

Friends of Pittville Trustee Meeting 7 October 2025 at 17.30pm at the Scout Hut, Central Cross Drive

Present:

Trustees John Holloway (JH, acting Chair), Louise Allerton (LA), Chris Archibald (CA), Sarah de Buriatte (SdeB), Andy Hopkins (AH), Janina Kay (JK), Sacha K (SK)

Potential trustees Barbara Leigh (BL), Geoffrey Rowe (GR)

Minutes Joc Potter (JP)

1 Welcome and apologies

JH welcomed everyone, especially GR, who was attending his first meeting. Julian Tooke sent his apologies.

The meeting acknowledged the resignation of David Kay (DK) as Chair. DK expressed in an email that he is conscious that, for personal and work reasons, he has not been able to commit the time required to fulfilling the role. It was agreed that JH should ask DK to step down as a trustee altogether until his work and other circumstances allow him once again to make a full commitment to the committee.

The meeting then asked JH to take on the role of Chair. He accepted. His ambition for the next year is to enable FoP to develop new strategies for the park, membership etc., necessitating an extra meeting before Christmas to start planning.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

These were passed as a true record.

3 Finance and Budget Update

These were circulated by SdeB before the meeting, and will be the basis for the end of year accounts, which the auditor has approved but not yet signed off. Income has broadly matched expenditure, with the sensory garden as the major project. CA will meet SdeB to check invoices in relation to the garden, although this won't affect the accounts. AH pointed out that FoP is holding a lot of money, which will affect grant applications; JH replied that the committee will plan strategically and look for suitable projects on which to spend the money. The accounts were unanimously approved. *[Note: One heading, but no figures, will be changed as a result of CA and SdeB's conversation.]*

Action: SdeB, CA

4 Regular activities

4.1 GSV update BL reported that an average of 18 volunteers have attended each recent working party, with three new ones at the last session and another possible. BL agreed that it looks fantastic, and said that having an artist in residence added value to the project. Work has started at the Albert Road gate, and Ubico are due to use a digger to create a bed there. CA pointed out that the metal fencing there is a disgrace, and that he has sent a photograph to Steve Mason (CBC), of the bridge, which needs serious maintenance near the centre of the arch. He has asked Steve to send the picture on to the relevant person in property at CBC; the other bridge also needs checking. He emphasised that FoP needs to spot problems and continually nudge CBC so that issues aren't forgotten.

4.2 Drop-ins JH reported that the location of the current venue, at St Paul's Church, isn't ideal, but that there is no better one in the area. Trustees are encouraged to go to the gatherings

and judge for themselves.

5 Projects

5.1 Sensory garden JH congratulated everyone involved on the creation of the sensory garden. Attendance by members of the public was good. *[After the meeting, CA suggested that there are now opportunities for local groups (beavers, Dunalley school, Aim Up) to contribute plants they may have grown (eg. nasturtiums, lettuce etc) and artwork (at the backs of the bug hotels). He also reported that the green frog waste bin is due at the depot this Friday.]*

5.2 Bicentenary board CA reported that this should be ready by mid-November, and that volunteers can dig holes and install it. It was decided that there should be no unveiling – only media coverage. AH suggested that a communications sub-committee should produce press releases for occasions like this. SK will share a link to BBC coverage of the sensory garden.

5.3 Future projects These will be discussed at the November meeting. JH asked that all ideas be costed – or at least (since CA pointed out that this can be difficult with staged projects and ones requiring negotiation with CBC) that suggestions should include approximate costings and mention of possible problems. SK will circulate – for discussion at the November meeting – a standard template that she uses, that requires a document at each stage of a project. JH assured BL that decisions could be made electronically between meetings.

Action: SK

6 Website developments and issues

LA will update the section on the sensory garden and will then update and extend information on the website about past projects. JH suggested that at this stage leaflets should only be distributed to park run participants, who may well not be local. A working party is needed to decide their use in a planned marketing campaign, using JK's detailed maps of the area and the data that she will supply to LA. LA pointed out that the leaflets will date slightly, but JH thought that wouldn't matter too much.

Action: LA, JK

7 Newsletter

AH commented that using a full page for the membership form in the printed September newsletter meant that the content was necessarily and unfortunately reduced. A half-page form (vertical) is needed for next September. He asked for all trustees to provide content for future newsletters. LA will write a piece on Mark, who looks after the aviaries. Other suggestions were how to build your own bug hotel, information about the bicentenary board, and (in future) reports from working parties. The deadline for contributions is 12 December, for December publication. AH will provide deadlines for the 2026 newsletters (March, June, September, December).

Action: AH, LA and all trustees

8 Membership and fund-raising

JK reported that she would have up-to-date numbers by the AGM, but payments continue to come in until the end of November. Numbers have been falling – so revenue may have – and more newsletters are generating fewer new members, perhaps because of price resistance and residual resistance (from people who have been receiving newsletters for many years without joining). She restated the importance of looking outside Pittville to other park users. On the positive side, very few people are now not paying the new amount. JK will prepare a long memo prior to leaving the committee, listing issues that need to be addressed. To replace her, JH and SdeB are meeting someone who is keen to help with membership (but lives in Brockworth), and SK will talk to a neighbour once JH has sent her a job specification.

JH said that a working party is needed to decide what can be offered to sponsors, corporate members etc, to make involvement attractive to them, and that QR codes allowing people to donate should be available throughout the park and on all FoP's printed literature. JH thanked JK profusely for her two terms of service to the committee. JK replied that she had every confidence in JH's ability to grow the organisation.

Action: JK, JH, SdeB, SK

9 AGM

AH reported that preparatory tasks include collecting a key from the café, familiarization with the technology, putting chairs out, providing coffee, tea, milk, sugar, wine, glasses and biscuits. CA and AH will speak to Henry and circulate a final list of what is needed. Andrew Booton, Chair of Cheltenham Civic Society, will speak for 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of questions, and will want to project slides. LA will buy wine, SdeB will provide glasses. Trustees should arrive at 4.45 to set up. CA and JK will be leaving the committee at the meeting, but both are happy to help FoP in future.

Action: CA, AH and all trustees

10 Trustee responsibilities

JH said that an additional extended and more relaxed meeting would consider responsibilities and planning. He asked for email suggestions for venues, but JP will first contact the Old Courthouse about using their Solicitor's Room. (AH also suggested the Playhouse Green Room.) It was agreed that the meeting would be on Tuesday 11 November from 7.30 until 9.30 or 10.00. FoP rules on the website cover the responsibilities of officers. SK volunteered to organise the race week car parking; CA and Henry will brief SK and Susan Pickles will be asked do the rota.

Action: JP and all trustees

11 Dates of meetings in 2026

These will be: 6 January, 7 April, 7 (not 14) July, 6 October.

11 AOB

11.1 The gates AH reported that Judi Hodson was interested in why this project hasn't been pursued. The status of planning permission needs to be checked. It will be added to options to be considered by a projects working party in the near future.

11.2 Facebook

BL is now an additional administrator.

11.3 Residuum board

It was agreed that one would be very useful and should be pursued.

11.4 Entrust

DK has, in response to an email from Entrust, pointed out that a survey and final report were done last year ; he has copied back to them their own Final Compliance Report in the expectation that no further review is needed.

11.5 DK requested that all trustees send tweaks/amendments of his draft report to him urgently so he can finalise this for circulation with AGM papers.

Action CA, BL & JK in particular

[Points 11.6 and 11.7 were added after the meeting, since there was not enough time to include them]

11.6 Footpath from the bus stop, Tommy Taylors Lane, to the west end of the lower lake

The GSV's used to spread bark on this footpath but it was starting to be used by Parkrun so they stopped. A legacy from a parkrunner is being used to appoint a contractor to convert it to a stoned path. CA understands that a contractor has been appointed and CBC are just waiting for a start date. This will be a great help to residents who live north of the west side of the park and something for the newsletter.

11.7 The Cheltenham Trust CA suggested that a meeting between FoP and the new CEO be arranged in the near future to explore how TCT and FoP could work together.

11.8 New trustees

The appointment of three new trustees (BL, GR and JP) was unanimously approved.

The meeting closed at 19.00.