



FRIENDS *of* PITTVILLE

September 2023

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.

Summer Party Success

Our fundraising summer cheese and wine gathering was held in the garden of our members Oggy and Julian in Pittville Lawn. We were very lucky with the weather, and Oggy and Julian not only hosted the event but also, generously, provided the wine. Three trustees spent quite some time preparing the food (hidden talents emerged!) and one of our members, Gareth Swain, donated some books on Pittville to be sold as part of the event.

Steve Blake gave a short talk that contained fascinating insights into the history of the terrace of houses where we were gathered. Stephen Selby read some of his poetry inspired by the park, as well as some verses written specially for the occasion. We also presented a farewell gift to Fiona and Tom Clarke.

It was a lovely evening and we raised well over £900 to be used for our future projects in the park. We would like to say a big thank you to our hosts, organisers and, of course, guests. *Sally Thomas*

News from the park

Green Space Volunteers

In the first six months of this year the Green Space Volunteers contributed 464 hours of work in the park with an average of 18 at each working party.



Green Space Volunteers get together for well-earned coffee and cake

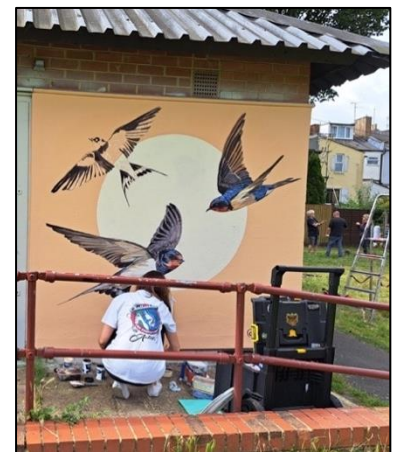
This is a bit down on last year but I think this is because people are getting more confident about booking holidays and perhaps have a few more aches and pains.

If you feel able to help look after the park on the first and third Thursday morning of each month please come along when you can; you will be very welcome. There is a range of jobs to be done and you get to choose. For more details email volunteer@friendsofpittville.org.uk.

Cheltenham Paint Festival

The Cheltenham Paint Festival took place 28-30 July and now there are some incredible new wall paintings around the town. The pavilion in the Agg Gardner recreation ground on the west side of the park was completely repainted with a variety of

pictures featuring birds, a Barbie doll, a fish and a skull with an eye. There were local artists working on the pavilion and others who came from as far as Manchester. Some paintings are more controversial than others ...



To see the location of all the festival paintings, go to the detailed map on the festival website at: www.cheltenhampaintfestival.co.uk/map.

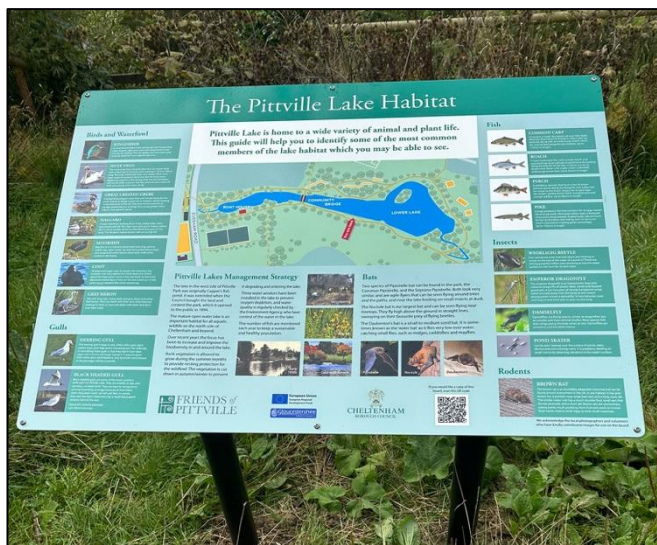
Chris Archibald

Sensory beds

Friends of Pittville have obtained a grant from the CBC Neighbourhood CIL Fund (previously Section 106 monies) to replant the six brick planters between the main children's play area and the aviaries, transforming them into sensory beds. Friends of Pittville will be providing match funding for the scheme. The initial part of Phase 1 of the project will be to design the planting and to employ a local artist to design some sculptural elements to add interest to the project. The beds will then be cleared and replanted by volunteers as part of this phase and information boards installed. Further grants will be sought to fund Phase 2, which is to make and fix the sculptural elements. We are looking for volunteers to help design the beds and/or work on them. If you feel able to help, please email volunteer@friendsofpittville.org.uk.

Habitat boards in the west side of the park

Unfortunately there had been a delay in the manufacture of the Wildflower Habitat and the Lake Habitat boards but we are pleased to report they have now been erected on the path that runs adjacent to the north side of the lower lake. You can photograph the QR code on the board to download a copy of the boards.



Friends of Pittville were awarded a further grant from the Gloucestershire County Council 'Build Back Better' fund for the production of a third board describing the Native Tree Habitat. The same team of volunteers and a CBC Green Space Team officer have started work on this board with the help of the CBC Trees officer to devise a native tree walk.

Chris Archibald

Diary note. The date of the next Friends of Pittville Quiz Night for at the Feathered Fish is Monday 19 February 2024.

Duck feeder

Our duck feed dispenser on the upper lake has seen eight years of constant service but the mechanism became worn. Tom Clarke was involved from the start and we were lucky that he was able to help us just before he moved back to Australia. He dismantled the mechanism on the old machine but found it was not repairable.



The original machine was a converted American gumball machine from the USA. Tom sourced a replacement from a seller on Ebay who refurbishes them for use in 'man caves'!

The new machine is not quite the same as the old so we now have a new mechanism in our old machine. We hope that this one will also last a good number of years.

The feeder is a popular attraction in the park as well as a fundraiser. Last year we made over a £1000, after sharing some of the takings with Aim Up who helped us to keep it running until they moved. A small number of FoP local volunteers are called out when the machine is jammed (usually with wrong coins). It is set to take only 20p pieces.

Malcolm Walls from CBC Green Space Team visited with Jason, who made the original outer casing, and they have confirmed that they can take the machine back to the depot to clean it at the end of the summer.



Philippa Howells

Trustees updates

We had a rather disappointing response to our request for candidates to come forward to take over the roles of either Chair or Secretary of Friends of Pittville, so we are no further forward in resolving this issue.

I would URGE you to consider helping us out, or to ask any friends or colleagues who may not be current members if they would like to get involved and give back to the community. This can be done by mailing: secretary@friendsofpittville.org.uk or chairman@friendsofpittville.org.uk

There is some good news in that we have two new trustees who will be standing for election at our AGM in October, and we hope later to have a third candidate who has recently come forward.

We introduced you to John Holloway in the March newsletter and he has already taken on a number of projects for us. We are also delighted to have Sacha K who is keen to join us and make a contribution to our work. Sacha is newly resident in Cheltenham as a house owner, and is returning to the area where she spent her school years. She now works in Business Development, a job that takes her travelling all over the world, and she is looking forward to settling down in one spot and putting down some roots. She enjoys Pittville Park with her dog, and hopes to contribute positively to the area via working with Friends of Pittville.

Sally Thomas

A plea from our current secretary!

You might say that some are born Secretaries, some achieve Secretary-ness and some have Secretary-ness thrust upon them. Falling somewhere between the last two, I took over some of Fiona Clarke's duties at the end of 2019. 'Some' is a key word: Fiona was one of the visionaries who oversaw the emergence of FoP from the previous residents' association and was so much part of it for many years. No one could fill her shoes!

Fiona guided me through the early days of Mailchimp, our main means of communicating with members. I've also learned to answer, deflect and divert enquiries ranging from ancestral research, dedicating (yet another) seat in the park, offers to litter-pick, making a sculpture out of a fallen tree, to comments about noisy music, mud, and the animals, birds and fish who share the park with us.

I am one of the longer-term residents of Pittville – we moved here in May 1981, and for most of those years knew few fellow residents: you go to work, come home, go in next day, for year after year. It was only after retiring and joining FoP that I met some of the many who care about this fine part of town and put in hours to look after it: fellow trustees who keep things going, those who help in the park, the Scout Group leaders who treasure the hut (and provide the committee with a meeting space), supporters of the drop-ins, and the patient transcribers of census returns to record early residents of Pittville for the excellent Pittville History Works site. It is now time for me to step down – and we urgently need someone to replace me!

Sandy Marshal, Secretary of FoP 2019-23

Friends of Pittville Pump Room steps project starts!

The reinstatement of the historic set of steps in front of the Pump Room will begin on 18 September. After some rather frustrating delays (mostly necessary local authority processes) we now finally have a start date for the Steps

Project. Following the tendering process, a contractor with an affordable quote was selected and the contract (after much due process checking details) was signed and sealed on 20 June. The contractor is Snape Contracting, a Gloucester firm. Inevitably the cost has gone up (to £54,390), but it is still affordable. Most of the money will come from a grant of £40,000 from Enovert Community Trust, with £3,000 from the Cheltenham Borough Council Jubilee Fund. The remainder will come from Friends of Pittville funds, mainly those raised by running the car parking during Race Week.

The project is in celebration of the Coronation of King Charles III, and when they are finished we will organise an opening ceremony, which will be attended by the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire Edward Gillespie.

The set of steps, between the two remaining plinths, is the only historic structure on the original 1826 plan that was demolished (in around 1900), so it is very satisfying that we now have the go-ahead to restore it.

Judie Hodsdon

Autumn AGM 2023



We are delighted that once again Roger Widdecombe and the team at St Paul's Church in St Paul's Road have generously given us the opportunity to hold our Annual General meeting at the church.

Our speaker at the AGM this year will be Chris Nelson, the Police and Crime Commissioner for

Gloucestershire, who was elected in May 2021. He and his family live in Cheltenham, and previously he was a Borough Councillor and Parish Council Chairman.

The AGM will be held at 6pm on Monday 23 October, and full details, including an agenda, will be sent out nearer the time.

Prestbury Road lights

At the lower end of Prestbury Road, on the stretch between Pittville Circus and Windsor Street, are four unusual and historic lamp posts. They are the surviving remnants of the Cheltenham District Light Railway which operated an electric tramway service in Cheltenham between 1901-1930.

Pittville History Works Group, led by Andrea Creedon, has for some time voiced concerns about



the state of these lamps, and has supported requests to get them refurbished.

Finally we have been informed that work on these lamps is due to begin in August. They will be removed, and some temporary modern columns will be erected whilst the others are refurbished and fitted with modern LED technology. The work is expected to be completed by the end of October.

Sally Thomas

A new bar for Pittville

There aren't many places to get a drink near Pittville, so the opening of a new specialist bar on our doorstep is welcome. 33 The Rum Bar has just opened its doors on Prestbury Road and is already a positive addition to this parade of shops and cafes that is becoming an edge of town destination. The people behind the concept are Paul Scarrott,



who set up Magnum Circus Tattoo Lounge on the opposite side of the road almost ten years ago, and his wife Lena, so they are well-established in the

area and committed to its success.

'A few years ago we found ourselves in a beautiful little rum bar in New York. And we thought how great it would be to have a similar place in Cheltenham. So here it is!' He hopes to attract a wide range of people. When we called in for a drink at around 5.30 (I know!) there was a good cross-section of ages.



Inside it's warm, welcoming, with lots of greenery and cool, stylish décor. Paul and Lena wanted to create a place where people could explore hard-to-find rums and meet friends in a low-key, relaxed atmosphere. There's talk of occasional board game nights and perhaps solo acoustic music in the downstairs area. It's not all rums and cocktails; there are wines, bottled beers, mocktails and soft drinks too.

There's seating for 60-70 people. Happy hour is 5-7pm with two cocktails for £15. So if you're a cocktail enthusiast, or a rum lover, or you just want to support a new enterprise in our area, why not call in for a drink. The Rum Bar is open from Wednesday to Friday 4-11pm and on Saturday and Sunday from 2pm. *Andy Hopkins*

Editor

Andy Hopkins

Photos

Andy Hopkins

Philippa Howells

Henry Williams

Tom Clarke

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



