



# FRIENDS *of* PITTVILLE

December 2022

The aim of Friends of Pittville is to promote greater community involvement in the enjoyment, protection, future restoration and renewal of Pittville Park and Estate.

## Introduction from the Chair

Season's Greetings to all! The Trustees and I would like to wish you all the best for the festive season. If you are travelling, we hope you have a safe journey, but we hope you have an enjoyable time whether you are staying at home or going away.

Friends of Pittville has had an excellent year, so a big thank-you to all our members and volunteers who have done so much to contribute to that success. We hope to have an equally exciting coming year, and please remember the two key contributions that will help us achieve that – **ideas** and **volunteers!**

## Refurbishment of the Scout Hut

Members may have noticed the one-storey dark green hut opposite Central Cross Café. This is home to the 10th Cheltenham (All Saints) Scout Group, one of the oldest groups in Cheltenham, founded in 1912. They decided to undertake a major refurbishment this year, and we at FoP were asked to send a letter supporting their application for a Cheltenham Zero grant – which was successful. Local firms donated materials, enabling a full makeover for the hut.



Work was done by volunteers, and Stephen Litchfield, one of our Green Space volunteers, was there every week helping them with insulation, plastering and

painting. He was joined by Karl Dubbink, David Byrne and our Park ranger, Lucy Wise, who removed the overgrown shrubs outside and revealed the old flower bed which can now be planted.



The result looks great, and as a thank-you to FoP, we have been offered the refurbished hut for our trustees meetings, as well as for our annual plant sale. It is an excellent venue with a cheery meeting space, a kitchen, toilets and heating if needed, so we have accepted their kind offer. We hope to start with our next meeting in January 2023.

We are pleased to have a link with a group of young people, and look forward to the launch event for the hut in the coming weeks. We would like to thank Sarah Boulton, Nicole Sullivan and Mark Harris for keeping us involved. *Sally Thomas*

## 2022 AGM

There was a good turnout for the October meeting, held at St Paul's Church, It was followed by an interesting and impassioned talk on climate change – its effects and potential solutions – by environmentalist and Cheltenham resident Jonathon Porritt.



FoP's Treasurer revealed healthy finances, thanks to renewed post-Covid fundraising and existing funds held available for projects. The Chairman reported on progress towards the reinstatement of the steps in front of the Pump Room, due to begin in early 2023, and requested ideas for future projects, especially on the west side of the park. She also appealed for new trustees and project-specific volunteers. Full minutes and financial accounts can be found under 'About us' and then 'Documents' on the FoP website. *Joc Potter*

# Green Space Volunteers

## Wildflower seeds

Many of you may have noticed that the wildflower area to the east of Tommy Taylors Lane has been cut and scarified. At our working party on 20 October some of our Green Space Volunteers helped the CBC Green Space team, Glorious Cotswold Grasslands and the Mayor to spread what were estimated to be 100 million seeds over the area. The native Cotswold wildflower seeds were collected by Glorious Cotswold Grassland mainly from Leckhampton Hill and also from other similar sites in the Cotswolds. Even if only a small percentage of the seeds germinate they will make a great show and provide a home for pollinators, invertebrates and other wildlife.



It will hopefully provide the opportunity to create a seed bank in the future, harvesting in the autumn and spreading the seed in other areas of the town. FoP is preparing a habitat information board for the wildflower area with the CBC Green Space team, to educate and inspire visitors to Pittville Park about the benefits of wildflowers and all the wildlife that depends on them.

## New tree planting



A local resident has over the years been growing native trees in pots in their garden and has now kindly donated the trees to Pittville Park. The trees range in height from 5 feet to 10 feet. Our Green

Space Volunteers collected the trees and recently planted them on the west side of Tommy Taylors Lane amongst a group of hawthorn and blackthorn bushes. This should make another interesting group of native trees in that area.

## Other volunteers

Members of other charities and organisations sometimes come along to help FOP Green Space Volunteers work in the park and we have been very



pleased that Carol, Shania and Ross from St Vincent's and St George's (now renamed Aim Up) have been able to join us for the last few months. We have also had staff from GE Aviation, Spirax Serco and the P3 charity come along and help us with specific tasks.

## The rockery

We continue to look after the west end of the rockery adjacent to the north side of the upper lake. This mainly involves weeding and pruning some of the shrubs, although it also involved watering some of the plants during the hottest spells in the summer.

A lot of clearance has been carried out on the east end of the rockery with the removal of some inappropriate trees, and some of the rocks have been retrieved from the lake and replaced in the rockery. The Green Space Volunteers will start further preparation in the new year, together with the CBC Green Space team, and new planting will hopefully start in April.

*Chris Archibald*

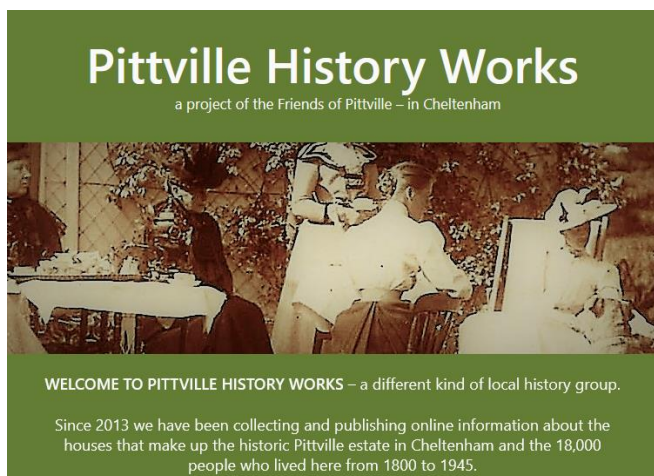
## The Pump Room Steps project

Since the last report there has been a bit of a delay because it proved difficult to find a landscape architect to take the Steps Project preparations forward. However, one has now been appointed, and an engineer too, so the work to prepare the documents to go out to tender is well underway. Another development is the signing of a legal agreement between CBC, FoP and Envoert Environmental Trust to ensure the payment of the grant in due course.

*Judie Hodsdon*

## A new look for Pittville History Works

In October Pittville History Works launched its new-look website, with all the content of the former site, but with an elegant and simpler design.



At the moment the project team is preparing to transcribe the Pittville data from the newly released 1921 census, which will give us an idea of how Pittville emerged from the Great War. We are expecting to find a rise in multi-occupancy, and a more varied pattern of residency and occupations beginning to emerge. The picture below appeared in the *Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic* just three weeks before census night in 1921, and shows the old order at a Pittville garden party – did they know it was all about to change? Keep an eye on the site to see how the census project progresses.



To learn more, please visit the new website at [www.pittvillehistory.org.uk](http://www.pittvillehistory.org.uk)

John Simpson

## Pittville Estate and the Gold Cup Meeting – an update

We ran an article in the September edition of the newsletter which highlighted the enormous increase in antisocial behaviour (ASB) in the Pittville area during the Gold Cup Week in March last year.

Complaints made by hundreds of residents have resulted in the Jockey Club introducing initiatives which they anticipate will go a considerable way to

resolving the situation. The *Love Our Turf* campaign has been co-ordinated with the Racecourse, the police and local businesses, and was trialled at the race meeting of 11–13 November. The campaign will be launched in full at the Festival Meeting in March. Particular focus is being placed on the Evesham Road route between Cheltenham town centre and the course, with stewards, enhanced street cleaning, more rubbish bins and increased toilet facilities being deployed.

Andre Klein, Cheltenham Racecourse's Community Engagement Manager, said 'We absolutely recognise the feedback from members of the local community and racegoers that there was a need to enhance the experience of pedestrians arriving and departing from the racecourse and we hope that *Love Our Turf* will go some way to delivering it. Additional stewards, as well as the provision of more facilities and amenities, should alleviate many of the concerns raised by our local residents. We are really excited about this new initiative and know we will learn plenty from our experience on Saturday [12 November] that we can take forward to March, to ensure that the negative impact our events have on the community are massively reduced.'

First-hand comments as to the success of this plan are favourable. What stood out was the significant police presence at the junction of every tributary road on both sides of Evesham Road from the racecourse roundabout to West Approach Drive.

Increased parking restrictions were in place both on the Evesham Road and on New Barn Lane: cones were in place on either side of the road in New Barn Lane (from Lexington Square), and on Evesham Road from the roundabout to Central Cross Drive. All the lay-by sections on these roads, which are always occupied during Festival week, were also cordoned off. More Portaloos were in place on Evesham Road, 12 in all; hopefully more in March.

Continuous heavyweight bollard sections were positioned in the centre of Evesham Road from the racecourse roundabout to West Approach Drive – this prevented pedestrians drifting across the main road and obstructing traffic.

Stewards were in evidence along the Evesham Road; however, there were fewer towards the south, and none were noted beyond Central Cross Drive. It seems that at last there is an acknowledgement of the impact made by around 260,000 racegoers flooding into the Pittville area over the four-day Festival period. The Jockey Club's programme has been supported by Chris Nelson, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire, together with a much-welcomed cross-party initiative from Cheltenham Borough Council. Both our local councillors, Stephan Fifield

and Julian Tooke, have been very proactive in promoting the interests of Pittville and its residents.

The exercise during the November meeting weekend was a trial. No doubt there will be further reviews before Festival week, and we will ensure as much information as possible is made available to our members in the March newsletter.

*Janina Kay*

## Book the dates

### Quiz night Monday 13 February 2023

Once again we will be holding our annual fundraising quiz at the Feathered Fish, in Winchcombe Street. Members and friends always have an enjoyable evening with lots of laughter. 7 pm for 7.30 pm start, £8 per person.

We will send out reminders to members nearer the time but please book the date and invite your friends. Contact the organiser, Philippa Howell, for more details. Email [philippahowell@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:philippahowell@yahoo.co.uk) Tel: 07564 521516.

### Plant sale Saturday 29 April 2023

Usually, our plant sale is in early May but the Coronation is scheduled for Saturday 6 May, so we have arranged for the plant sale to be on Saturday 29 April from 10am to 12 noon in front of the Scout Hut at Central Cross Drive in the park. Our regular nurseries will be there with plants. Other plants provided by members of Friends of Pittville will also be for sale. If you could donate plants or seedlings to sell we would be most grateful. Please contact the organiser, Philippa Howell, for further information via the email or phone number above.

### Our duck-feed partners

Our duck feeder partners, formerly called St Vincent's and St George's Association, will shortly be moving to new premises at Well Close House, Lansdown Parade, Cheltenham GL50 2LH. They now have a new name, **Aim Up**, and plan to continue sharing the jobs involved with the duck feeder. This includes topping up the feed, and, too often, having to un-jam the mechanism when the wrong coins are used. For more information on the work done by the charity go to [www.aimup.co.uk](http://www.aimup.co.uk)

*Philippa Howell*

## Oggy Boytchev talk

We would like to say a big thank-you to Oggy Boytchev for the excellent talk he gave on his experiences of filming BBC news reports in some of the world's most dangerous war zones. The feedback from those who attended has been very positive and the event raised almost £500 to go toward FoP's projects.

## Some December events in and around Pittville Park

**1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>** 9.15–11.15am Green Space Volunteers at work in the park

**1<sup>st</sup>** 7.30–8.30pm A Very Dickensian Christmas, Holst Victorian House (£20)

**3<sup>rd</sup>** 10am–12pm Cheltenham Animal Shelter's Festive dog walk (tickets for humans £7.50 online), from the Shelter car park

**3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>** 10am–7pm Christmas artisan markets, with music at 1pm, Pump Room

**8<sup>th</sup>** 7.30pm Eblana String Trio CMS, Pump Room (£5/£20/£25)

**9<sup>th</sup>** 11am Young musicians' lunchtime concert – Tskushi Mitsuda (piano) Pump Room (free)

**10<sup>th</sup>** from 10am Victorian Christmas Day, Holst Victorian House (free/£10)

**11<sup>th</sup>** 10am–12pm, 1pm–3pm Wreath-making workshops, Holst Victorian House (£40)

**12<sup>th</sup>** 12.30pm Flower arranging demonstration, Pump Room (£7)

**13<sup>th</sup>** 4pm–5.30pm In the Bleak Midwinter, Holst Victorian House (£15)

**14<sup>th</sup>** 8pm Comedy Club, Pump Room (£15)

**16<sup>th</sup>** 8pm Cherries on a Cloud Burlesque and Cabaret, with dinner, Pump Room (£50/£52)

**20<sup>th</sup>** 11am–3pm Children's Craft Drop-in Crackers and Centrepieces, Holst Victorian House (free/£10)

**21<sup>st</sup>** 4.30pm–7pm Museum by Candlelight, Holst Victorian House (free/£10)

**28<sup>th</sup>** 8pm Swing Dance with the Harlem River Cats, Pump Room (£12/£14)

**29<sup>th</sup>** 10am–12pm Friends of Pittville Drop In, Pump Room café

**Every Saturday** 9am Cheltenham Park Run, west side of park (free)

*Joc Potter*

### Editor

Andy Hopkins

### Photos

Sally Thomas

John Simpson

Chris Archibald

Henry Williams

### Contact FoP at

Telephone 01242 245143

Email [secretary@friendsofpittville.org.uk](mailto:secretary@friendsofpittville.org.uk)  
[newsletter@friendsofpittville.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@friendsofpittville.org.uk)  
[membership@friendsofpittville.org.uk](mailto:membership@friendsofpittville.org.uk)  
[volunteer@friendsofpittville.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@friendsofpittville.org.uk)

Website [www.friendsofpittville.org.uk](http://www.friendsofpittville.org.uk)

Social Media [social@friendsofpittville.org.uk](mailto:social@friendsofpittville.org.uk)

Facebook Friends of Pittville

**Registered charity number** 1146790



