

## **Friends of Pittville Trustee Meeting 11 July 2023 at 5.00pm at the Scout Hut, Central Cross Drive**

### **Present:**

**Trustees** Sally Thomas (ST), Sandy Marshall (SM), John Holloway (JH), Andy Hopkins (AH), Philippa Howell (PH), Janina Kay (JK), Henry Williams (HW)

**Minutes** Jocelyn Potter

**Observer** (from 5.30) Sacha Kerkhof (SK)

### **1 Welcome and apologies**

ST welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Sarah de Buriatte (SdeB) and Chris Archibald (CA), and from council representative Julian Tooke (JT).

### **2 Minutes of the last trustees meeting, 4 April 2023**

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

### **3 Follow up from the strategy meeting, 19 June**

**3.1 Document calling urgently for new officers and committee members** A draft document was circulated by ST before the meeting. AH presented a second draft of the document, which will be sent out by Mailchimp to members, with ST's and SM's phone numbers for contact. ST will also add a succinct call for a chair, a secretary and trustees with particular skills to the VCS Alliance Trustee Register. Following JK's suggestion, it was agreed that the roles of the chair and secretary need to be redescribed. JK and SM will pass past descriptions to ST, and SM and ST will pare down the descriptions of their roles in relation to decisions made at the strategy meeting.

**Action: JK, SM, ST**

**3.2 Future needs and skills requirements for trustees** The following were mentioned: computing and social media skills; writing, editing and desktop publishing skills; interest in the park and the community; the ability to promote community involvement. AH emphasised that role descriptions shouldn't be daunting, and that trustees can anyway bring in other contacts for specific tasks; JK said that most tasks are hands-on; HW that it is important to stress that FoP is a small, local charity with simple aims and activities.

### **4 Website progress**

**4.1/2 Joining online and website revamp quotes** JH has completed a digital audit of the skills used and needed, including the need to bring membership data onto the website (which can be done remotely from JK's computer), and has asked three local companies to quote for the task by the first week of August. The chosen firm could be invited to make a presentation to the next meeting. The most urgent task is a plug-in for online membership renewals, preferably before September. JK noted that the number of cheques has recently reduced greatly, and standing orders are encouraged. David Hewitt has been unwell and can only hand over the work he has done (without full charge) on the website so far. JH said that the chosen company will also consider better alternatives to Mailchimp and 34SP if they don't cost much more. It is possible that Google will host the site-related email addresses free, a service provided for charities. JH will circulate quotes and a summary document, but following AH's suggestion, he and ST will make a decision with the aim of a revamp of the website before the AGM. ST thanked JH for his work. JK raised the issue of data protection

in relation to the membership list; only officers and the membership secretary should be able to access that part of the site. JH confirmed that the quotes would be taking this into account.

**Action: JH, ST**

## **5 Recent events**

**5.1 Plant sale** Held on 29 April, this made £566.45. ST thanked everyone for their help in running the sale. AH suggested that more high-quality prizes should be contributed for future raffles.

**5.2 Quiz night** It was agreed that this will continue to be held in February. PH will suggest possible dates at the next meeting.

**Action: PH**

**5.3 Summer garden party at 53 Pittville Lawn** This was very successful, with a profit of £922.95 for FoP. ST has delivered a thank-you gift from the committee to JT and Oggy Boytchev, the hosts and donors of the wine. JK thanked ST, JH and SdeB for organising the event. AH commended the contributions of both Steven Blake and Stephen Selby. JH noted that Steven Blake's publisher, Gareth Swain, donated books for sale.

## **6 Future events**

**6.1 AGM** St Paul's Church has been booked for 23 October. Suggested speakers were: Edward Gillespie, Lord Lieutenant; Andre Klein, the Cheltenham Racecourse Community Engagement Manager; Chris Nelson, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire; Chris Chavasse, CBC's Senior Trees Officer; the head gardener at Lords of the Manor Hotel; a speaker from the Woodland Trust who gives a talk with slide show (whose name HW will find out, and HW also confirmed that slides can be shown in the church); Chris Evans, the manager of Dundry Nurseries; the man who has led bat walks in the park; an organiser of Cheltenham Parkrun. It was agreed to narrow these down to green space related speakers and the police commissioner; if more than one person agrees to speak, a special event can be arranged similar to Oggy Boytchev's talk. The speaker will need to be available from 6.30 (half an hour after the start of the AGM) and to talk for 20 minutes. ST will coordinate responses. Wine, tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided at the AGM, with detailed arrangements to be agreed at the next meeting.

**Action: ST, HW and other trustees with relevant contacts**

**6.2 Autumn recital by Stephen Shelby** Following his excellent poetry recital, he has offered to do a piano or piano and poetry recital in aid of FoP. ST will discuss this with him. AH pointed out that the choice of a venue will depend on the availability of a grand piano. ST ruled out the Pump Room as too expensive.

**Action: ST**

## **7 Projects**

**7.1 Information boards** HW reported that these should be erected soon, but that one location is now overgrown as a result of an ongoing issue with CBC. GSVs in the park aren't receiving the same support as volunteers in other green spaces, to the extent that some volunteers have threatened to leave the team; HW and CA have drawn up a 'grot spot' map which they will show CBC at a meeting in the park next Tuesday. AH asked whether this might be a subject for a newsletter article. In response to a question from SK, HW explained that 32 groups of GSVs come under the auspices of CBC's parks department, but that FoP provides financial support, tools and jackets for the Pittville Park GSVs, who put in many hours of volunteer labour and save CBC a lot of money. It was agreed that the outcome of next week's meeting will determine whether FoP should address the problems with CBC.

**7.2 Sensory garden** CA reported in a written submission that he had applied for a £2,500 grant from the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy Fund for phase 1 of the project, but due to the great demand on the fund's resources, only £1,000 has been granted, so the phases will have to be rethought. CA will see if CBC's green spaces team want to be

involved. The trustees agreed unanimously that FoP should contribute money to the project. If any trustees are happy to help CA with project, they should contact him.

**Action: CA and interested trustees**

**7.3 Steps** ST expressed unhappiness with the inefficiency of CBC's project manager, without whom the project would have been completed or at least would now be moving ahead more quickly; if work doesn't start soon, the already deferred Enovert grant could be lost. The contract was sealed in June and Snape was awarded the contract. The cost will be £54,389.52, including a contingency of £7,500. An extra cost will be an engraved plaque commemorating the coronation of King Charles III. FoP's contribution will be between £8,889.02 and £16,389.52; £5,000 has already been paid. A start date – hopefully in August – will be fixed when Snape has the date for the arrival of the stone. Adam Reynolds (CBC) has told The Cheltenham Trust what they will and won't be able to do while work is in progress. JH hoped that there is a penalty clause in Snape's contract for overrunning the installation time. AH expressed surprise that the committee, given its financial involvement, hasn't seen the documentation relating to the contract. ST replied that CA has attended meetings and has the documents if AH wants to consult them.

There was discussion of the plaque, the chosen design for which will be communicated for interest to Edward Gillespie. AH said that the work should go to a professional letter-cutter and that the size must take into account the number and sizes of the letters to be inscribed on it. He will speak to CA about the planned size and location for it. He also emphasised the need for the stone for the steps to be cut and laid in the stone's natural bed. HW reminded the group that some stone for the gates had to be rejected because of its quality.

**Action: CA, AH**

## **8 Regular activities**

**8.1 PHW** ST noted that PHW need to be considering a proposal for the transfer of database management from New York to a UK platform.

**8.2 Duck food** PH reported that there have been few problems.

**8.3 Drop-ins** JH reported that the last one was quite well attended, outside the Pump Room, where it will continue while the café remains.

## **9 Newsletter**

It was agreed that the September edition will be hard copy, 2,500 copies with a folded membership form insert. AH will write to trustees at the end of the month asking for copy, with a deadline of 15 August. JK noted that many people enjoy receiving hard copies, but that they are now (post-Covid) less welcome in doctor's surgeries and other places where they can be picked up. She suggested that advice for renewing membership online should be included on the membership form; JH will see if there is time once quotes from web management companies have been received and a company selected. JK will find the membership form template, send a copy to ST, tweak it if possible in consultation with SdeB and pass it to AH by 15 August.

**Action: AH, JK**

## **10 Other issues**

**10.1 Review of the Constitution and Rules** This was deferred until it is clear whether the call for new trustees has been answered. JH suggested that it should be an agenda item for the next meeting so that any proposed changes can be taken to the AGM.

**10.2 CBC heritage strategy** There has been no news.

**10.3 Passwords** ST gave a list to JH with a blank column, but he requested all the actual passwords.

**Action: ST**

## **11 A.O.B**

**11.1 Sacha Kerkhof** She was welcomed onto the committee as a trustee (subject to approval at the AGM).

**12 Date of next meeting**

It will be held on Tuesday 10 October at 5.00pm in the Scout Hut. ST noted that this will be the last time that the Scout Hut is available free in exchange for FoP's contribution to the renovation of the building.

The meeting closed at 6.50pm.