

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.

A fond farewell

We are very sorry to be saying goodbye to Hilary and John Simpson who are leaving Cheltenham for pastures new, but we cannot let them go without acknowledging the huge debt of gratitude we have for the work they have done to make the Pittville History Works (PHW) project such a success.

For those who are not familiar with them, John has chaired the group (pictured below) for over ten years, assisted by Hilary as secretary. John and Hilary are in the far right of the picture below.

Hilary has also contributed to many other local groups, and chairs the Holst Victorian House. John has won a Local History Publication Award for his work on paupers in Cheltenham, and is currently documenting the lives of clergymen in the area. The group won a citation from Cheltenham Arts Council in 2017 and have regularly supported the annual Heritage Open Days.

During their tenure PHW developed a stunning and valuable resource for information about all aspects of the local history of the Pittville area. They developed a new user-friendly website (using John's data management skills and contacts) that allows access to an enormous wealth of information which they collected, starting in the 1830s, about people, buildings, occupations and life in general both above and below stairs. This is free and fully accessible to all, and they are the first response unit for worldwide queries from

interested descendants of Pittville residents. We encourage you to visit their website to see what has been achieved. Please join us in wishing them the very best in their new environment – but they will leave big shoes to fill.

www.pittvillehistory.org.uk

... and a welcome

I am pleased to introduce John Holloway, who has recently become a Trustee for Friends of Pittville.



John, a native of Bristol, moved to Pittville in February 2021, after living for many years in London. He is delighted to join the Executive Committee, as he loves the beauty and historic significance of the area that FoP was created to nurture.

His work experience has been in marketing and fundraising in predominantly not-for-profit organisations both in the UK and abroad. He still works as a self-employed Management Consultant and Communication Skills Coach, and we are very much looking forward to his contribution to our efforts.

Sally Thomas, Chair



FRIENDS OF PITTVILLE PLANT SALE

29 April

10am – 12 noon

Central Cross Drive outside the Scout Hut

Plants from local nurseries and donated by
members and friends

Quiz night February 2023



This year a record number of quizzers enjoyed our quiz night at the Feathered Fish. With entry charges and lots of raffle prizes donated by members and local businesses, we raised a total of £522 towards park improvements. Thank you to Andy at the Feathered Fish, Paul the quizmaster and everyone who attended. Look out for more information about our Christmas Quiz.

Plant sales in April

Friends of Pittville will hold our plant sale on Saturday 29 April from 10am to 12 noon, outside the scout hut in Central Cross Drive. Plants donated by members are especially valued by visitors and we will be supported by local nurseries.

The Cheltenham Horticultural Society will hold their Spring Flower Show on Sunday 2 April from 12.30 to 3.30pm at Pittville Pump Room. Entrance is just £2.00 for adults with children free. Friends of Pittville will have an information table with a lucky dip.

Philippa Howell

Cheltenham Festival Week management – an update

We outlined in the last newsletter the proposals made by The Jockey Club to mitigate the extensive antisocial behaviour during Cheltenham Festival Week. The measures introduced by the 'Love Our Turf' initiative are set to be implemented more extensively than in the trial run which took place in November. This campaign will promote recognised arrival and departure routes for racegoers, including Evesham Road, Albert Road, Tommy Taylors Lane, Paddocks Lane and the end of the Honeybourne Line footpath, with increased toilet facilities, police presence, wayfinding ushers and street performers, as well as enhanced street cleaning and more bins in place.

KeepItCleanCheltenham is an initiative being rolled out by Cheltenham Borough Council which will be run to raise awareness and stamp down on antisocial behaviour, including public urinating and littering: 'The Council is also working with Gloucestershire Constabulary and Cheltenham Racecourse to increase the number of temporary public toilets, police and steward visibility at key points and junctions, and the issuing of fixed penalty notices where necessary for those who still choose to urinate in public.'

The significant increase in policing at the November meeting on the Evesham Road had a noticeable impact, as did the introduction of concrete bollards along the centre of Evesham Road, which improved traffic flow considerably. It seems very unlikely that Evesham Road will be closed during Festival week, as the knock-on effect to other roads leading to the racecourse would create gridlock. It was also rumoured that the Festival would be extended from four to five days. This is not to be the case.

If further information becomes available before 14 March, FoP will incorporate this into a message to all members.

Janina Kay

FoP Festival car park

Friends of Pittville will again operate the car park at Albermarle Gate during the race days of the Festival. There has been a record level of volunteering this year to do stints and we would like to thank everyone who has come forward to help FoP raise funds for the park. It's usually a fun day. There's always a bit of banter with the racegoers as they set off to the course full of optimism and return to their cars at the end of the day a little worse for wear.

Chris Archibald

Cheltenham Music Festival Society Young Musician Concerts

The series of Young Musician Concerts free at the Pump Room continues in March. On Tuesday 7 March at 1.00pm Ivan Hovorum, a young Ukrainian pianist, will perform music by Schumann, Horowitz, Rodrigo and Danzon. Ivan, who is based in Manchester, has been part of an initiative to set up a scholarship fund for Ukrainian students to the Royal Northern College of Music. The fund has successfully reached its goal of £50,000. The last concert before Easter will be given by pupils from Bournside School, on Friday 24 March at 1.00 pm.

Where have the Pittville swans been?

When the boating lake froze before Christmas, except for a very small area near the Boathouse, George, Maisie and other wildlife gathered in a part that remained unfrozen. Unfortunately, dirty cooking oil found its way into this area of the lake and the contaminated water affected the wildlife.

We noticed that George and Maisie were in a dreadful condition. They had lost their waterproofing, weren't eating, were finding it



difficult to swim, were cold and soaked through to the skin. They had also ingested some oil and so we had to rescue them before they perished.

When the lake started to thaw, George and Maisie were able to make their way back to the safety of their island. This meant we had to plan the rescue carefully and, more importantly, find a sanctuary that would take them in.



The following day, 22 December, we arranged to meet up with other members of Pittville Swans & Friends to discuss our plan. We got special permission to take a boat out from the Boathouse, and once we had rescued both swans, we drove them to The Swan Sanctuary in Shepperton, Middlesex, as pre-arranged.

The facilities and care at The Swan Sanctuary are world class and after seven weeks of intensive care and attention, on 9 February we brought George and Maisie back home. As a gesture of our eternal gratitude to The Swan Sanctuary, we have set up a JustGiving fundraising page to offset the cost of



looking after our beloved swans.

You can donate to their JustGiving page by clicking www.justgiving.com/fundraising/simone-heathershaw2?utm

*Chris and Simone Heathershaw
Pittville Swans & Friends*

Paving issues

A few weeks ago, without any warning, access to our houses and cars was restricted whilst the pavement was dug up in Pittville Lawn between the Gates and Wellington Road, to install high speed broadband by Virgin Media.

On reinstatement of the works I was horrified to see that a large patch of black tarmac had been laid where previously there had been at least four paving stones. My initial complaint to CBC was redirected to County Highways, where I lodged an official complaint. I received valuable support from our neighbour, Victoria Cambridge, who added her complaint supported by numerous photos.

I escalated my complaint to the Chief Executive of the County Council, who copied it to the Director of Highways. I added our local councillors Julian Tooke and Stephan Fifield. Victoria and I also gained support from other neighbours who added their complaints.

Action was immediate. Gloucestershire's Traffic Manager was very helpful, with Julian Tooke giving instructions to the contractors to replace paving stones and repair and reseed the badly

damaged grass verges. Most of the work has been completed to our satisfaction, but there are still some works outstanding.

However, the question remains, if we had not got together as a strong group of residents and addressed our complaints vociferously to multiple senior officials, would satisfactory reinstatement works have been carried out to this protected area? People Power won the day. *Richard Payne*

The duck feeder

For some years the staff and Phoenix Centre users have been sharing the work involved in the duck food dispenser during the week. The Phoenix Centre on Winchcombe Street closed for good on 25 November 2022 with the users holding a leaving and Christmas party. The closure of the centre coincided with the renaming of the old St Vincents's and St George's charity as Aim Up.



Karen Whyte, the Manager, relocated to existing Aim Up premises in Lansdown in January and is now organising Outreach from there, with five members of

staff going into people's homes to help them with activities. This is working well and she says that everyone is enjoying the freedom of getting out, going shopping, having their nails done, then meeting for lunch. Some people have been using the Leisure Centre for swimming, the health spa and the gym. Everyone makes time to meet their friends on a Friday in Wetherspoon's Moon under Water.

A new building at Well Close House in Lansdown will be ready later in the year and will provide a hub for different activities each day. Its garden has a chicken run with four laying chickens, and an outdoor kitchen which can make egg breakfasts and do barbecues. You can find more information about Aim Up's activities in their newsletter: www.aimup.co.uk/newsletter-feb2023

We are grateful for all the help from Aim Up with looking after the duck feeder, but as they are now quite far from Pittville, they are no longer able to be involved. FoP therefore needs more help. As well as topping up the food, we need to check that the machine is not jammed with the wrong coins. (It only works with 20p pieces.) With better weather the feeder will get more use. If anyone can help for a day a week or more, please contact me, Philippa Howell, at philippahowell@yahoo.co.uk / 07564 521516.

Green space volunteers

The volunteers have started this year with their usual maintenance tasks, litter picking, pruning shrubs and tidying up the banks beside the lakes. The big job for the spring will be the restoration of the east end of the rockery on the north bank of the upper lake. The rockery was reconstructed in 1933 and overseen by Mr Leuchars, the park and garden superintendent. Over time it has suffered from inappropriate planting and a lack of maintenance, with many of the shrubs well past their best, and rockery stones thrown into the lake.



Last year CBC removed the poor-quality trees to provide light and shrubs were pruned hard or removed. A number of rocks have been removed from the lake and replaced in the rockery but some of the larger ones await machinery to get them out. The volunteers also spent a lot of time clearing weeds and old roots from between the stones in preparation for planting and to see if there was anything worth saving – not much! It is planned to get the initial phase of planting done by the end of April; this will be a mixture of shrubs and larger alpine plants. An important consideration in designing the planting will be to minimise the amount of maintenance required.

Chris Archibald

Editor

Andy Hopkins

Photos

John Holloway

Ben Howell

Chris Archibald

Sandy Marshall

Contact FoP at

Telephone 01242 245143

Email secretary@friendsofpittville.org.uk
newsletter@friendsofpittville.org.uk
membership@friendsofpittville.org.uk
volunteer@friendsofpittville.org.uk

Website www.friendsofpittville.org.uk

Social Media social@friendsofpittville.org.uk

Facebook Friends of Pittville

Registered charity number 1146790



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

The MBE for volunteer groups

