

Trustees' Annual Report for the period 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019

Charity Name: **Friends of Pittville**

Registered Charity Number: 1146790

Charity's principal address: 3 Burston House, Pittville Circus, Cheltenham GL52 2PU

Names of Trustees:

Judie Hodsdon	Chairman
Fiona Clarke	Secretary
Paul Benfield	Treasurer
Gloria Jones	Membership Secretary until 9/19

Adrian Allen	resigned 5/19	
Chris Archibald		
Andy Hopkins		
Philippa Howell		
Janina Kay	from 3/19	Membership Secretary from 9/19
Sandy Marshall		
David Richards		
Henry Williams		

Joc Potter is Minutes Secretary (but not a trustee).

The charity is an association with a constitution. The trustees are elected by the membership. Further details about the charity can be found at www.friendsofpittville.org.uk

In summary, **the objects of the charity** are to promote the use, preservation, improvement and conservation of the environment, facilities and heritage of Pittville Park and the open spaces of the historic Pittville Estate for public benefit.

The charity's **main activities** are:

- Working parties in the Park and other green spaces, under the guidance of Cheltenham Borough Council's community park rangers
- Disseminating information and learning material about Pittville and its open spaces on a website, quarterly newsletters, emails and noticeboards and through occasional public events and other events
- Researching and publishing information about Pittville's past.
- Organising a range of events for members and to raise funds to support the charity's activities
- Undertaking major projects to enhance Pittville's environment.

Funding for the charity's activities come from members' subscriptions and donations, and fundraising events, and, for major projects, from fundraising campaigns and grant applications.

We have lost 38 members during the year but with 50 new members the **membership** total now stands at 358.

There are various groups of **volunteers**, including the Green Space volunteers, the regular researchers in the Pittville History Works group, over 40 volunteers who deliver newsletters, plus the trustees and ad hoc groups who run events and projects.

Major achievements during the year:

The year-round, bi-monthly Green Space working parties have kept up their record of regular gardening, maintenance and litter picking, with only one day having to be cancelled because of exceptionally bad weather. They have made significant improvements in several areas, including continuing to clear the shrubberies at the rear of the Pump Room (a huge and ongoing task), keeping the underpass clean and tidy, lifting tree canopies on Pittville Lawn and getting the beech hedge alongside Bradbury Gardens into shape. The working parties were organised by Chris Archibald with help from Martin Jones. Once again, nearly 1000 hours were achieved for the reporting year with an average of 21 volunteers per party and 37 members attending on one or more day, plus 2 Japanese students for one session.

The work of the volunteers helped to maintain the award of Green Flag and Green Heritage Site Accreditation status for Pittville Park (first awarded in August 2016).

There has been further progress on masterplan for improvements to the area around the upper lake and the Pump Room. The rockery at the west end of the upper lake was cleared by the Green Space volunteers and, following further consultation with the landscape architect, will be replanted with appropriate plants next spring. The plans for the two gateways and the set of steps near the Pump Room have been drawn up by landscape architects Illman Young, and are nearly ready for presentation for planning and listed building consents. Fundraising for future expenditure on these projects has continued through the manning of a carpark for racegoers in November 2018 and March 2019. This was organised by Henry Williams and Chris Archibald and raised over £4,000. The improvement plans were displayed to the public at the two Cheltenham Horticultural Society shows at the Pump Room and at the FoP plant sale in early May.

The Pittville History Works group celebrated its fifth birthday in the spring, and over the past year the group's focus has shifted to the first half of the twentieth century. In November 2018 members of the group took part in the "Cheltenham Remembers" event to mark the end of the First World War, and commemorated the lives of 40 Pittville residents who died in the conflict. Following the war, the profile of Pittville started to change rapidly. The extension of the franchise in 1918 and then again in 1928 meant that electoral registers grew substantially, and this has provided the group's database with information about large numbers of previously invisible residents, mainly women. At the same time many of Pittville's large houses ceased to be occupied by single households and were divided instead into a variety of multi-occupancy arrangements. The group's website [www.http://pittvillehistory.org.uk](http://pittvillehistory.org.uk) continues to expand and now includes the first online version of Steven Blake's authoritative guide to the Pump Room. A database of architectural information on Pittville's houses is in the process of being compiled, and research has been published on the inheritance of the slave trade in Pittville. An article by John Simpson on the origins of house names in Pittville appeared in *The Local Historian* (the journal of the British Association for Local History) in July and has attracted national interest. The group is expanding its photographic archive from both public and private sources, and hopes to make many more visual records.

Chris Archibald and Judie Hodsdon gave two Heritage Open Days talks in September describing the historic landscape features of the Park visible from a point just to the north of the upper lake, indicating how they had changed, or not, over the years. Sixteen FoP members enjoyed a butterfly walk in the Park in August, led by Matt Brierley from Butterfly Conservation.

The Pump Room Action Group has continued its work to promote the Pump Room as a visitor attraction. A number of meetings were held with staff from the Cheltenham Trust to discuss possible improvements and a series of 'secret shopper' visits were made to check whether the welcome for heritage visitors had got better. The volunteer guides, though few in number (and almost all FoP members) have definitely made a difference to the visitor experience. Hilary Simpson was invited to speak for the Group at a Trust event at the Pump Room but concerns remain that it will be difficult to balance the need for the Pump Room to earn money from events held there and the promotion of it as one of Cheltenham's prime heritage attractions.

The quarterly newsletter was edited by Andy Hopkins, with the distribution organised by Gloria Jones with the help of a number of volunteer deliverers. There were two editions just for members and the others going to 2000 households in the area. The monthly drop-in coffee morning was revived with a change of venue to the Havana café. As in the past FoP had a stall at the April and August Cheltenham Horticultural Society shows at the Pump Room.

Events held during the year to supplement FoP funds included a well-attended quiz night in February (organised by member Amanda Slayton-Joslin with help from trustee Philippa Howell), and a plant sale in May (organised by Sandy Marshall, Philippa Howell and David Richards). These raised over £1,000 in total. Further regular income comes from the duck feed dispenser, organised by Fiona Clarke in conjunction with St Vincent's and St George's Association (a local charity). FoP earned £396 (and StV&StG earned £989).

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above
Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signatures

Full Names JUDIE HODSDON
Position CHAIRMAN
Date 20 OCTOBER 2019

Full Names FIONA CLARKE
Position SECRETARY
Date 20 OCTOBER 2019