



**Minutes of the Friends of Pittville Annual General Meeting held on Monday 11 November  
2024 at 6.30pm at St Paul's Church, Cheltenham**

Abbreviations used: FoP = Friends of Pittville; CBC = Cheltenham Borough Council; GSV = Green Space Volunteers

**Trustees present:**

Hon Chairman David Kay (DK)  
Hon Treasurer Sarah de Buriatte (SdeB)  
Hon Secretary Sacha K (SK)  
Vice-chairman John Holloway (JH)  
Membership Secretary Janina Kay (JK)  
Chris Archibald (CA)  
Andy Hopkins (AH)  
Philippa Howell (PH)  
Sally Thomas (ST)

**Members present:**

There were 33 members present in addition to trustees.

**Minutes:**

Joc Potter

**1 Welcome**

DK welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Pittville.

**2 Apologies**

Trustee: Henry Williams

Members: Sandy Marshall, Pascal and Joelle Bernaville, Gerald Seal

**3 Financial report**

SdeB presented an overview of FoP's financial activities for the year ending 30 September 2024. Electronic copies of the accounts were circulated before the meeting, and are also available on the FoP website.

*Income* SdeB reported that income was up from £11,370 to £13,390 (excluding the Enover grant); £3,900 of this was the Building Back Together and the Jockey Club grants. Subscriptions were up on the same point in 2023 from £2,700 to £2,873; income received in advance (so accounted for in 2023-2024 but relating to the new 2024-2025 year) was double that of the same point the previous year. Fundraising surpassed the budgeted target with the quiz, the plant sale, the wine and cheese and summer parties raising a total of £3,110. Project income comprised the £40,000 grant received from Enover for the steps project.

*Expenditure* By far the largest expenditure was the payment for the steps project, totalling £52,523, some of which (after grants) came from FoP's fundraising reserves. Other notable expenditure included £600 for the ongoing development of the website and an increase in

printing costs for the annual renewal forms and newsletter to £890 from £610. The shed project was almost complete with a total cost of £1,123 funded by the Jockey Club grant of £2,000.

*Overall* On 30 September both accounts (for day-to-day running and for projects) showed healthy balances, with available cash amounting to £44,639.83. The total income for the year was £53,392. The total expenditure for the year was £58,327. (Excluding the steps project, income was £13,392 and expenditure £5,804.)

The accounts were produced by SdeB and inspected by Joe Marr, an independent examiner, who – with DK and SdeB – signed off the accounts as being consistent with FoP's records and giving a full and fair view of the charity's financial activities. The accounts had previously been approved by the trustees. SdeB thanked Joe Marr for his many years of checking FoP's accounts, as he retired from the role.

#### **4 Annual report**

In his report - which was circulated in advance of the meeting and is also available on the website - DK detailed FoP's main activities (all supported by volunteers, who he thanked for their many and varied efforts) before summarising the highlights of the year.

*Membership* This has increased to about 400 members, who can join or renew their memberships via the website as well as by traditional methods. Since the hard copy September edition of the newsletter is an important part of the recruitment process, the distribution area may be widened to reach park users who live further afield. Other editions are emailed to members only.

*Green Space Volunteers* An average of 20 volunteers have joined each working party to maintain and improve the park – including work on the east and west rockeries, Bed 38 and the garden by the Pittville Lawn gates, and occasionally teams of volunteers from local firms have helped with bigger tasks.

*Green Flag Award and Green Heritage Site Accreditation* These were retained this year, the judge for the Green Heritage Site Accreditation noting that the project for the reinstatement of the Pump Room steps was 'exemplary'. FoP continues to work closely with the CBC Green Space team.

*Pittville Pump Room front steps* The re-instatement of the steps between the remaining plinths (the only historic structure on the original 1826 plan that had been demolished) was completed in November 2023 and was opened by Edward Gillespie, the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire. A plaque commemorates the coronation of King Charles III. Enover Community Trust Fund generously contributed a grant of £40,000 towards the total budget of £54,390.

*Habitat boards* The final board, 'Native trees', was erected on the west side of the park near the boathouse. The three boards featured in the Heritage Open Day Walk and Talk, 'A people's park and wildlife corridor', given by two GSV's in September.

*Sensory garden* Work is continuing to convert the six brick planters near the aviaries into a sensory garden; the plan is to plant out the beds next spring. Local artists have been invited to submit ideas for adding sculptural elements.

*Volunteers hut* A grant from the Jockey Club and support from CBC Green Space team, Will Bros and Easy Mix Ltd, enabled the construction of a hut on the east side of the park, to store the GSV's tools.

*Technology and communications review* Blueline Media (Southam) are working with FoP to improve the coordination of the membership and financial record keeping, as well as ways of maintaining and updating communication channels – the website, emails and social media – in an efficient, cost-effective and future-proof manner.

*Fund-raising events* A major source of funding, the usual March Race Week parking in Albermarle Gate car park, was not available to FoP this year, but FoP continues to lobby CBC for reinstatement of this important source of fundraising. The February Quiz Night raised £604 from ticket sales and raffle tickets. The FoP stand at the Cheltenham Horticultural

Society Spring Show in April attracted considerable interest and potential members, and raised £83 from the Lucky Dip box. The Plant Sale in May raised £794.10, with the support of three local nurseries, Cheltenham Horticultural Society, FoP volunteers, the Scouts (use of their hut) and St Paul's Church (loan of tables). A Summer Cheese and Wine Party was hosted by two members, Julian and Oggy, with a talk by Steve Blake and live music, raising £851. A Garden Party in September, hosted by the Chairman and his wife, with the support of Morrisons and Once Upon a Tea Room, raised £440. The duck feeder raised £468.60. Finally, the take from the Cheltenham Lottery was £581.50; please continue to buy tickets! *Pittville History Works* Despite the loss of the group's Chairman and Secretary, the data collection will be retained, and the award-winning website ([pittvillehistory.org.uk](http://pittvillehistory.org.uk)) supported.

No questions were received before the meeting, so the annual report – which had already been accepted by trustees – was accepted by the AGM (proposer JH, seconder SK).

## **5 Election of trustees**

Louise Allerton was elected as a trustee (proposed by JH; seconded by SK) and welcomed to the committee. Her career is in marketing and communications, and she has already been helping FoP with the development of the website and the online version of the newsletter, in preparation for a relaunch.

The following trustees are retiring, and were thanked profusely by DK for their service in their different roles: PH, ST and HW.

DK asked members interested in joining the committee (where there are now four vacancies) to email him.

## **6 A.O.B.**

There were no questions, but Andrew Auster asked members to support the free lunchtime Young Musicians Concerts in the Pump Room.

The meeting closed at 7.05pm.

The meeting was preceded by a short talk, including a stimulating and challenging quiz, by Chris Chavasse, CBC's Senior Tree Officer, who is responsible for maintaining existing trees and planting new ones. He thanked the GSVs for all their work in Pittville Park and distributed tree walk leaflets. In addition to quiz questions ranging from the amount of time it takes to cut the grass on each side of the park to naming Pittville's champion tree, the interesting observations he made – some in response to questions – included: Cheltenham Tree Group's mission to grow and sell trees (to the public, at £8 a tree) in aid of tree-related charities; the attempt to resurrect, as a stump that might regrow, the large tree that has fallen in Pittville Crescent; the 14% canopy cover in Cheltenham, which is below the UK urban average, since some areas of town have far more cover than others.