

Trustees' Annual Report for the period 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022

Charity Name: **Friends of Pittville**

Registered Charity Number: 1146790

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

Names of Trustees:

Sarah (Sally) Thomas
Alexandra Marshall
Sarah de Buriatte

Chairman
Secretary
Treasurer

Judie Hodsdon
Andy Hopkins
Janina Kay

Website Editor
Newsletter Editor, Facebook editor
Membership Secretary

Rob Hyatt-Williams
Philippa Howell
Henry Williams

Joc Potter is Minutes Secretary (but not a trustee)
Chris Archibald is Volunteers Organiser (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 raising 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.

In 2020/21 the paid-up **membership** was at a low point of just under 300, relating directly to Covid 19 restrictions, and there being no hard copy newsletter with the Membership form insert distributed in September 2020.

The first distribution in September 2021 of a hard copy newsletter for 18 months has led to a welcome renewed interest in taking out membership, and we have 75 new members. Our total membership stands at over 375 at the end of 2021/22.

We are now looking at additionally providing the ability to join online via our website.

The charity has various groups of **volunteers**, including the Green Space volunteers, the researchers in the Pittville History Works group, the numerous 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** have continued to carry out a range of maintenance tasks including litter picking, pruning shrubs and hedges, looking after young trees, spreading bark on informal paths and tidying up at the entrance Gates and Samaritan bed in Winchcombe Street. Ongoing projects include Bed 38 (at the corner of Wellington and Evesham Roads) which we have sponsored and continue to add plants, and, working with CBC, the restoration of the west end of the rockery near the upper lake, and clearing the east end which we hope to plant up next spring.

FoP has secured funds from GCC's Build Back Better grant to install two new information boards next spring in the west side of the Park. These will contain information on habitats, the lake and the wildflower area. We were invited to take part in an experiment by the Cheltenham Festivals to see if the paper cups that are advertised to be recyclable actually rot down in a compost bin, which is now in the park. The experiment is ongoing and the results will be reported at the Science Festival in 2023. The wild flower area next to Tommy Taylors Lane has been prepared, and our volunteers have scattered the seed which was collected from Leckhampton Hill and other sites in Gloucestershire. We hope to get an interesting array of wild flowers next year.

In the coming year we would like to replant the raised beds near the aviaries as sensory beds, with accompanying basic information beside them, and further information on the internet.

The Green Space Volunteers contributed 1180 hours in the period July 2021 - June 2022 with an average of 25 volunteers at each working party who enjoy meeting socially after their efforts in the Central Cross Café and periodically get together for coffee and cakes. A number of the Volunteers have been supporting the work we do for nearly 10 years. We are well supported by the CBC Green Space team, and we were delighted this last year to welcome the new community ranger and new community development officer.

Towards the end of 2021, after planning permission and listed building consent had been obtained, it was decided to proceed with the **Masterplan** projects to make improvements around the Pump Room, beginning with the reinstallation of the flight of steps at the top of the grass in front of the building. A small group of FoP and CBC representatives met regularly, an updated costing was made, and despite an increase the steps project appeared to be affordable. FoP began raising extra funds (some money was already ringfenced from running the car park during race weeks). A grant of £40k from the Enover Community Trust has been promised, and the CBC Jubilee Fund awarded us £3k. Further grant applications are in progress. A landscape architect has now been appointed and the tendering process is underway. It is hoped the work will take place early next year.

The replacement of three **heritage information boards**, one near the Play Area and two by Pittville Gates, finally took place in February 2022, and are well used by locals and visitors.

Pittville History Works has continued to meet every two months, and their achievements can be viewed on their website ([www.http://pittvillehistory.org.uk](http://pittvillehistory.org.uk)) including new articles on Pittville's educational establishments, its two maternity homes, and an analysis of the occupations of Pittville residents from 1841 to 1939. Extensive work has been undertaken on adding information to their database from the Pittville Spa Subscription Book for the period 1830-52. John Simpson's book on the experience of paupers in Cheltenham from 1831-52 received an award for Local History Publication of the year. The group also have representation for the heritage sector on Cheltenham's culture board. A new, user-friendly version of the website is about to be launched.

The **newsletter** continues to be published four times a year - three in electronic form emailed to members as attachments, and a fourth printed edition in September containing a membership and renewal form. We print about 2500 of the hard copies which are distributed more widely in the community to encourage new members. The aim of the newsletters is to keep members up to date with FoP activities and progress of projects, and the work of the Green Space volunteers and recent insights from Pittville History Works research feature regularly. We include interesting news items about the park, and one-off features of particular interest to our members. The newsletter appears on the FoP website and in the main noticeboard by the lake.

During **Heritage Open Days**, despite the cancellation of some events during the early days of royal mourning, FoP managed the opening up of the 1895 underground chamber at the Gates which was used as an electricity substation, and fitted in with the "astounding inventions" theme. No one was able to descend due to heavy rain flooding the interior, but 100+ people were able to view from above, and 50 leaflets on its history (which are now available on the History Works website) were distributed.

Pittville History Works organised a successful drop-in session at the paint shop in Prestbury Road, and we were able to do one of two planned walks featuring the Park's special trees, which was very well attended.

The Cheltenham Arts Council invited us to take a stand at their event in the Promenade; it was manned by our volunteers and was also well attended.

The monthly Drop-in coffee mornings, for members and friends, were held at the Heritage Cafe at the Pump Room, and an average of 12-15 members attended each month. It has proved to be a popular event and thanks go to the volunteers who reserve tables and are there to welcome attendees.

This year's **fundraising** for the Masterplan projects, achieved by our volunteers running a car park for racegoers at the Festival, took place in March 2022. Despite the rain reducing the parking area to hard standing only, we raised just over £6000, our best result to date. This could not have been achieved without the commitment of our volunteers in all weathers over a 4-day period, so our thanks go to all those who supported us.

Due to Covid restriction-related cancellations of our Quiz night and Plant Sale in 2021, we held two Quiz nights, in November 2021 and February 2022, and two Plant Sales, in October 2021 and May 2022.

The quizzes are a mix of serious teamwork and laughter for members and their friends, and we had a very good selection of raffle prizes, generously provided by

individuals and organisations. The February Quiz was particularly well attended, and after paying the quizmaster, the evening raised £257.

The Plant Sale in May was one of our most successful to date, and we raised £618.50 towards improvements in the Park. The three nurseries, Cheltenham Horticultural Society and Friends of Pittville members all provided an excellent range to sell. We had considerable support from volunteers and donations for raffle prizes, and we were grateful to the All Saints Scouts Group for use of their hut and tables.

FoP had a stand at the Cheltenham Horticultural Society show in March 2022, and raised over £40 by providing a Lucky Dip.

Regular income continued to come from the duck feed dispenser. We share the profits with Aim Up (formerly St Vincent's and St George's) who look after the dispenser during weekdays, and this year, after paying for the duck food, we made a profit of £325 towards Park improvements. We would like to thank the volunteers who are called out to unjam the dispenser when inappropriate coins are used.

Another source of regular income has come from members purchasing tickets for the weekly Cheltenham Lottery. The general figure has dropped by a third, and we would like to encourage more tickets to be purchased as the prizes are very worthwhile. We are lucky to have received additional funds from members donating their winnings to us.

The **2021 AGM** was held on 26 October 2021 at Pittville Pump Rooms, with a good attendance. Judie Hodsdon stepped down as Chairman and the Trustees appointed Sally Thomas (Vice Chairman) to replace her.

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signatures (signed on the original)

Full Names	Sarah Thomas	Alexandra Marshall
Position	Chairman	Secretary
Date	25 October 2022	25 October 2022

