



Minutes of Friends of Pittville Annual General Meeting (AGM) - 21 October 2008

1. Executive Committee (Excom) Members Present

Chairman – Tony Mason (TM)
Hon Secretary – Ron Pattinson (RP)
Hon Treasurer – Paul Weston (PW)
Ward Councillor – Tim Cooper (TC)
Ward Councillor - Diane Hibbert (DH)
Park Watch – Desmond Fitzgerald (DF)
Anne Roberts (AR)
Arran Stibbe (AS)
Colin Eynon (CE)
Fiona Clarke (FC)
Judy Langhorn (JL)

Also, from Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC)
Assistant Director Environmental Maintenance – Rob Bell (RB)
HLF Project Management Officer – Rosemary Mansbridge (RM)

Approximately 50 Members of the public present

1.1. Apologies

Maurice and Nora Harbridge
Bill Donohoe
Roger Turner

2. Minutes of the Previous AGM (24 October 2007)

The minutes had been previously circulated to the members of the Friends of Pittville (FoP). A vote was taken on the motion that the minutes represented a true account of the AGM of 24 October 2007.

Proposed – CE, seconded by AR and carried unanimously.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the previous AGM.

4. Chairman's Report

4.1 The Chairman read his annual report as follows:

“This has been a very satisfactory year for the Friends of Pittville. The major event has been the submission by the Borough Council of the Heritage Lottery bid. Many of the recommendations received by FoP in response to the newsletters and web site were incorporated in the Bid.

We have greatly appreciated close cooperation with the Borough Planning Staff in its preparation and submission. FoP representatives have sat on the Heritage and Community Communication sub Committees and have been consulted at every stage formally and informally, up to and including the process of making the details of the Bid available to the general public in the Borough Library and on the FoP website.

Communication with the community has been sustained by quarterly news letters, an expanded web site and personal meetings in Pittville Park and elsewhere. I would especially commend the web site to those who are not familiar with it. In addition to its news about FoP, the full content of the Lottery Bid includes a detailed history of the park with some beautiful illustrations. We are extremely grateful to our Hon Sec, Ron Pattinson, who has created on the website a superb and easily accessible source of information.

The Executive Committee have welcomed the new Ward Councillor for Pittville Tim Cooper to the Committee. The Committee has recently been attended by a representative from the St Pauls area and two members of the Committee of the Pittville Residents' Association (PARA). The Member of Parliament for the Borough, visiting MPs and one prospective parliamentary candidate have been briefed on FoP and progress of the bid.

We would like to thank the Gloucestershire Echo and BBC Radio Gloucestershire for frequent, comprehensive and positive cover and support. In times when the Borough Council has to make difficult choices about resource allocation it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of such strong media support, usually linked to the activities of FoP. The result has been the Council's pledge of £1 million to secure a further £3 million from the Lottery Fund, in recognition of the enormously important contribution of a revitalised Pittville Park to the quality of life of the Cheltenham community and beyond.

It is therefore with very mixed feelings that I retire now from my position of Chairman of FoP: quietly satisfied with progress so far, but more importantly, aware that we are on the threshold of a momentous decade of transformation, *when*, not *if*, we secure the funds. We need a Chairman from at least the next generation who will bring fresh ideas, and longer term leadership and coordination. I am very pleased to leave FoP in good heart, poised to make a major contribution to the final stages of the Heritage Lottery Bid and its subsequent implementation."

There were no questions raised on the Chairman's report.

5. Treasurer's Report and Statement of Account

- 5.1 The Hon Treasurer reported a net income over the previous 12 months of £107.17, giving a balance of £704.19 held in the FoP account at the end of September 2008.
- 5.2 The Chairman pointed out that the cost of design, hosting, and maintenance of the website were not reflected in the accounts since they had been borne by the Hon Secretary. These costs are normally significant.

There were no questions raised on the Treasurer's statement of account.

Proposed by Mr John Clayton, seconded by CE and carried unanimously.

6. Amendment to the Constitution

- 6.1 The proposed revisions to paragraphs G(1), G(2) and G(6) of the Constitution had been notified to the FoP members as required by paragraphs P(2) and T of the Constitution.
- 6.2 The rationale behind the revision was to clarify the number of members of the Executive Committee and that members of the Executive Committee should be current members of FoP and have been formally proposed by another member of FoP. In addition, the minute book mentioned in para G (6) does not exist and the declaration in that paragraph is now incorporated into the formal proposal form, which has to be signed by an applicant to become a member of the Executive Committee.
- 6.3 The revised paragraph G of the Constitution proposed by the Excom is as follows:

G. Executive Committee

- (1) The Executive Committee shall consist of not less than 5 members nor more than 10 members being:

- (a) the honorary officers specified in the clause F:
- (b) A maximum of 7 other members, who have been formally proposed by a member of the Friends of Pittville, and elected at the annual general meeting.
- (c) The members of the elected Executive Committee shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting.

- (2) Co-opted Members

- (a) In addition, the Executive Committee may appoint not more than 4 co-opted members, consisting of one representative from Pittville Area Residents Association (PARA), who shall not be one of the three officers of the PARA committee (Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer), one representative of Pittville Park Watch, and two Cheltenham Borough Councillors of the Pittville Ward. In doing so, no more than one third of the members of the Executive Committee shall be co-opted members.

- (b) The Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer of the Friends of Pittville Executive Committee shall not be committee members of PARA while holding these posts.
- (c) Each appointment of a co-opted member shall be made at the Annual General Meeting, or at a special meeting of the Executive Committee called under clause J (1), and shall take effect from the end of that meeting unless the appointment is to fill a place which has not then been vacated in which case the appointment shall run from the date when the post becomes vacant.
- (d) No co-opted member shall be eligible to be Chairman
- (3) All the members of the executive Committee shall retire from office together at the end of the next Annual general Meeting after the date on which they came into office, although they may be re-elected or re-appointed.
- (4) The proceedings of the Executive Committee shall not be invalidated by any vacancy among their number or by any failure to appoint or any defect in the appointment or qualification of a member.
- (5) Nobody shall be appointed as a member of the Executive Committee who is aged under 18.
- (6) No person shall be entitled to act as a member of the Executive Committee whether on a first or on any subsequent entry into office until after signing a declaration of acceptance and of willingness to act in the best interests of the Friends.

Proposed by Mr Malcolm Stennett, seconded by TC and carried unanimously.

7. Election of the Executive Committee

7.1 All members of FoP had been notified that anyone wishing to be elected to the Excom should return a signed and endorsed proposal form to the Hon Secretary not later than 7 days before the AGM.

7.2 The Chairman received the approval of the members present to split the election of the Excom into two parts.

7.3 Formal signed and endorsed proposals were received from the current Honorary Secretary (**RP**) and Honorary Treasurer (**PW**) to be Excom members and to continue to hold these posts. In addition, a formal signed proposal was received from Mr David Prince (**DP**) to become a member of Excom. **DP** was also proposed by the current Excom to become the new Honorary Chairman of FoP.

No objections were raised and these appointments were approved unanimously.

7.4 At this point, the outgoing Chairman (**TM**) invited the newly elected Chairman (**DP**) to preside over the rest of the meeting. **DP** thanked the outgoing Chairman for being an outstanding ambassador for FoP, for his professionalism in leading the excom, and for his role in taking FoP involvement in the HLF bid process forward.

7.5 Formal signed and endorsed proposals to be Excom members were also received from current Excom members **Anne Roberts (AR)**, **Arran Stibbe (AS)**, **Colin Eynon (CE)**, **Fiona Clarke (FC)**, and **Judy Langhorn (JL)**. In addition, a formal signed and endorsed proposal was received from **Mr Daud McDonald (DM)**, of St Paul's, to become a new Excom member.

No objections were raised and these appointments were approved unanimously.

7.6 Three co-opted excom members were also appointed: **Ward Councillors Diane Hibbert (DH) and Tim Cooper (TC)**, and the **Park Watch member, Desmond Fitzgerald (DF)**

8 Briefing on HLF Bid, Stage I Application

8.1 Assistant Director Environmental Maintenance, Mr Rob Bell (RB), thanked FoP for its invaluable inputs, "challenging discussions" and constructive criticisms in the process leading to the completed Stage I submission.

8.2 HLF Project Management Officer, Rosemary Mansbridge (RM), then reminded everyone of the 5, equally weighted principles, which **must** be satisfied for a successful bid:

- Increase the range of audiences
- Conserve and improve heritage value
- Increase the range of volunteers involved
- Improve skills and knowledge through training
- Improve management and maintenance.

RM explained the structure of the submission to HLF; 5 large binders under main headings of Conservation Management Plan (CMP), Audience Development Plan (ADP), Access Plan (AP), Maintenance Management Plan (MMP), and Training Plan (TP). These documents can be viewed in their entirety at the Cheltenham Public Library and the main body viewed by following links on the Friends web site News page. RM particularly commended the CMP, which is an excellent record of the current state of Pittville Park, as well as containing a comprehensive historical record of the Park, compiled by Dr Steven Blake.

8.3 RB then briefed on the time scale from this point, with the result of the Stage I application being expected towards the end of March 2009 and a time line extending to 2011/12 for completion of the final detailed work. RB also assured the members that in the unlikely event the bid should be unsuccessful, there is still funding for a revised plan. The decision on use of the funding set aside for the HLF bid would be subject to further discussion within CBC.

8.4 Questions were invited from the audience

In response to a question from Mr Stennett regarding public response to the consultative process, RM advised that several hundred responses had been received, many with detailed and constructive comments. Much of this can be found in the ADP.

Mr Clarke asked if work had to wait until 2011 before starting. RB explained that detailed planning is part of the Stage II application, which is the next step after approval of the Stage I application, so there would have to be a delay until after that time before work could realistically commence.

A member asked how many other bids had been submitted. RM said she thought there were only 2 others from the South West region but that there were 5 or 6 other regions with variable bids, all competing for the same funding. The decision to bid for £3,000,000 rather than a larger amount was decided to give the bid the best chance to succeed since asking for more would have meant it was a much larger proportion of the funds available.

A representative of the Tree Preservation Society asked to be kept in the loop over plans which would affect tree felling etc.

AR expressed disappointment that CBC had not given any feedback to those who had submitted ideas during the consultation process. RB conceded that this was the case but lack of available time due to the amount of work being done on the application and the volume of input had made it impractical to respond meaningfully. Some specific items had had to be excluded because of the large cost relative to the size of the overall planned budget.

Mr Oates wanted to know what impact the St Vincent's Project would have on the HLF bid. RB conformed that the HLF bid is flexible enough to cater for many contingencies.

AS pointed out that since much of the money going into the Lottery comes from more disadvantaged communities, CBC should be mindful that the focus of the Project should reflect this in the plan. This was acknowledged by RB.

The Chairman thanked RB and RM for the presentation and the work they had put in to the Stage I application.

9. Any Other Business

9.1 The Chairman stated that, over the next 6 – 8 months, FoP would be investigating ways in which it could assist CBC in a hands –on way to advance the Project.

9.2 A request was made from the audience for a list of those projects which had failed to make the final list in the Stage I application so that they could be costed with a view to obtaining sponsorship or other funding. RB agreed to furnish FoP (RP) with this information. **** Action: RB & RM**

9.3 Mr John Clayton proposed a vote of thanks, firstly to the outgoing Chairman (TM) for his contribution to FoP, and secondly to the Hon Secretary for maintaining the www.friendsofpittville.org website to a high standard.

10. Next Meeting

The date for the next Annual General Meeting was set for October 2009, the precise day to be determined closer to the time.

Reminder: Should Dunalley School be the venue for future meetings at night, outside lighting will be essential, since one member fell and suffered a bloody nose.