



Minutes of Friends of Pittville Executive Committee Meeting – 22 February 2011

1 Members present

Hon Chairman Judy Langhorn (JL)
Hon Secretary Fiona Clarke (FC)
Hon. Treasurer Frances Gabriel (FG)
Judie Hodsdon (JH)
Andy Hopkins (AH)
David Richards (DR)
Henry Williams (HW)
Park Watch co-ordinator Desmond Fitzgerald (DF)

1.1 Hon. Chairman Judy Langhorn (JL) welcomed Frances Gabriel who has been co-opted to the Executive Committee and kindly accepted the position of Hon. Treasurer (refer item 4 of previous minutes).

2 Apologies

Chris Archibald (CA)
Ward Cllr Tim Cooper (TC)
Ward Cllr Diane Hibbert (DH)

3 Minutes of Executive Committee (ExComm) meeting – 11 January 2011

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved as being a true record of that meeting except for item 11 – today's meeting is on a Tuesday, not a Thursday.

4 Matters arising (Previous minutes' reference) - this item was taken after items 5 and 6

4.1 **Pittville Neighbourhood Community Group (item 1)** - JH and DF had attended the first meeting on Wednesday 19 January, at Pittville School. Although it is set up by the local police, its remit is wider, for anyone providing services to the community, and to do with the well-being of local residents, e.g. traffic speeding, clearing overhanging bushes from paths. It was thought Pittville did not have a lot of problems of that nature. FC said it would be helpful if she could refer people who contact FOP through the website enquiry to this group. JH said this would be good providing the matter was serious. The next meeting will be run by Pittville School's Head.

4.2 **Facebook (item 6)** – HW had been unable to discuss this with TC, but it was important and should not be forgotten **Action: TC and HW**

4.3 **Postcard and photograph afternoon, 6 February 2011 (item 7)** - FC said this had been an enjoyable event and historian Sue Rowbotham gave an introductory talk about postcards, cartes-de-visite and photographs in local history research. Thirteen people, plus five FOP committee members and their partners, came to Joules cafe, in Clarence Court Hotel, in Clarence Square. FC had contacted these people since the event to see if they were interested in forming an informal local history group. She had had strong support from Holst Museum Chairman, Graham Lockwood, and, to date, one other. Ron Pattinson had donated a mounted photograph taken in the west half

of Pittville Park, and speaker Sue Rowbotham one of her books for raffling. FOP was able to cover the speaker's fee (small) and made a tiny profit!

4.4 Duck food dispensers (item 3.1) - FC was waiting to hear from TC if CBC had bought the dispensers. HW said he'd checked the one in Bence's and it was not waterproof. FC has posted notices in the park notice boards asking for volunteers to help maintain the dispensers and sent an e-mail to Friends asking for volunteers. Two had replied to date.

5 Pittville Gates restoration project

JH reported that the sub-committee had met on 1 and 7 February and would meet again tonight, after this meeting, and again on Monday 28 February.

The first stage application to the Community Spaces (Big Lottery Fund) to cover some of the landscaping work had been unsuccessful. It did not demonstrate as strong a need for their funding as other applications; other projects would have a greater impact; and they did not think we were in a position to proceed with the project as there was a significant shortfall in funding. JH thought the first two might always be a problem as Cheltenham was not considered a deserving area and the social impact of restoring the gates is difficult to demonstrate.

The response to the pre-application to the Heritage Lottery Fund's *Heritage Grants over £50,000* had also been discouraging - the level of funding we are seeking is considered very expensive especially as the costs are solely towards restoration of the gates (including stonework and railings) and landscaping of the surrounding area. They are looking for educational and community participation benefits. They have not turned us away completely and it may be worth considering applying for the smaller *Your Heritage grant £3000-£50,000*. This still requires demonstrating a high degree of social benefit.

The Gloucestershire Environmental Trust contact is still enthusiastic about the project and encourages us to apply for funding to cover the landscaping.

The Summerfield Trust, based in Cheltenham, would prefer us to request funds for something specific, such as the overthrow restoration.

It has been suggested that we have a meeting between FOP, CBC, Summerfield Trust and Gloucestershire Environmental Trust. **Action: FC to arrange**

A public consultation to check support for our ideas is next, with the 'Gathering at the Gates' this Saturday 26 February (see item 7 below).

The launch of the public fundraising is at the Cheltenham Townhouse on 7 April.

JH and FC are meeting CBC landscape architect Claire Stenson, tomorrow, 23 February to try to finalise paving options etc. in order to provide some plans for the Gathering. In answer to a question from DR, JH said the area in front of the gates was originally road surface with a probably cobbled crossing for pedestrians, the result of a petition from local residents.

James Hodsdon has almost completed the text and illustrations for a history of the gates. He is obtaining quotes for printing. In the meantime he needs some help with final design and layout of the booklet and still need images from 1950-70s. It was suggested that we write to Friends to see if there is a member with this experience who could help. **Action: FC**

JL and FC are working on a tri-fold leaflet about the gates which will be used in fundraising and will include a donation form.

There was some discussion as to why CBC did not fund restoration of the gates as they are listed by English Heritage (EH). FC explained that they were only grade 2 and EH would only put pressure on the council for grade 1 structures. The council does have a responsibility, however, if health and safety is an issue. FG asked about HLF priorities and JH said that economically poorer

areas were preferred, as were educational and community participation projects – these had to relate to conserving heritage, but heritage on its own was not enough. DR said that CBC could probably purchase plants at a good discount and that the public could be asked to sponsor a plant. FC thanked DR who has prepared a list of suitable plants. AH asked if it was time to obtain some more detailed quotes for the stonework in particular. JH said that one had been obtained through CBC and we'd discuss this further at the sub-committee meeting on 28 February when we'd be deciding the order of work and priorities.

6 Gates restoration fund raising ideas

JL opened the discussion by reminding members she had written asking everyone to prepare some costed events and activities so we had something firm to consider. She went around the table and suggestions were:

- DR - a concert by the police choir in association with a local church, e.g. Holy Trinity or All Saints. They would charge about £100, the venue free. 300 tickets at £8 would result in £2400, with £1200 to FOP
- DR - Cheltenham Horticultural Society Spring show at Pump Room on 19 March. We could run tombola. He had made £100 - £200 in three hours at previous events
- DR - plant bring and buy sales when the bands are playing in Pittville Park in the summer
- DR - open garden mornings/days at end May or early June with a raffle and coffee. These can raise £200 but hosts need to be insured as they are not covered by household insurance. FOP would have to cover this
- DR - sponsored walk or run around the park
- HW - have a tent/gazebo in the park on a Saturday in the summer with information about the gates project; also have a treasure hunt based on a map of the park marked out on the ground; the public would pay to put a 'lolly pop stick' in the ground where they think the treasure is. The prize money could be shared between the winner and FOP
- AH - auction of promises, although these usually are attended by friends and relatives of the organiser rather than the public
- JL - auction of good quality items donated by the members and public. She has spoken to auctioneers Mallams who will not charge commission (but will charge handling fee and VAT on that). Any time of year is suitable so JL is looking to November or December. The donated items will be placed in the appropriate sale and Mallams will handle all the arrangements. The idea would be promoted through the newsletter and other usual channels, starting with the May newsletter. FC noted that she's been told by an experienced fundraiser we will get more and better quality items if the owner receives their cut, say 20%. Also we can hold a sale of items which do not reach the required quality standard (donors need to be told this in advance)
- DF – said that if we had some seed money that would help us to get more. For some events we will need upfront payments. He suggested something regular which could build up. For example, line dancing or Scottish dancing at the Pump Room. Young musicians might perform for a low fee or free; the pump room could provide the venue at reduced rates and have the bar money; FOP keeps the entry fee

There was some discussion about this suggestion. FC asked if there were existing regular event organisers we could go in with. AH thought that holding such events independently was close to the edge financially, especially as others would get most of the financial benefit. There were dozens of young bands performing in Cheltenham and no one would pay to go to hear one.

- HW - a 'race night' at Cheltenham Racecourse (Arkle Suite) when previous races had been screened. He'd done this for the St Paul's church gate piers project and raised £3000
- JL - a skittle night such as PAB (People against Bureaucracy) holds at the Royal Oak in Prestbury, at £9 per head. We could charge more and hold one in the autumn
- FC - the national 'The Big Lunch' www.thebiglunch.com is holding its third big lunch in early June. Last year Hatherly was the only area in Cheltenham which held an event. She has asked Pittville School, through former ExComm member Christine Sharpe, to check if the school would be interested in working with FOP on this

- AH - he'd been involved with a local 3-4 day festival in Charlbury when all the local organisations got involved. He wondered if we could run something alongside one of Cheltenham's festivals
- DF - noted that the music festival used to provide good quality refreshments in a marquee in front of the pump room. This did not happen in 2010. Perhaps FOP could run one?

There was further discussion about working with existing constituencies rather than establishing our own. Local schools are obvious places. It was recognised that fund raising for people and animals was easier than for restoration of buildings, e.g. Help for Heroes was chosen by Cheltenham North Rotary which held an event in the Pump Room with 40 stalls and raised £6500. DR said it was pointless to write to branches here in Cheltenham of national companies as the letters go straight to the head office.

JL informed the ExComm that Barclays Bank will match any amount up to £750 we raise at a single event which they approve in advance. We need to identify such an event.

- FC - performance by one-man show actor Chris Harris (who she has seen several times) of 'Ally Sloper's half term holiday'. He was a nineteenth century cartoon character and the play is based around Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee, Chris's fee is £1000 for a whole day; the evening event and another for young children in the morning. She is finding out about cheaper venues than the pump room (which is not ideal anyway). AH thought this was also a risky event financially
- JL - recycling old mobile phones which can be done online, with collection boxes in local homes and shops, if they are willing to participate. This could be promoted in the May newsletter
- JL - Waitrose charity scheme

It was agreed that JL and FC would draw up a list of proposals, with dates, and suggested priority order for ExComm members to agree by e-mail/letter. **Action: JL and FC**

7 Gathering at Pittville Gates, 26 February 2011

FC said that final arrangements were being made. HW is bringing a gazebo, a table and chairs. Permission had been obtained, through DH, to erect this on CBC-owned grass triangle at the gates. FC would have a structured interview for us to use with as many people as possible. She will send an e-mail to the ExComm members with all the details, and outlining what each sub-committee member has agreed to do.

JH asked about publicity in the Echo. FC said they were probably aware, but she would check.

Action: FC

8 Gardening and other volunteer work in Pittville Park

FC reported that the extra volunteer working parties, clearing around the upper lake south side amounted to 24 hours. The regular Thursday one in February was 18 hours. There had been positive feedback about the lake edge. JH suggested the Echo be invited to see the results.

Action FC

She and DR had met Adam Reynolds, Parks Development Manager, and community ranger Malcolm Walls on 18 February to walk around the entire east upper, (east side) park. AR would prefer to focus on restoring and upgrading existing plantings rather than introducing new ones, as we'd suggested through DR. However, AR was interested in doing some planting along the wooden fence near the road leading up to the pump room from the residuum. In general AR was prepared to be more drastic with cutting back etc than we expected, which was good news.

MW will prepare a work plan for the year, based on the walkabout.

We agreed to use the conservation management plan in the 2007 HLF bid as the basis for our work and to meet again to agree priorities etc. **Action: FC**

JL said that she'd enjoyed the volunteer work and it was good to see the results.

9 Catering facilities and boathouse etc.

FC had checked but had no further news on catering facilities. JL had written to Rob Bell, Head Operations, and he had replied that the decision would be made public soon. DF said that work had started on repairing the boathouse. He also thought that there may be a start on the foundations for the community bridge soon, as workmen had been seen in the area. .

10 Any other business

10.1 Seats in the west side park - HW had been asked by a member of the public whether seats could be put in the west side near the new play equipment. **Action: FC to ask John Rees at next CBC FOP sub-committee meeting 1 March 2011**

11 Date of next meeting

It was agreed to hold it on 29, 30 or 31 March, just before the launch event. The date is to be agreed by e-mail. **Action: FC**

A room will be booked in the Municipal Offices, as usual.

Action: DH