



## Minutes of Friends of Pittville Executive Committee Meeting – 4 August 2009

Note abbreviations used in the minutes: FOP = Friends of Pittville; PARA = Pittville Area Residents' Association; CBC = Cheltenham Borough Council

### 1 Members present

Hon Chairman Dave Prince (DP)  
Hon Secretary Fiona Clarke (FC)  
Hon Treasurer Paul Weston (PW)  
Ward Cllr. Diane Hibbert (DH)  
Judy Langhorn (JL)  
Ron Pattinson (RP)  
Anne Roberts (AR)

#### 1.1 Apologies

Ward Cllr. Tim Cooper (TC)  
Park Watch - Desmond Fitzgerald (DF)

#### 1.2 Absent

Colin Eynon (CE)  
Daud McDonald (DM)

## 2 Minutes of Executive Committee (ExComm) Meeting – 6 June 2009

The minutes were agreed. It was noted that they were very detailed. This was because the meeting had been significant in the history of FOP. Future minutes would revert to being more concise.

### 3 Matters arising

- 3.1 Payment for the web-site:** CBC had provided the cheque for £250 for Flip Media which had created and set up the FOP web-site.
- 3.2 The bridge:** There is not a lot to report as both Rosemary Mansbridge (CBC) and Adam Reynolds (CBC) are on leave. Rob Bell (CBC) had informed DH that Christopher Lisney is working up a design for the decoration on the bridge, which itself is 'off the shelf'. All relevant community groups, including FOP, will be shown the design (or designs - it wasn't known if there would be more than one to consider). Then the preferred design will go to Planning. It is expected that health and safety and conservation staff will be involved in the final choice.

Questions that FOP has for CBC include whether there is a timetable for the consultation and the planning decision, and whether other designers have been invited or considered. FOP also wants to have the designs and associated information right now for putting on its web-site. This was promised months ago and has not been forthcoming.

**ACTION: DP and FC to write to Rob Bell (CBC), asking for this information, with an answer by 31 August, in time for the next ExComm meeting on 9 September (see paragraph 9 below).**

## 4 Feedback on HLF Project Planning meeting 17 June 2009

- 4.1 DH reported that, at the time of the meeting, there was a current round of external funding proposals being prepared. However, CBC had decided that, on advice that it should make one application only, it would be for the Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum. The Pittville project would have to go forward after October 2009 – if there were any government funds to apply for. It seems there is always something. It seems, also, that the £1,000,000 contribution to the HLF bid was to be made on condition that the bid was successful. That is, the money will almost certainly go back into the CBC coffers. It was thought that a decision will be made at the next CBC Cabinet meeting.

DH noted that the children's playground needed a major overhaul. It was last revamped fourteen years ago. This could be an area that CBC might be prepared to fund.

DP pointed out that FOP was not mentioned during the Project Planning meeting by any of the CBC officers and that, had he and DH not asked any questions, at the very end of the meeting, even the information about the £1,000,000 would not have been made public.

DH said that we have the HLF bid Master Plan and we need to be ready to apply for any funding that becomes available, or to push for particular items such as the playground.

**ACTION: DP and FC to also ask, in the letter to Rob Bell, who in CBC should be watching out for potential funding streams and keeping FOP informed and in the loop.**

- 4.2 DH informed us that the idea has been mooted of leasing the cafe in Central Cross Drive to an outside organisation. Interest has been expressed by someone who would add a canopy (or similar) to the existing cafe, so that it would be more comfortable in wet weather, and that it would be licensed. The ExComm was not enthusiastic about it being licensed but thought that developing the cafe was worthwhile because it is very popular, despite its position rather far from the park itself.

**ACTION: DP to invite this person to a FOP ExComm meeting, so we can find out more about the idea. This could be the next meeting (see paragraph 9 below)**

- 4.3 AR pointed out that we still did not know why the bid was unsuccessful. It seems ridiculous that we cannot be told, especially if it is only because there were too many bids for the money available, and it was decided on quite arbitrary criteria. Our members have been waiting since April to hear; the April newsletter was not produced because there was nothing to report. As a result FOP is losing credibility and eventually members.

**ACTION: DP and FC to ask Rob Bell, in the proposed letter, to prepare a statement which will be included in the next newsletter (which must be published one month before the AGM)**

## 5 Feedback on PARA meeting 18 July 2009

- 5.1 DP and DH attended. There were approximately 20 people at the meeting (not a quorum). The PARA Chairman informed the members that neither FOP nor the St Paul's area residents association wished to amalgamate with PARA. The PARA funds will be split between several charities. The Chairman encouraged the PARA members there to attend the FOP AGM. DP noted that there were several energetic and committed people in PARA who would be welcome in FOP.

**ACTION: FC to make a special note in the printed newsletter inviting ex-PARA members to attend the next FOP AGM.**

## 6 Future plans for Friends of Pittville

6.1 This was a wide-ranging and open discussion with ExComm members putting forward their ideas and comments on the Friends and how it has operated to date.

6.2 Points which were raised included:

The **printed newsletter** should be glossier (but this is beyond our financial capability at the moment); it should be any colour than green (so as not to be confused with People Against Bureaucracy's newsletter).

The FOP '**mission statement**', which appears on the web-site home page should omit, for the moment, reference to CBC and the HLF bid and any future bids for central government funds.

However, we do want to lobby the CBC for local council and government **funding** (see paragraph 4.1 above).

FOP wants to be informed by CBC about activities and events being planned in the park and Pittville as a whole so that these can be posted on our web-site. As well as bringing more people to the park, it could also be an opportunity for us to promote the Friends group, and obtain new members. More importantly, it would enable us to get feedback from the public about the park and Pittville which we can act on or refer to CBC if appropriate.

**ACTION: DP and FC to include this in the letter to Rob Bell**

FOP needs **promotional materials** such as sticky labels (e.g. 'I am a Friend of Pittville') and a display board for any stall we might have at an event.

FOP could ask for Friends to **volunteer** to help on a practical level to make the park more enjoyable and protected (refer FOP Constitution), such as litter picking and sweeping path edges, gardening (edging paths, weeding under trees and around the lake, generally tidying up) FC noted how disappointed she was with the park's appearance last weekend, compared with National Trust properties which are largely maintained by volunteers, with sometimes only one full-time gardener in charge. This is a short-term objective that FOP could address.

**ACTION: FC to draw up a proposal which could be put to CBC (as they would need to provide supervision and equipment)**

We need to clarify what **Park Watch** does so that there is no overlap and make this clear to Friends  
**ACTION: FC to check with Park Watch and include note in the next newsletter, if appropriate**

FOP must continue to work for the **continued restoration and renewal** of the park (refer FOP constitution). This means working with CBC (refer paragraph 4.1 above) and sourcing funds from elsewhere such as sponsorship and non-HLF funds such as Community Spaces

<http://www.community-spaces.org.uk/default.aspx?page=1>

**ACTION: FC to circulate details of Community Spaces to ExComm members with the Minutes**

It was noted that the previous chairman had met officials at Cheltenham Racecourse and UCAS who both indicated they might be willing to **sponsor** elements in the park. However, detailed proposals would be needed before approaching them again

**ACTION: ExComm to consider in 2010**

It is possible that the **Dunalley wildlife garden** might survive if the recent rejection of St Vincent's plans for the Dunalley site is sustained. It is now open to the public and it might be better in the long term if it become a community rather than a school garden. The school has run the garden for many years without a lease and Gloucestershire County Council, which owns the land, might be open to the idea of a group such as FOP taking it over. It might be easier for FOP to do this if it were a registered charity. If FOP were to manage the wildlife garden it would need volunteers to do the work. Both FOP and volunteers' involvement might have financial and legal implications for us as individuals. It was noted that the St Vincent's proposal comes up for discussion again on 20 August.

**ACTION: PW to find out what these financial and legal implications would be and to investigate how FOP might achieve charitable status and to report at the next ExComm meeting**

Several ExComm members would like to see **Picnic in the Park** held again but on a smaller scale and during the day. Another idea was to coincide it with the Big Lunch (thought up by the Eden Project's director and run this year for the first time. For a review of the Big Lunch see <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article6719642.ece>

**ACTION: DP and FC to ask Rob Bell, in the letter, who to contact about events in the park**

Park Watch has suggested that **posters be put up in the park depicting the wildlife** and drawing people's attention to conservation issues, such as proper disposal of fish hooks so that birds and fish are not injured. FOP could pay for the display panels and the posters.

**ACTION: RP will take some photographs and mount a new slide show on the FOP web-site. DP will investigate where CBC will agree to mount the posters, e.g. at the Boat House, in the lakes themselves**

Another idea was to have **walks and talks** in the park and squares etc. These could include wildlife talks, as well as horticultural, architectural and historical ones.

It would be good to have a **plan of activities** for 2010.

**ACTION: DP to lead discussion on these last two items at the next ExComm meeting.**

## **7 Annual General Meeting 2009**

It was agreed that the most realistic date was Wednesday 28 October 2009. Members and the public need to be informed about the meeting at least three weeks before it takes place. Therefore the printed newsletter must be distributed on or before 1 October. Given that CBC officers are on leave in August it is unlikely we will have answers to our questions before the end of August, but we will try. It was agreed that the Dunalley School was a good venue (provided the outside lights are working) and that refreshments would be served at the AGM

**ACTION: DH to secure the room; FC to prepare the printed newsletter with all the relevant information, including changes to the Constitution (i.e. references to PARA)**

## **8 AOB**

**Web-site home page:** Further to his e-mail to ExComm members, RP asked again for suggestions and comments about the web site home page. It is now out of date. It was decided to make the obvious changes now, e.g. references to CBC and the HLF bid, but to make a final version after the AGM.

## **9 Date of next meeting**

This was agreed for Wednesday 9 September, at which time the AGM agenda will be finalised.