint for Infants Play Area fence.  
£1,100.00 Consolidation of Tree Sculpture.

**Expenditure pending (not yet claimed back):**

£2.97 3 x Garden Leaf Grabbers.  
£7.92 8 x sets of 5 paint brushes.  
£9.00 Sweets for Guess the Sweets competition.  
£3.77 Pipe bracket for Splat the Rat.  
£19.15 Chicken wire and staples for oak tree.

Committed funds in account are: Skate Park Fund £17,174 and Flowerbeds £165 leaving a working balance of £624.

**5.0 Any Other Business****5.1 New Waste Bins**

Discussions have been held 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. We feel that one is also needed towards the top end of the park near Lock 10 but this will have to be followed up separately.

We are now awaiting news of council decisions on what they will provide.

**5.2 Emptying of Green Waste Area**

Mark has emailed the council asking them to empty the green waste area before the next task day on 27 September because it is now very full and becoming difficult and unsafe to use. The council has instructed SSK to do this before the task day.

**5.3 Clematis around Oak tree trunk at entrance**

One of the clematis planted round the oak trunk is growing really well but not gripping onto the bark as expected. Mark has spoken to David Myers of Myers Tree Care and he advised us to purchase wire mesh and staples and he would help to fit it. This was done on Wednesday 3 September. The cost was £19.15 for materials and we have plenty of wire mesh left if more is needed in the future.

A big thank-you to Dave at Myers Tree Care for his help and support!

**5.4 Zip Wire in Junior Play Area**

The council had ordered a replacement zip wire and Jane is chasing up installation.

**6.0 Date of next Meeting**

Monday 13 October 2014 at 6pm in Marple Library.

**Meeting dates scheduled for 2014 (library booked):**

13 October, 10 November and 8 December 2014.