



Minutes of Friends of Pittville Annual General Meeting, Tuesday 18 October 2016, at 6.30pm

Abbreviations used: CBC = Cheltenham Borough Council; FOP = Friends of Pittville; HLF = Heritage Lottery Fund

Trustees present:

Hon Chairman Judie Hodsdon (JH)
Hon Secretary Fiona Clarke (FC)
Hon Treasurer Wendy Acres (WA)
Chris Archibald (CA)
Sandy Marshall (SM)
David Richards (DR)
Hilary Simpson (HS)

1. Welcome

The Hon Chairman (JH) thanked everyone for coming to this, the 10th anniversary AGM of Friends of Pittville. Some founder members are here tonight and she congratulated them on being at the start in 2006. She thanked Dunalley Primary School for allowing use of the wonderfully enlarged Main Hall, at no charge.

2. Apologies

FOP members: Richard Acres, Ann Adelman, David and Rosemary Bromley, Maureen and Nick Edwards, Desmond Fitzgerald, Moira and Graham Gage, Hellen and Tony Harrison, Robert and Geraldine Hyatt Williams, Jillian Herbert, Janina and Gerald Kay, Penny McCracken, Vibeke Nair, Dennis Parsons, John Rawson, Derek Rue, Gerald Seal, Mrs P Simmons, Janet and John White, Mrs PA Wiggall.

59 FOP members were present.

3. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting, 19 October 2015

The minutes for last year's AGM had been posted on the website throughout the year and JH hoped that everyone had seen them. There had been no queries and, as there were no comments, the minutes were unanimously accepted as a true record of the 2015 Annual General Meeting. Proposed by Annette Berg and seconded by Jackie Anderson.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Treasurer's report

Refer *Appendix 1 Friends of Pittville Accounts year ended 30 September 2016*. The Hon Treasurer (WA) highlighted the two projects, Pittville Gates and the play area. Two late invoices for the Gates project were paid in February 2016, and were covered by income from Gift Aid on the Gates donations. £565.17 remains in the Gates fund and will be used for future projects. £95,530.22 had been transferred to CBC for play area payments (£85,041.78 was grants and £10,488.44 was donations). Nothing remains in the Play Area fund. There will be less Gift Aid in the coming year from project donations.

For FOP General, fundraising is shown in both income and expenditure, with a net result of £2113.32 profit. Website costs were higher than 2015 because of the new website, launched in February 2016. Together, newsletter printing and postage, and office consumables expenditure was lower than in 2015.

There were no questions. James Hodsdon commented, though, that FOP is to be congratulated for not sitting on large reserves as some charities do, and for spending its money.

WA thanked Joe Mar for examining the accounts which were then signed by JH. It was proposed by David Richards and seconded by Jenny Ogle that the accounts be accepted.

6. Chairman's report

JH had prepared the annual report for the Charity Commission, on two sides of A4, which had been distributed this evening. *Refer Appendix 2*. She hoped that members agree it has been a good year. There is a photo display and an array of awards at the back of the room.

So what is it that makes all this possible? First of all, the 'Green Space' volunteers (30 regulars), whose work over the last seven years has made a tremendous difference to the park in particular. They have changed the attitude of CBC to the park, and we work together in partnership twice every month, with an annual meeting and celebration. The second group is the newsletter deliverers (now 32). 2000 copies are distributed twice a year, involving lots of steps and letter boxes with stiff hinges and bristles! Two more issues go to members only. The third group is the Pittville History Works team who have developed a web-based historical resource which is freely available, requiring analysis and recording, often from difficult handwriting. The team provided two guided walks and an afternoon presence at Pittville Pump Room during Heritage Open Days in September. Finally, the members who attend and support our ad hoc events, and especially those who organise some of these, e.g. Amanda Slayton-Joslin (quiz night) and John Pickles (FOP helpers at Cheltenham Half Marathon).

JH then thanked her fellow trustees – GJ who manages the membership and newsletter distribution; SM who edits the printed newsletter; HS who runs the website and Facebook and is a key member of the History Works team; DR who suggested and made possible the plant sale, with participation from local nurseries; CA who was instrumental in getting the paperwork for the Green Flag and Green Heritage Site Accreditation applications, and was a leading light in the play area project, submitting grant applications and having an input into the design. She also thanked FC who gets involved in everything; who has been a committee member for ten years and who is looking to move to pastures new. A special thanks to WA, who has brought FOP into online banking, set up spreadsheets to record and monitor the money, and dealing with hundreds of thousands of pounds over the last four years. WA is standing down after four years as Hon Treasurer. We've not found a replacement yet, so if no-one steps forward, JH will be acting treasurer. Finally, thanks to the 340 members. A lot don't do more than pay their subscriptions but this support is much valued and we don't give much in return, just the printed newsletter and the website.

JH then turned to the coming year. We have almost £4000 in general funds in the bank which is more than we have ever had. We are contemplating two things. The first is producing an online resources pack about the park for teachers, in line with the curriculum and in conjunction with CBC. The second is much larger and we have started talking to CBC. Our role would be to fundraise, but also to influence. We want to continue the improvements around the Upper Lake and the Pump Room landscape areas, which we have divided into five sub-areas: the so-called wildlife refuges; the rockeries; the Pump Room environs; the grass and tree border on the east/Albert Road side; and the car park behind the Pump Room. This is quite ambitious and will take many years to achieve. CBC has suggested that FOP runs the Albemarle Gate car park during the November race meeting, keeping the parking fees income which could help pay a landscape architect to survey the area and give advice.

There are plans for another plant sale and garden party in 2017, but the first event is the lunch on 20 November 2016 at East India Café. Further details will be sent shortly.

There was one question - Graham Lockwood asked if there were any plans for the west side of Evesham Road. There are no specific plans but the Green Space volunteers will continue in areas already worked in, e.g. the Woodland Trust trees, the bank near the entrance from Evesham Road and the pathway from Albemarle Gate carpark. The area west of Tommy Taylors Lane will be developed as a wildlife area with more planting. There will be grassed pathways through for people to walk, as now.

It was proposed by Hilary Simpson and seconded by Susie Panikkar that the chairman's report be accepted.

JH thanked WA again for her valuable contribution and presented her with a large and beautiful plant.

7. Election of trustees

JH reminded members that, with the new constitution, the trustees choose the office bearers at their first meeting after the AGM (on 1 November 2016). One person has been nominated to be a trustee (note: proposed by Fiona Clarke) – Eileen Lockwood. She was elected, with all in favour.

JH appealed for more trustees and wondered if the term, 'trustee', was a little off-putting. Anyone interested is welcome to attend a trustee meeting as an observer and can be appointed by the trustees during the year. FC noted that there had been one expression of interest earlier in the evening.

8. Any other business

There was no other business.

9. Date of next meeting

The date of the next Annual General Meeting will be in the second half of October 2017. (Note: one member sent apologies to say that, yet again he could not attend because the meeting was on a Tuesday; perhaps it could be a different day in 2017).

10. Guest speaker: Adrian Barlow

JH introduced Adrian who is a popular speaker on stained glass in all its settings and on architecture. We were very privileged to have him give a short presentation on Pittville's architecture. Many think of Pittville as Georgian, but Adrian took a more flexible approach, with different historical periods overlapping. In fact, many notable Pittville buildings are an amalgam of styles, ranging from mock Tudor to classically inspired to Gothic. Annette Berg proposed a vote of thanks to the trustees and the two speakers.

NOTE: before the AGM, 59 members had assembled for a celebratory drink to toast the 10th anniversary of Friends of Pittville. A public meeting entitled 'Pittville Estate Conservation and Management Plan' was held on 22 June 2006 at Pittville School. This led to the formation of Friends of Pittville (to support CBC in its HLF bid) and the first AGM on 20 September 2006. Pittville historian, Dr Steven Blake briefly summarised the group's history and its significant achievements, before inviting members to raise their glasses and cups.

The evening concluded at 7.45pm.