



Trustees' Annual Report for the period 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023

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	Chairman
Alexandra Marshall	Secretary
Sarah de Buriatte	Treasurer
Chris Archibald	Volunteer Manager
Andy Hopkins	Newsletter Editor, Facebook Editor
Janina Kay	Membership Secretary
Philippa Howell	Fundraising, Events
Henry Williams	Fundraising, Events
Joc Potter	Minutes Secretary (but not a trustee)
Judie Hodsdon	Website Editor (but not a trustee)
Caroline Macklin	Social Media (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 objectives 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:

- Organising 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, in quarterly newsletters, emails and on noticeboards and through occasional public 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
- Raising funds for the charity's activities from members' subscriptions and donations, fundraising events, and (for major projects) from fundraising campaigns and grant applications.

Membership

At the start of the year 2022-2023 the membership numbers had risen to 375, and we have now introduced a new process on the website as a point to join and renew memberships. This

is in addition to the traditional methods of standing orders or cheques. We hope to encourage people who use the park, but do not necessarily live in the Pittville area, to become members.

The monthly **drop-ins** remain well attended, and, after researching other venues, we have decided to continue holding these in the Pittville Pump Room Heritage café. Our volunteers ensure there are tables booked for each event.

The **newsletter** is an important part of our recruitment process, and continues to be produced four times a year. Three are emailed to all members, and the hard copy September edition, which is more widely circulated, is a very effective recruitment tool, and consideration is being given to widening the distribution area.

Volunteers

Volunteers are the backbone of Friends of Pittville. The **Green Space Volunteers** have had another good year. The **newsletter delivery teams** are key to the increased distribution plans mentioned above. The **events teams** raised significant funds during the year, and the **Pittville History Works researchers** have continued with their award-winning website.

Major achievements this year

- The **Green Space Volunteers** (GSVs) have carried out the usual maintenance, and made progress on the projects to improve the park. Bed 38 is progressing well, although the box bushes succumbed to box moth. Further planting is planned to add more colour to the bed. Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) lifted a number of large rocks out from the upper lake, and replaced them in the east end of the rockery. The GSVs carried out Phase 1 of the planting, mainly on the north side, and this will be continued in 2024. They continued to weed and maintain the west end of the rockery. The average number of volunteers at each working party was slightly down on last year, as post Covid, people have other commitments. We have lost some volunteers but gained others, and we are always looking to welcome new GSVs. This year our teams were occasionally joined by volunteers from several local firms, including Holiday Architects, Spirax-Sarco and P3.

Wildflowers came up this summer, from the seeds collected from Leckhampton Hill which were scattered on the ground east of Tommy Taylors Lane last autumn. The ground on the west side of the lane has been prepared for seeding in October, and the seed will be scattered by volunteers.

- **Green Flag Award and Green Heritage Site Accreditation** was retained this year. We continue to work closely with the CBC Green Space Team.
- The **reinstatement of the Pittville Pump Room front steps**, part of the **Park Master Plan**, started this September, and is due for completion by early November. The set of steps between the two remaining plinths is the only historic structure on the original 1826 plan that was demolished. The initial stages of planning, contractor selection, fundraising, etc. were complex and complicated by Covid, but we got there. The total budget is £54,390 of which **Enovert Community Trust Fund** has awarded us a grant of £40,000. The CBC Jubilee Fund awarded us £3000, and the remainder will come from Friends of Pittville reserves. Our sincerest thanks go to Enovert who have provided the majority of the funding. We have chosen to remember the Coronation of King Charles III on the plaque in the front apron. The opening ceremony will be held later in the year on a date yet to be determined, and we hope it will be attended by Edward Gillespie, the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire.

- We carried out a **technology and communications review**. After putting together an audit of the charity's digital resources and procedures, we searched locally for a company to help us streamline how we manage our electronic/online administrative activities. We invited them to quote for helping us to improve the coordination of our membership and financial record-keeping, as well how we can most efficiently maintain and update our communication channels – like our website, emails and social media. We selected a Southam-based company, **Blueline Media**, to work with us and support us as we plan and deliver a communication strategy for: achieving our aims; keeping our membership informed, involved and growing; promoting our successes; organising and advertising our fundraising and educational events, and consulting on future ideas – all this in an efficient, cost-effective and future-proof manner. We look forward to reporting next year on a year of progress.
- The **wildlife and wildflower habitat boards** have been erected on the north side of the lower lake. A 3D barcode was included to allow visitors to download a copy of the information from the boards. A further grant was obtained from the Gloucestershire County Council Build Back Better Fund to design and erect a third board to cover the native tree habitat, which will include a tree walk in the west side of the park designed with the help of the CBC trees officer.
- We applied to CBC for a grant to replant the six raised brick beds between the main children's play area and the aviaries with **sensory beds**. The plan is to create sensory beds with information about the senses and the plants used, and to make them attractive and interesting for children. We intend to work with the local scout group, and the organisation Aim Up and possibly to commission a local artist. FoP received part of the grant applied for and the rest will come from FoP funds to carry out phase1 of the project.
- We had a good year for **fundraising** to support the Park Master Plan and our other projects and improvements in the park. In November 2022, £469 was raised when a member, **Oggy Boytchev**, gave a talk in the Pittville School theatre on his experiences filming on the front line in war zones. The February 2023 **Quiz Night**, which is always a fun way to raise funds, made £528 from ticket sales and raffle tickets. In March, **race week parking** in Albermarle Gate car park is our major annual fundraising event of the year, and raised £4,792. We are very grateful to the many volunteers who help for all four days of the racing festival on a rota from early in the morning until after the last race. They take payments, optimise the parking space available, and patrol the area for security. The 2023 income was down on previous years due to wet weather limiting the available space on the grass and a new traffic management system on Evesham Road. The future use of the car park as a fundraising opportunity is in doubt, as currently it is planned by CBC to use it for contractors' equipment whilst the new cycleway is installed.
- The FoP stand at the **Cheltenham Horticultural Society Show** in April attracted considerable interest and potential members, thanks to the high-tech singing plants of James Marks and a well-stocked Lucky Dip box. The **Plant Sale** brought forward this year to the end of April raised £566; our thanks go to the three local nurseries, the Cheltenham Horticultural Society and the FoP volunteers and members who supported our stand and manned the raffle. We are also grateful to the Scouts for once again letting us use their hut and tables.
- In July, two members, Julian and Oggy, hosted a **Summer Cheese and Wine Party** in their garden. Steve Blake gave a talk on the history of the area, and a local poet and musician Stephen Selby gave a recital of his own poetry. Julian and Oggy donated the wine and an impressive £928 was raised.

- The **duck feeder** is a good source of funds. We have assumed sole responsibility for it as our partner organisation has left the area. The mechanism reached the end of its life and had to be replaced. Our thanks go to the volunteers who make up the support teams as their endeavours led to the *quacking* good profit of £676.40.
- The **Cheltenham Lottery** provides us with a contribution whenever a member buys a ticket (so please continue to do so) and increasing the participation is an opportunity we should not miss. The take this year was £625.

Pittville History Works

The group lost its Chairman and Secretary in January, when they decided to leave Cheltenham. The remaining members have determined that the data collection should be retained, and that the award-winning website (pittvillehistory.org.uk) should continue to be supported. They will continue to respond to queries while they decide on a way forward.

New and retiring trustees

The **2022 AGM** was held on 25 October 2022 in St Paul’s Church by kind permission of Roger Widdecombe and his team. Chris Archibald was voted in as a trustee, and Judie Hodsdon and Rob Hyatt Williams stepped down.

Three prospective trustees have been working with the committee during 2023.

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

Signed on behalf of the charity’s trustees:

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(Signed on the Original)

Name	Sarah Thomas	Alexandra Marshall
Position	Chairman	Secretary
Date	23 October 2023	23 October 2023