

## **Friends of Pittville Trustee Meeting 9 July 2024 at 5.00pm at the Scout Hut, Central Cross Drive**

### **Present:**

**Trustees** David Kay (DK), Chris Archibald (CA), Sarah de Buriatte (SdeB), John Holloway (JH), Andy Hopkins (AH), Janina Kay (JK), Sally Thomas (ST), Henry Williams (HW)

**Consultant** Louise Allerton (LA, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of meeting)

**Minutes** Jocelyn Potter

### **1 Welcome and apologies**

DK welcomed everyone. Apologies were received from Philippa Howell (PH) and Sacha (SK). Two potential trustees were unable to attend, but will attend a future meeting

### **2 Minutes of the last trustee meeting, 9 April 2024**

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

### **3 Finance and budget update**

Papers were circulated before the meeting, and SdeB reported on the accounts. There have been issues of fraud via Stripe, but loopholes have now been closed, preventing transactions from the U.S. and elsewhere. FoP lost £82.20 as a result of the criminal activity. DK has reported the crime and has a crime reference number.

SdeB highlighted successful fundraising events. Although the loss of car park revenue leaves a hole, finances are good in relation to the budget set without that income.

### **4 Regular activities**

#### **4.1 GSV update**

CA reported. In the first six months of 2024, 480 volunteer hours were achieved, by an average of 20 volunteers each time, slightly up on last year. At the last work party, corporate volunteers from GCHQ and Holiday Architects joined the team.

It was agreed that in the next two or three months more cards can be printed for volunteers to hand out to interested members of the public (about £50 for four boxes), and more vests can be ordered (about £150).

CA announced that on July 17<sup>th</sup> (and confidential until then) it will be announced that the park has retained its Green Flag and Green Heritage Site awards, and that the inspector was very complimentary, especially about the new steps. It is disappointing, though, that CBC (unlike other towns) has no heritage strategy – a vision is needed demonstrating the four principles of green heritage – and that the Green Space team is more interested in biodiversity than heritage. The agreed work in the maintenance plan has also not been carried out by the Green Space team; nor have some aspects of the masterplan. It seems likely that the park isn't being allocated its share of available funding. CA will meet CBC officers to discuss these issues. DK reported that the Heritage Café is probably coming down in November, with no news of what – if anything – will replace it.

**Action: CA**

#### **4.2 Plant sale results**

These were good.

#### **4.3 CHS Show (18 August)**

DK suggested a stall. JH, JK and possibly DK and CA volunteered to man it, but more volunteers are needed for a stall to be viable. DK agreed with HW's suggestion that the roll-up boards and other promotional material need updating and should be reviewed.

#### **4.4 Summer party (9 September)**

Afternoon tea will be held from 3.00 – 5.00 pm in DK's garden; the cost will be £20 per person. JH suggested inviting a young cellist and violinist to play, and will ask them what they would charge.

**Action: JH, DK**

#### **4.5 Drop-ins**

A new venue will be needed if the Heritage Café is pulled down. Suggestions were Airs and Graces (JH), Clarence Court Hotel or no.38 (JK), the Feathered Fish (HW), the tea house next door to that pub (LA), Acai Bowls (AH).

### **5 Projects**

#### **5.1 Tree board/Sensory beds**

CA reported that the order for the tree board (the last of the biodiversity boards) has gone to the manufacturer, with a deadline for production of the end of August.

Since there has been no response from artists to a call for suggestions for art around the sensory beds, CA and AH will make a short video making clear what the vision is, and send that around with a request for initial ideas. If that doesn't bear fruit, individual artists will be approached. CA reported that black matting is currently suppressing weeds; over winter, the planting will be planned and the beds prepared; planting may be through matting for easy maintenance.

**Action: CA/AH**

#### **5.2 Volunteers Hut**

CA reported that the grant of £2,000 is in the bank and the shed (£1,900) has been ordered. Wills Bros have offered to lay the concrete base if FoP pays for the concrete at cost (£240). Since CBC will be saving money on the base, CA will ask if they will install the electrics. Shed erection day will be 27 September.

**Action: CA**

#### **5.3 Bicentenary event**

DK reported on a meeting with Laurie Bell, who told him that the only event planned by The Cheltenham Trust for the bicentenary is a Bridgerton-style ball. JK remarked that the D-day beacon, another Cheltenham Trust venture, was pitiful. DK suggested that FoP commemorate the anniversary with a heritage interpretation board, to be placed beside the steps. CA suggested asking Peter Adams at Springboard Graphics for a price for a board containing information from the existing leaflet; Fiona Clarke probably has the photos from the leaflet. A meeting is needed with CBC's green space team to discuss this.

ST reminded the committee that 2026 will be FoP's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### **6 Website and newsletter**

#### **6.1 Website development and issues**

LA has created a new format for the newsletter for the website. AH's concern was that in this format the newsletter can't be sent out to members as an attachment or archived. It was agreed that a pdf in the normal format is therefore also needed, so AH will need to produce the content in two formats, which he is uneasy about – but he praised the new initiative, since in the past little has been added to the website to keep it interesting. AH asked that any contributions going onto the website separately from the newsletter (but which could then be included in the newsletter in part or in full) be passed to him for editing to ensure consistency of house style.

JK reminded the meeting that the membership form (currently being amended) must go out with the (printed) September newsletter, and at other times 15 printed copies of the newsletter will be needed, most for members without email addresses. CA asked what will go on the noticeboard – perhaps just three or four articles from the newsletter, or extracts. JH said that Susan Pickles has offered to compile a display for the noticeboard – to the style of the newsletter, but with QR codes so that articles can be read in full. AH suggested that she should work on that with him as editor.

JH said that there is now a database behind the website, thanks to Ben Jeffery, and that he is delighted that LA is helping JH with the format and content of the website. LA presented her proposed new design for the website, scrolling down for easier access to content, with requests

to donate and other actions. LA can use Wordpress content editor to build the site page by page without publishing it, and distribute it for comments without affecting the current site. When the structure is approved, content will be imported and the dummy sent round again. JH will send the link. The aim will be to launch the website at or before the AGM. There was unanimous approval of LA's work (and applause).

CA will send JH artwork of the new information boards to add to the site. HW suggested looking at the Visit Bath website, particularly the inclusion of transport and access options. Following JK's observation that a disabled member's question below a news item hadn't been answered, it was agreed that the comments function should be turned off. LA will do that; JK will write to the woman whose question was unfortunately overlooked.

**Action: JH, LA, AH, CA, JK**

## **6.2 September newsletter format and distribution**

The September newsletter will be produced in two formats – for the website, and as a pdf for printing and for the archive. AH asked that the last date for submitting contributions be 7 August. Suggestions for content were Qigong in the park (JH), but the organiser was actually interviewed for a previous newsletter; an update on Airs and Graces (ST), the reinstatement of the Prestbury Road lights (which AH will write). JK emphasised the importance of a definite date for production of the newsletter so that volunteer distributors know when that will be; deferring the distribution date (as happened last year) creates havoc with the schedule.

**Action: AH, JK and all other trustees**

## **7 Membership and fundraising**

DK had circulated a document showing how low membership fees are in relation to those of other bodies in Cheltenham and proposing increases more or less in line with inflation since the last increase in 2016. The risks were discussed; JK said that it is difficult to persuade people to change standing orders (and a dozen or so people are still paying trivial sums, although anyone not paying the full subscription doesn't receive email communications or newsletters) and that some people may just cancel them. AH suggested that the increase needs to be explained, which DK will do in his next message from the Chair. ST raised the issue of what members are offered. They will still receive three newsletters a year that are sent exclusively to them, and LA suggested a code for certain members-only areas of the website, which (DK) could include a research section that includes the Pittville History Works (PHW) archive. The fee increase was agreed, with one objection from HW.

**Action: DK, SdeB, JK**

## **8 HODS, September 2024**

The information to be included in the brochure for the two FoP walks was circulated. AH will attend the launch on 11 July at the Bowls Club, where a final brochure will be available.

**Action: AH**

## **9 2024 Excomm meeting dates**

The next meeting will be on 8 October, and the AGM possibly on 18 October.

## **10 2025 Excomm meeting dates**

DK will email suggested dates.

**Action: DK**

## **11 AOB**

### **11.1 PHW**

JH reported that Ben Jeffery is talking to the American hosts about migrating the site and keeping it alive.

The meeting closed at 7.00pm.