

Trustees' Annual Report for the period 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2020

Charity Name: **Friends of Pittville**

Registered Charity Number: 1146790

Charity's principal address: 65 Prestbury Road, Cheltenham GL52 2BY

Names of Trustees:

Judie Hodsdon
Alexandra Marshall
Paul Benfield

Chairman, website editor
Secretary
Treasurer

Chris Archibald
Andy Hopkins
Janina Kay

Volunteers Organiser
Newsletter Editor, Facebook editor
Membership Secretary

Rob Hyatt-Williams
Philippa Howell
Gloria Jones
David Richards
Henry Williams

Sally Thomas

Co-opted Jan 2020 (subject to election by members)

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 websites, 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.

The membership currently stands at 350 after 7 resignations. It has proved more difficult to recruit new members since the Covid 19-related precautions ruled out distributing the newsletter as widely this year.

The charity has various groups of **volunteers**, including the Green Space volunteers, the 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 and events during the year:

The Green Space Volunteers continued to work the winter of 2019/20 catching up with the seasonal jobs, with an average of 20 volunteers. However, the working parties had to be suspended between 5 March and 9 June due to Covid-19 restrictions. Some of our volunteers continued to keep the park tidy during 'lockdown' by collecting litter on their daily walk. This was needed as the numbers of people using and appreciating the park increased.

When the working parties resumed volunteers had a safety briefing from the CBC Green Space Development team and practised social distancing, working in small groups. From 19 volunteers for the first working party the numbers have grown to an average of 26 (the highest ever) with several new volunteers.

The volunteers have continued with the usual maintenance jobs such as pruning, bark spreading, path edging, litter picking, tidying up at Pittville Gates and getting the snowdrop bank ready for the spring. They have also made progress with the two major projects. Last year it was decided to improve the bed at the corner of Wellington Road and Evesham Road (bed 38) using FoP funds and work proceeded to clear it for the planting of 3 new cherry trees and some shrubs. With the CBC Green Space Development team, preparation work has almost been completed on the rockery at the north west corner of the upper lake. Other Masterplan projects are on hold for the moment. It is not all work, the annual Volunteers Week was celebrated, a little late, with coffee and cakes at the Pump Room. The work of the volunteers contributed significantly to the re-award of Green Flag and Green Heritage status for the Park.

Pittville History Works group marked a major milestone in 2020, when it completed a six-year project to collect details about the inhabitants of Pittville in the past. The project used censuses, local directories and electoral rolls, and the result is an online database with searchable information about 18,800 people who lived in Pittville between 1830 and 1945. There are already over 50 biographies on the website and one of the group's next projects will be to uncover more of the life stories of Pittville's historic residents. Always primarily an online group, Pittville History Works has continued without interruption during the pandemic, meeting via Zoom.

The most visited pages on the website, [www.http://pittvillehistory.org.uk](http://pittvillehistory.org.uk), in recent months have been those on Pittville house names in the nineteenth century; Pittville and the inheritance of the slave trade; and the online version of Steven Blake's book Pittville 1824-1860. This year the group has also added an architectural image library to its website and produced an app for mobile devices with a guided walk of Pittville's architectural points of interest.

The last 3 editions of the quarterly newsletter appeared only in an online version this year (with a few hard copy versions for members without email). This meant that the normal large deliveries to 2000 households in April and September did not happen.

During Heritage Open Days week, there was an online presentation by FoP member, Desmond Marshall, about naturalists who lived in Pittville and elsewhere in

Cheltenham. Another FoP member Jill Archibald led a guided walk about the history of the Park for a small group in September.

Inevitably Covid-19 affected our events this year. The annual plant sale was cancelled as were the Cheltenham Horticultural Society shows at which FoP has a stall, and the summer garden party for members could not be held. However, the quiz, organised by Philippa Howell, and well attended as usual, did take place in February, raising £276. After a 4-month break the monthly Drop-in coffee mornings, organised by Sue Walker and Liz Auster, for members and friends resumed in July this time at the open air café at the Pump Room. A new activity this year was sponsoring 2 musical events, organised by Andy Hopkins, Janina Kay and Sandy Marshall, from the Pump Room bandstand in September, attracting large audiences sitting in groups on the grass or at the café.

Funds for the Masterplan projects were increased by Henry Williams and other volunteers again running a car park for racegoers in November and March, raising £5,480. Further regular income comes from the duck feed dispenser, managed by Philippa Howell. This made a profit of £780.90 of which £273.20 went to the St Vincent's and St George's Association (a local charity) which normally shares the work and the profits. However this arrangement has been on hold since late March but can resume once the charity is operating fully again. Another source of regular income this year has come from members purchasing tickets for the weekly Cheltenham Lottery. This has been supplemented by members also donating their winnings resulting in income of £832.

Friends of Pittville have expressed their support for the campaign to stop the felling of the large cedar tree in Albemarle Walk. The tree is not actually in the Park but dominates the view on the west side and it would be much missed.

The Pittville Pump Room Action group decided to set up as a separate organisation, Pittville Pump Room Revival, in November 2019. FoP continues to support their aim to revive the Pump room as a heritage destination and has provided funding including for the new information leaflet about the Pump Room.

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signatures 



Full Names Judith Hodsdon

Alexandra Marshall

Position Chairman

Secretary

Date 26 October 2020

26 October 2020