



**Minutes of the Friends of Pittville Annual General Meeting held on Monday 27 October
2025 at 6.30pm at St Paul's Church, St Paul's Road, 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)
Louise Allerton (LA)

Members present:

There were 38 members present in addition to the trustees, two guests and the speaker.

Minutes:

Joc Potter

1 Welcome

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

2 Apologies

Jane Martin

3 Financial report

SdeB reported that the balance sheet and income and expenditure report had been circulated ahead of the meeting and was available to view and download on the FoP website. FoP has two bank accounts: one for the day to day running of the charity and a savings account that finances special projects.

Expenditure: The final payment of £1,794 for the Steps project was made at the start of the financial year. Two new projects were the building of a new shed and the creation of a sensory garden, at a total cost of £8,797 for both projects. The cost was offset by a council grant of £1,000 and a member donation of £250. FoP spent £3,079 on general running costs. In almost all areas spending was down on the previous year, especially costs associated with newsletter printing and postage. Other expenditure included insurance, website hosting and the running costs of fundraising events.

Income: Special project income only came from the return of race week car parking, which raised £3,375. As regards general income, subscriptions raised £3,948, and the additional contribution made through the Gift Aid Scheme added £975. Social and community fundraising events included the annual quiz and plant sale and the summer party, which

together raised £2,356. The Cheltenham Lottery raised £621, and the duck food machine contributed £420.

Income against expenditure gave a small deficit of £432.

Balance Sheet: This shows resources available to the FoP on 30 September 2025. At the end of the financial year FoP had £43,570 available across the two accounts. The community account held £30,316 and the project account £13,860. £86.40 was available as a float for fundraising events. £691 of membership fees was received in advance of the new year, so actually relates to the current financial year.

Summary: The accounts remain in a strong position. FoP will continue to look at fundraising opportunities to allow new projects as well as the core work of the charity.

The accounts were produced by SdeB as Treasurer and then reviewed by an independent external auditor to ensure that the information is correct, reasonable and reflects the activities of the charity. This review was undertaken by Mal Gray, whose time and support are much appreciated.

The accounts were signed by SdeB and the Chairman and countersigned by Mal Gray.

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 aims and main activities (all supported by volunteers) before summarising the highlights of the year.

Membership: Membership renewal numbers are currently standing at 260, with more expected over the next month or so, probably taking membership back over 300. The system introduced on the website to join and to renew memberships will remain under review to see if improvements can be made. The traditional methods of standing orders or cheques will remain for those members who prefer to renew or join in this way. FoP hopes to encourage more people who use the park, but do not necessarily live in the Pittville area, to become members.

Monthly drop-ins: These, run for FoP by Liz and Andrew Auster, relocated to the School House Café in St Paul's following the closure of the Pittville Pump Room Heritage Café. They were reasonably well attended, although the distance from Pittville had an effect.

Newsletter: This continued to be produced four times a year – emailed three times, and once distributed as hard copy. The hard copy September edition is more widely circulated and is an effective recruitment tool.

Volunteers: These are the backbone of FoP and include the newsletter delivery teams, the events teams and the GSVs. The GSVs – averaging twenty people per working party – carried out ongoing maintenance and made great progress on projects to improve the park. The Green Flag and GHSA judges have commented that they like to see horticultural features in the park, and these are looked after by the GSV's. Bed 38 is maturing well, with a small amount of extra planting this year. Further works to the east end of the rockery were completed, together with the planting of plants mainly supplied by CBC but also by volunteers. Maintenance of the west end of the rockery continues. The garden and photinia hedge at the end of Pittville Lawn look very attractive. New volunteers are always welcome to join the working parties, and last year teams of volunteers from local firms occasionally helped with bigger clearing jobs.

Other major achievements: *The Green Flag Award and Green Heritage Site Accreditation* were retained, with judging by a 'mystery visitor'. FoP will continue to work closely with the CBC Green Space Team to prepare for full judging again this year.

FoP are marking the bicentenary of the laying of the foundation stone of the Pittville Pump Room with *the creation of an interpretation board*, to be sited in front of the Pump Room before the end of 2025.

The six brick planters near the aviary were turned into a *sensory garden*, with bug hotels, opened by the mayor on 30 September. New seating and signage were also installed, and

visitors were able to watch a local artist, Natasha Housego, carve a large sculpture in front of the beds.

FoP completed the erection and fitting out of *a volunteers' hut*, with racking for the tools. The streamlining of FoP's *management of electronic/online administrative activities* continued. Blueline Media supported FoP in developing the delivery of 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 in an efficient, cost-effective and future-proof manner. The monthly email notice to members is now the main regular method of communication with members.

LA worked on *the complete re-building of the website* to update it, integrate the payment system for membership and make it suitable for the future of the organisation.

Fundraising to support the Park Master Plan and our other projects was helped by *the reintroduction of car parking*, manned by volunteers, in the Albermarle Gate car park during the Cheltenham Festival.

The February 2025 *quiz night* raised funds from ticket sales and raffle tickets. FoP volunteers and members, local nurseries, the Cheltenham Horticultural Society and the Scouts (who let FoP use their hut) were responsible for the success of *the plant sale* in May.

In August, money was raised when two members, Julian and Oggy, hosted *a Summer Garden Party*, and donated the wine. There was a talk by Steve Blake, close-up magic and live music.

The duck feeder continued to be a good source of funds, and *The Cheltenham Lottery* provided us with a contribution whenever a member bought a ticket.

The Pittville History Group lost its Chairman and Secretary in January 2023, when they left Cheltenham. The remaining members determined that the data collection should be retained, and that the website (pittvillehistory.org.uk) should continue to be supported. They continue to respond to queries while they decide on a way forward.

No questions were received before the meeting, and the Trustees declared that they approved the report above.

5 Election of trustees

CA and JK retired at the meeting, and were thanked profusely by DK for their service over long periods of time. As well as being trustees, CA was the GSV coordinator and JK was the membership secretary. DK also stood down as Chairman and a trustee, and was thanked for his service by JH. SK stood down as secretary, but will continue to be a trustee.

JH was welcomed as the new Chairman, and three new trustees were elected: Geoffrey Rowe (proposed by JH, seconded by CA); Barbara Leigh, already the GSV coordinator (proposed by Sally Thomas, seconded by CA); Joc Potter, already the minute taker, who becomes a trustee and the new Secretary (proposed by SK, seconded by LA).

Before the meeting ended, Andrew Auster asked members to support the free lunchtime concerts in the Pump Room, on Tuesdays at 1pm.

The meeting closed at 18.54.

The meeting was preceded by an interesting talk from Andrew Booton, Chair of Cheltenham Civic Society (CCS), who outlined the aims of the active, campaigning society. Using slides of past and recent changes to the town, he emphasised the need to hold local councils to account and to offer alternatives during the planning process. With partners (including CBC), CCS runs heritage open days, gives civic awards to fine developments, runs the blue and

green plaques scheme and undertakes other projects on behalf of the town. Andrew Booton urged FoP members to help by:

- volunteering (participating in the local index review, the heritage strategy and the conservation area review);
- observing (especially breaches of planning and heritage rules and decisions);
- advocating on behalf of the town's heritage (with the assistance of CCS, who can advise which bodies to report to).