

Friends of Pittville Trustee Meeting 13 April 2021 at 6.15pm (on Zoom)

Contributors Trustees: Judie Hodsdon (JH), Paul Benfield (PB), Chris Archibald (CA), Andy Hopkins (AH), Philippa Howell (PH), Janina Kay (JK), Sandy Marshall (SM), Sally Thomas (ST), Henry Williams (HW – until 6.55)

Minutes: Jocelyn Potter

1 Welcome

JH welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from David Richards, Robert Hyatt Williams (after the meeting) and Dennis Parsons (DP). DP will be standing down as a councillor and therefore as a council representative. JH expressed the committee's gratitude to him for his help and support over the years.

3 Minutes of the trustee meeting, 12 January 2021

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

4 Matters arising

4.1 Information board replacement

JH reported that the manufacturer of three new, more robust boards (one on the east side and two at the gates) will be the company that made a board for the west side for CBC, and that the existing legs don't need to be replaced. JH's daughter, a professional editor, will update the information (but her costs will be met from a donation, not FoP funds). The cost of the boards will be £1,329, without VAT since the purchase can be made through CBC. FoP will apply for a Community Pride grant for half the cost, and will apply to Cheltenham Arts Council for £150 towards the match funding. JH agreed with CA that voluntary work can also be used for matched funding. The committee agreed that FoP would meet the eventual cost.

Action: JH

4.2 Severn Trent works at Pittville Gates

JH reported that Mike Beamish will replace the badly laid paving, and Severn Trent will be asked to pay for his work – perhaps with a charitable donation, since the company is tied to a particular contractor. If Severn Trent don't pay, Mike will do the work free. JH has found the right number of the correct setts and paving slabs for the job.

Action: JH

5 Finance report

Following the circulation of the accounts and his report before the meeting, PB noted that CBC has been paid for work on Bed 38. Membership numbers are creeping up, and income covers costs. PH will pay in £150 collected from the duck feeder.

JH thanked everyone who circulated notes before the meeting, SM for providing the agenda and minutes, and PB for his full financial report.

Action: PH

6 June newsletter

AH referred the committee to JK's previously circulated document, and suggested that a wide paper distribution is the only way to increase membership until there are proper systems for recruiting digitally. JH pointed out that a paper distribution is expensive, and deliverers may still be reluctant, but that it expands the range of readers. JK feels that many people using the park don't know about FoP, and suggested newsletter or leaflet dispensers (although littering might be a problem), and a way of recruiting people who view the website and Facebook. She has transferred the database to Excel and will produce graphs to understand why members are lost, to see if there is a way forward without a big distribution.

JH suggested a wide distribution in June or September to promote FoP to as many people as possible. CA agreed, and will write a short article for the next newsletter about the Severn Trent sewer that is sending grey film into the residuum, following the Environment Agency's advice that individuals are more likely to fix a problem they have caused if it is publicised within a small community.

ST suggested approaching younger potential members via Facebook and older ones via paper newsletters, although AH pointed out that older people are more likely to use Facebook these days. PB suggested requesting donations through an app rather than membership from particular groups.

It was decided that there would be an electronic newsletter in June and a large paper distribution in September.

AH asked for leads for articles (after a year of little but hope and Henry's pictures); he will include CA's sewage suggestion, and perhaps one on the loss of the bandstand as a facility. CA will talk to the GSVs about an article on 'grot spots' and how the park can be helped to recover after such heavy use. PH suggested that noticeboards could be better used, and reported on Montpellier Square Friends' provision of litter-picking equipment with notices suggesting its use. CA pointed out there is useful information from a range of organisations on the notice boards already. Better eye-catching notices promoting joining FOP and GSV's are needed. There are GSV cards available from CA for anyone who needs some and is willing to hand them out. PH suggested A5 leaflets about FoP on bins. ST will submit something on wildlife in the park.

AH will make a proposal for the newsletter nearer the time, and ask for more suggestions.

Action: AH, JK, CA, ST and All

7 Park developments

7.1 Masterplan

CA reported that Adam Reynolds (AR, CBC) has asked the landscape architects to apply for planning permission and listed building consent. JH said that the permissions and usually also estimates from contractors are needed before grants can be applied for. FoP must take

control from AR, who has too many other responsibilities. JH and CA will discuss a joint project board.

Action: JH, CA

7.2 Skatepark

ST has received an updated plan. The skateboarders have formed a group and have visited other skateboard parks for research purposes. CA agreed to join ST in a meeting with the group, to help them approach Malcolm Walls (MW, CBC).

Action: ST, CA

7.3 Frisbee golf

JH supported the idea. CA said that there were health and safety issues, and that the Park Ranger is the relevant CBC contact.

8 Regular activities

8.1 Green Space Volunteers (GSVs)

CA reported that work has restarted, with some new volunteers. The fence is up (with notices) around the rockery, but no way in has been left for volunteers; AR will sort that out.

8.2 Pittville History Works (PHW)

Following the circulated minutes of the last meeting, SM pointed out the link to the map page (Know Your Place).

8.3 Duck food dispenser

JH thanked PH for maintaining this.

8.4 Drop-ins

With hope that these can restart at the end of April, JK reported that Liz Auster will book a couple of tables and encourage people to come early in case it is too cold to stay for long.

8.5 Cheltenham Cultural Strategy workshop

ST will keep FoP updated; a meeting in two weeks' time will focus on heritage. AH raised the state of the heritage bandstand. CA reported that the bandstand falls under the CBC property department, not green space, and that they need to find the money for a bigger job than envisaged since roof timbers are rotten; he will follow up progress. AH said that the bandstand is very important, especially to bring life to the park for young people, and should become a FoP project. JH agreed that that might become necessary. PB agreed with AH that investment in the bandstand is more important than in steps and railings.

Action: CA

9 Future events

9.1 Plant sale?

JH suggested a sale at the end of May, after consultation with CBC. SM will ask CBC. DR is keen and would approach nurseries. Careful Covid-related planning would be necessary. PH worried about use of Scout Hut furniture, and whether people would have plants to contribute. CA agreed that plants would mainly have to come from nurseries. JH will ask DR

to check whether nurseries would support a sale. PB agreed that he could apply for cashless payment devices any time. A meeting of everyone interested in helping would be needed.

Action: SM, DR and possibly PB and others

9.2 Strategy meeting 8 June

CA and JH offered their gardens (or garden room with open doors) for this. JH and ST will plan the meeting.

Action: JH, ST

9.3 Garden party?

It was agreed that this will be discussed at the July meeting, with a view to holding it at the end of the summer.

9.4 Heritage Open Days 10-19 September 2021

The theme will be 'edible Cheltenham'. SM has been approached about participation in an online meeting, which Robert Hyatt Williams has agreed to take on.

9.5 AGM date TBD

SM will contact the school secretary to see if the usual venue will be available, since a face-to-face meeting would be preferable.

Action: SM

10 AOB

10.1 Pittville Pump Room Revival (PPRR)

JH reported that since the relationship between PPRR and The Cheltenham Trust (TCT)/CBC seems to have broken down and FoP's relationship with CBC is crucial, FoP should remain neutral in relation to the group and not mention it in the newsletters or other media. CA pointed out that PPRR want to work with TCT and the TCT Chairman has suggested a meeting in the future. CA suggested that things such as the Heritage Cafe and the proposed heritage display and tours were suggested by PPRR and are welcomed. PPRR doesn't want to damage the FoP relationship with CBC and agrees with JH's proposal. CA reminded the meeting that most of Pump Room guides that were actually volunteering before Covid were from FoP. AH said that TCT does sometimes need to be called to account. JH reported that she will be stepping down as a trustee of TCT at the end of April.

10.2 Quiz

Following her suggestion, it was agreed that PH will approach the pub landlord about running a quiz on a Monday night in September.

Action: PH

10.3 Police

JK's contact, Simon Bailey, would be happy to meet and talk about the park. JK will arrange a time suitable for him, her and for CA. Separately, CA invited the police to add a notice to a park board; they were enthusiastic, but nothing has happened yet.

Action: JK, CA

10.4 Cedar of Lebanon

CA reported that a campaign fund of £1,300 remains. He will ask the advice of Chris Chavasse (CBC) about what should be done with it. JH suggested putting it towards the bandstand restoration, but CA thought the donors would be more interested in tree planting.

Action: CA

10.5 Defibrillator

CA reported that the phone box by the Central Cross cafe is being smartened up and will contain a defibrillator – which, unlike the one beside the playground, won't require a code from ambulance staff.

10.6 New west side notice

A notice has appeared requiring dogs to be kept on leads. MW is checking its status with the enforcement team.

10.7 Wire plant guards at lake edges

Many have been removed following complaints from Pittville's swan group and then – at a meeting between them and GSVs – the discovery of a dead coot.

10.8 No gathering/ball games sign at Pump Room

PB complained about the new unnecessarily harsh new sign. JH replied that it was there because people were behaving illegally under the portico.

10.9 Councillor representation

Following a query by PB, JH said that she would invite the new councillor to replace DP when he or she was elected. JK pointed out that the elusive Jo Stafford, another representative, hasn't paid a membership fee for two years; SM added that she doesn't respond to email circulations either.

Action: JH

11 Date of next meeting Tuesday 13 July 2021. SM will contact the Municipal Offices to find out if a room will be available; if not, it will be held on Zoom. The strategy meeting will be held before that, on 8 June.

Action: SM

The meeting ended at 7.45pm.