



## Trustees' Annual Report for the period 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2024

Charity Name: **Friends of Pittville**

Registered Charity Number: 1146790

Charity's principal address: 15 Pittville Crescent Lane, Cheltenham GL52 2RA

### Names of Trustees:

David Kay  
Sacha K  
Sarah de Buriatte  
John Holloway

Chairman  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
Vice-Chairman

Chris Archibald  
Andy Hopkins  
Janina Kay  
Sarah (Sally) Thomas  
Philippa Howell  
Henry Williams

Green Space Volunteer Coordinator  
Newsletter Editor, Facebook Editor  
Membership Secretary  
Past Chairman  
Fundraising, Events  
Fundraising, Events

Joc Potter - Minutes Secretary (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](http://www.friendsofpittville.org.uk)

In summary, the aims 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:

- 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, quarterly newsletters, emails and noticeboards and through occasional public events 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.
- Funding for the charity's activities come from members' subscriptions and donations, fundraising events, and, for major projects, from fundraising campaigns and grant applications.

**Membership** - at the start of the year 2024-2025 the membership numbers have risen to approx. 400, 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 more 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 we have continued holding these in the Pittville Pump Room Heritage café. At the time of writing the café has advised us it will be closing at the end of October 2024. We are researching alternative venue options. However, No immediate decision has been possible. Our volunteers are exploring possibilities to ensure they can continue. Changes, including even the day of the week, may need to be made. We will keep the membership informed via our newsletter, website and MailChimp messaging.

The **Newsletter** is an important part of our recruitment process and continues to be produced 4 times a year. Three are e-mailed 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 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** are:

- **Green Space Volunteers** have carried out the maintenance and made progress on projects to improve the park. The Green Flag and GHSA judges commented this year that they liked to see horticultural features in the park which in Pittville Park are looked after by the GSV's. Bed 38 is maturing well with a small amount of extra planting this year. Preparation of the east end of the rockery was completed and the GSV's planted it out with plants mainly supplied by CBC but with some contributed by volunteers. Maintenance of the west end of the rockery is continuing. Our GSV's, who regularly look after the gates at the end of Pittville Lawn, keep the garden and photinia hedge looking very attractive. The average number of volunteers at each working party has stayed the same as last year with an average of 20. We have had a small number of volunteers leave over the year for various reasons but have had good interest from people wanting to join some of whom are now regulars. However, we are always looking to welcome new volunteers. The number of volunteers who go down to the Central Cross cafe for a coffee and a chat after a working party has grown. We have again occasionally been joined by teams of volunteers from local firms which helps with the bigger clearing jobs.
- **Wildflowers** - The land west of Tommy Taylors Lane was seeded last year but the results have been mixed due some problems with preparation. Both sides of TTL have been cut this autumn but with sections of the wildflowers on the east side being left for birds and insects over the winter but will be cut in the spring.
- **Green Flag Award and Green Heritage Site Accreditation** - This was 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'. We continue to work closely with the CBC Green Space Team.

- **Pittville Pump Room front steps** - The re-instatement of the steps part of the Park Master Plan, was completed in early November 2023 and was opened by Edward Gillespie the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire on 20th November 2023, re-establishing the set of steps between the two remaining plinths, which was the only historic structure on the original 1826 plan that had been demolished. The initial stages of planning, contractor selection, fund raising etc, were complex and complicated by Covid, but through hard work and perseverance we got there. The total budget was £54,390 of which ENOVERT Community Trust Fund awarded us a grant of £40,000. The Cheltenham Borough Council Jubilee Fund awarded us £3000, and the remainder came from Friends of Pittville reserves. Our sincerest thanks go to ENOVERT who provided the majority of the funding. We chose to use the opening of the steps as a means to mark the Coronation of King Charles III via a plaque that is incorporated into the front apron of the steps.
- **Habitat boards** - The third and final board in the series of habitat boards, 'Native trees' was completed and erected in the west side of the park near the boathouse. The boards featured in the Heritage Open Day Walk and Talk 'A people's park and wildlife corridor' given by two GSV's this September.
- **Sensory garden** - Work is continuing to convert the six brick planters near the aviaries into a sensory garden. During the year the GSV's have removed the old shrubs and weeds and covered the beds with black matting to hopefully kill the perennial weeds without pesticides. Local artists have been invited to submit ideas for making the beds interesting with sculptural elements and FOP have received expressions of interest. Work continues on the horticultural elements and signage together with the possibility of replacing the seating. The plan is to plant out the beds next spring and to seek further grants and to continue liaising with local interested groups.
- **Volunteer's hut** - During the year FOP applied for a Jockey Club grant from the racecourse and received a grant of £2000 to construct a volunteer's hut, to store the GSV's tools, in the east side of the park. The hut has now been erected and about to be fitted out with racking for the tools. Thanks are due to CBC Green Space Team who got their electrician to put in power and lighting, Wills Bros (contractor for the cycleway) who put the shuttering up and supervised the pouring of the concrete for the base (with help from GSV's) and Easy Mix Ltd who gave FOP a good deal on the concrete. This should make things easier and more efficient for the GSV's and for CBC.
- **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 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 or educational events; and consulting on future ideas - all this in an efficient, cost-effective and future-proof manner. Several changes have been made and despite some unexpected snags that have been quickly eradicated, we are almost ready to go live. We look forward to reporting next year on a year of progress.

- We had a challenging year for Fundraising to support the Park Master Plan and our other projects and improvements in the Park. The February 2024 Quiz Night, which is always a fun way to raise funds, made £604 from ticket sales and raffle tickets. Unfortunately, the usual March Race-Week parking in Albermarle Gate car park, was not available to us this year due to it being loaned by CBC for use as the contractors equipment/site compound whilst the new cycleway is constructed. This has impacted us significantly as this was the major source of our annual fund-raising, and talks are ongoing as to whether this will be available to us in the future. There can be no guarantee that this will be the case, but we continue to lobby to seek re-instatement.
- The FoP stand at the **Cheltenham Horticultural Society - Spring Show** in April attracted considerable interest and potential members, thanks to the well-stocked Lucky Dip box which also raised £83, whilst the Plant Sale in May raised £794.10, our thanks go to the 3 local nurseries, the Cheltenham Horticultural Society and the FoP volunteers and members who supported our stand and manned the bottle and plant stalls. We are also grateful to the Scouts for once again letting us use their hut and St Paul's Church for the loan of tables.
- In June, two members, Julian & Oggy, hosted a **Summer Cheese and Wine Party**. Steve Blake gave a talk on the history of John Forbes, the architect of the Pittville Pump Room, and two local musicians played live music. Julian and Oggy donated the wine, and the event raised a much needed £851. September saw the return of a **Garden Party** hosted by the Chairman David and Caroline Kay at their house. The weather was kind to us and £440 was raised. With thanks to the hosts for the donation of the wine and the baking of cakes, Morrisons who provided some of the ingredients and provisions for the event, and 'Once upon a Tea Room' in Winchcombe Street who made and donated the scones. Thanks also to other FoP members who helped the hosts in staging this event at a challenging personal time. You don't seek public recognition, but you know who you are, and we are grateful.
- **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 last year. Our thanks go to the volunteers who make up the support teams as their endeavors led to a profit of £468.60
- **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 £581.50.
- **The Pittville History Group** lost its Chairman and Secretary in January 2023, when they decided to leave Cheltenham. The remaining members have determined that the data collection should be retained, and that the award-winning website ([www.http://pittvillehistory.org.uk](http://pittvillehistory.org.uk)) should continue to be supported. They would continue to respond to queries while they decided on a way forward.

The **2023 AGM** was held on 23 October 2023 in St Pauls Church by kind permission of Roger Widdecombe and his team. Sandy Marshall stepped down as a Trustee and Secretary. Sally Thomas stepped down as Chairman but remained as a Trustee. John Holloway, Sacha K and David Kay were all voted-in as Trustees. Sacha K assumed the role of Secretary, whilst David Kay has agreed to accept the role of Chairman in order that Friends of Pittville can maintain its obligations under the rules of the Charity Commission.

Four prospective trustees have been working with the committee during 2024.

The Trustees declare that they approve the trustees report above

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

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(Signed on the Original)

Name	David Kay	Sacha K
Position	Chairman	Secretary
Date	11 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	11 <sup>th</sup> November 2024