



Minutes of Friends of Pittville Executive Committee Meeting – 11 November 2009

Note abbreviations used in the minutes: FOP = Friends of Pittville; CBC = Cheltenham Borough Council

1. Members present

Hon Chairman Dave Prince (DP)
Hon Secretary Fiona Clarke (FC)
Hon Treasurer Paul Weston (PW)
Park Watch - Desmond Fitzgerald (DF)
Ward Cllr. Diane Hibbert (DH)
Colin Eynon (CE)
Judy Langhorn (JL)
Ron Pattinson (RP)
Anne Roberts (AR)
Christine Sharpe (CS)

1.1 Apologies

Ward Cllr. Tim Cooper (TC)

2. Minutes of Executive Committee (ExComm) meetings – 9 September and 13 October

The minutes were agreed to be a true record of the meetings.

3. Matters arising

3.1 The Community Bridge

FC noted that FOP had not been invited to a short meeting before submission of the planning application as promised (refer para. 3.1, 9 September meeting).

DH reminded the meeting that we were still in the consultation period; she had received some negative comments, in her role as a borough councillor.

There was further discussion about the principle of writing. It was agreed finally that FOP had been kept informed and consulted from the beginning. The ExComm had questioned CBC officers at several meetings, but the whole process had been presented more or less as a *fait accompli*. That notwithstanding, if the ExComm as a group, or individuals, had felt strongly enough against the proposals they should have spoken up more assertively at the time.

Severn Trent, which is providing a substantial amount of money, is not involved and does not have a view on the style of the bridge; it was approved by the heritage officer and heritage bodies.

It was agreed that the ExComm would not write or make a group response to the planning application. However, individual members were encouraged to do so, in a personal capacity, through the CBC planning application web-site.

3.2 Central Cross Cafe

The CBC heritage officer was unable to attend this meeting but she has sent a very useful e-mail with questions and comments relating to Central Cross Cafe and Pittville Gates. This had been e-mailed to ExComm members last week.

There was some discussion about the location of Central Cross cafe, whether or not the Pump Room could provide refreshments, what other facilities could be provided, e.g. a kiosk at the play area, selling ice creams from the bicycles which had been bought last year but seldom, if ever, used. The Boat House sells ice-cream etc, but it is not open often enough. The biggest concentration of people is between the Pump Room and the play ground and it seemed absurd that there was nothing for them. With CBC we are trying to encourage greater and more responsible use of the park and yet the borough council seems to have little interest in providing more for the public.

Several members commented how busy Central Cross Cafe had been this year. It seems that the additional outdoor seating and good quality, but not over-priced, refreshments had attracted a wide range of people – young mothers with children, mothers meeting children after school, older people in the mornings.

RP thought it would be useful to do a survey of the people using the cafe. This would establish whether they had come just for the cafe or whether they were on the way to or from other facilities in the park itself. This would have to be next spring, if it were to take place.

DP said that the most that could be hoped for in this area was a van with a hatch, as it is likely that planning would not be given for a more permanent structure near the playground.

DH reminded the ExComm that all the Cheltenham parks' catering outlets might be leased out next year. AR said there as money to be made. She said so much could be done; she would like to see Central Cross Cafe expanded so that there was tourist information, souvenirs and other things to buy, as well as a cafe.

CE suggested that FOP needs to state formally that there is a need for more facilities - at the very least bring back the bicycles and serve tea and coffee in the Pump Room.

RP reminded the meeting that the third most requested item on the FOP survey for the HLF bid was improving the refreshment facilities in the park.

Action: DP and DH to invite Grahame Lewis, CBC's Strategic Director for the Environment to the next ExComm meeting, so he can be asked about what can be done about the lack of refreshment facilities.

CE suggested that FOP could arrange a petition, but it was agreed to wait until we hear from Grahame Lewis.

4. AGM – action required

Item 8 Future funding for Pittville Park – DH reported that the budget proposals will appear soon. This is the opportunity for the public to be involved. All responses are made public. There are meetings to which the public can come; there is a stakeholders' meeting in the Town Hall. Budget holders have to explain their decisions. It is very important that we do something to ensure that at least some of the £300,000 that is still actually ear-marked for Pittville Park is retained.

Action: DH to find out the exact dates for the period of consultation and to inform the ExComm.

Action: once this is known, FOP members are advised and an item is placed on the web-site. Also, a printed newsletter be produced and delivered. FC and RP

JL suggested this could have a tear-off page which people could send to CBC. It was thought however this could be counter-productive because if too many responses come with exactly the same content, the CBC

could discount them. However, a list of issues for people to consider could be included. Also, they would need the name and address to which they should send comments.

The AGM action point was that the newsletter would be distributed before Christmas – this date may not be appropriate if the consultation period slips. Also, DP thought that it was not the time to be thinking of activities for 2010.

CE asked if sponsorship for catering facilities in the park was considered. DP replied that it had – the owner of Hotel on the Park had expressed an interest. JL suggested that the St George's Association cafe in Bennington Street could do it.

5. Volunteers – update

FC referred to the e-mail to potential volunteers (from the AGM) which was copied to ExComm members. The first day is 19 November. CBC will supervise – this is to make sure health and safety is covered and also we need their presence for insurance.

DP said he was very unhappy that FOP would have to provide its own insurance if volunteers were to work on their own. CBC should do this, whether or not their staff was there. After all, we are doing their work for them.

FC pointed out that the other volunteer groups in Cheltenham provided their own insurance, and across the country there were 4500 groups working on landscape and environmental projects.

6. Monthly 'walkabout' report

DH explained that this FOP sub-committee (ward councillors, Park Watch, CBC, and police) had walked-about on 2 and 30 October and identified various things in the park and estate that had to be put right, e.g. replacing metal grills over the lights in the underpass, removing a damaged tree branch from the outlet of the lower lake.

RP asked if the list of things to be done and action to be taken/taken could be published on the web site; CS agreed that listing what had been done would be of interest. DH was reluctant as she said this work was not publicly minuted. P added that it was part of the councillors' normal work and names were attached to the actions. It could also lead to people contacting FOP to have worked done or to check on what FOP might have done. This is not FOP's role.

RP reiterated that the list could go on the Park Watch pages, e.g. saying something like 'as a result of the regular walkabout, these were the items picked up for work to be done....'. The public could be referred to the two ward councillors if this was part of their work. He was very concerned that there was a lack of communication in Cheltenham local government as a whole and this should be remedied.

Action: DH to discuss the issue with CBC and the police. If they agree to such a list, it can go ahead.

DH invited FC to join the team at its next office meeting on 12 November.

7. Park Watch

DF outlined the recent events at the Pump Room and the bandstand and around the Boat House and Central Cross Cafe. There has been a substantial increase in vandalism since August this year, after 60 consecutive months of manageable misbehaviour.

A contributing factor is lack of police presence after 9.30pm. There is a new police team and they are on a steep learning curve. CCTV cameras are to be placed at the Pump Room but this is limited – there needs to be a concerted effort to get Pittville Park better protected at night.

DH mentioned the SARA method of policing which should be reactivated. (For details of this, see end of these minutes)

Action: better policing to be raised with Grahame Lewis at the next meeting – DH and DP

The meeting was required to vacate the meeting room at 8pm so the following items were covered quickly.

8. Waitrose Charity Scheme

DF reported that he has obtained an application form and completed it.

9. Christmas card

RP showed the ExComm a mock-up of a Christmas card which he had hoped to show members at the AGM. Time was short to publicise it for this year. The same image could be on a blank card and a postcard.

The card cost 75p to produce for 100; it could be sold for £1.50. JL said that WHSmith had cards for £1.99 so £1.50 is a good price. PW suggested that each ExComm member could underwrite 10 cards which would cover the first 100.

The ExComm was not able to discuss further as time was limited.

Action: RP to circulate the ExComm with the proposed card and costing.

10. Membership fees

JL reported that there were 197 people on the database, but that only 39 had paid their 2010 membership fee. Several ExComm members had not paid either. It was crucial to remind people.

Action: to send an e-mail (and letter to those who are not on e-mail) reminding them their membership is due and that an easy way to do it is by Standing Order; also to ask people to confirm if they do not wish to renew. JL

Action: also, to include the SO in the next newsletter, with a strong message to members that we rely heavily on their subscriptions to survive and promote their views. FC

11. AOB

There was none.

12. Date of next meeting

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It was agreed to have the meeting on Thursday 11 February 2010 and to invite Councillor Roger Whyborn again (as he had not been willing to come to tonight's meeting as he has nothing useful to say at this stage).

Action: FC to invite Cllr Whyborn again.

Crime Reduction - Helping to Reduce Crime in Your Area



See next page

Problem Solving SARA

SARA – Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment

SARA has been used for some time in problem-oriented policing (POP) as a methodical process for problem solving. It is an integral part of the philosophy of community policing in the US.

It is of use to crime reduction practitioners in any field as applying the process can ensure that a crime problem is effectively identified and tackled, avoiding any waste of time and resources if only part of the actual problem is identified. SARA is also commonly used within the police service, so an understanding of the process may help partner organisations to work with the police to tackle local problems.

Its four stages are:

Scanning – spotting problems using knowledge, basic data and electronic maps

Analysis – using hunches and information technology to dig deeper into problems' characteristics and underlying causes

Response – devising a solution, working with the community, wherever possible

Assessment – looking back to see if the solution worked and what lessons can be learned.