



Minutes of Friends of Pittville Executive Committee Meeting – 29 September 2011

1 Members present

Hon Chairman Judy Langhorn (JL)
Hon Secretary Fiona Clarke (FC)
Hon. Treasurer Frances Gabriel (FG)
Chris Archibald (CA)
Judie Hodsdon (JH)
David Richards (DR)
Henry Williams (HW)
Ward Cllr Diane Hibbert (DH)

2 Apologies

Desmond Fitzgerald (DF)

3 Minutes of Executive Committee (ExComm) meeting – 9 August 2011

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved as being a true record of that meeting.

4 Membership fee

This was dealt with first because a vote was to be taken and the Hon. Treasurer and Auditor were to meet separately to prepare the End of year accounts for the AGM.

The Hon. Chairman noted that, although we had discussed raising the membership fee at two previous meetings, a vote had not been taken. As reported there, the membership fee has not been raised since Friends of Pittville was formed in September 2006. Costs were rising. She outlined the financial situation which is that, despite a rising number of members, the bank balance was not large and kept at £2 per annum there would not be sufficient funds to cover expected expenditure in 2011. This included the printed newsletter and the fee for a just appointed web manager, plus other web related costs.

She acknowledged that many members had paid more than £2 over the last few years, from £5 to sometime £20 per year. In the September newsletter, people had been offered a fee of £2 for 2012 if they joined or renewed before the AGM and take up had been very good. Some had paid £2 but more had paid more than that. However we could not rely on their continued generosity,

She also noted that members did not get a great deal for their subscription fee. In addition to the printed newsletter and a number of e-mail and letter updates during the year, she wondered if we could offer one or two social events or benefits during the year, For example, a evening activity, a trip to the theatre or a park, or discounts at local shops,

Points raised in discussion included whether we risked losing many members; that other Friends groups such as Hatherley Park and Montpellier pay at least £5; that in 2008 we had conducted a survey in which people were asked what a reasonable fee would be (the majority had said £5), but action had not been taken at that time; that renewal rates might not be as high; that the printed newsletter is extravagant; that there are too many issues per year; that three issues per year had not allowed enough space for all the news and large enough images; that it had proved impossible to get sponsorship from local shops and that a promised sponsorship had not been honoured; that it could be e-mail only (over one third of members are not on e-mail); that the newsletter is part of our reaching out to the community as a whole and is valuable in making applications for funding such as for the Gates restoration project; that members could receive a colour version; that newsletter from church and other groups out of the centre of Cheltenham seemed to be able to raise their full printing costs through advertisements from local businesses.

The Chairman put it to the vote that the 2012 fee would be a minimum of £5 per year for one person and £7.50 for a couple. ***This was unanimously accepted.***

She then proposed that there be four newsletters per year for members (April, June, September, December; with two issues only being delivered throughout Pittville and parts of St Paul's and Fairview (April and September)). These two issues would include a membership form; but not the June and September ones. This would be on a year's basis, with a review at the end of the year, to see how membership recruitment and retention compared with now. ***This was unanimously accepted.***

The Hon. Treasurer and Auditor left the meeting at this point.

5 Matters arising (from 9 August meeting)

5.1 para 6 - As Tim Cooper wasn't at the meeting, he could not report on meeting Edward Gillespie. JH pointed out that perhaps this should be deferred until the Summerfield Charitable Trust has considered our recent application because Mr Gillespie is one of the trustees. **Action: FC to advise TC**

5.2 para 8 - The Park Watch item had had to be held over for a later newsletter because of lack of space. FC suggested it be included in conjunction with the bird count as protection of wildlife is also of interest to Park Watch. **Action: FC to discuss in 2012 with DR and DF**

5.3 para 8 - PC Lynn Aston memorial: FC thanked those who had responded to her draft wording for the plaque on the flowerbed near the aviaries in Pittville Park. She had written to ExComm members to tell them that PC Aston's husband had offered to pay for the plaque (in fact he had insisted he wanted to do that). He will

send us a proof copy of the plaque which will include her name, rank, dates as well as the Gloucestershire Police emblem, and the words, Friends of Pittville and 2011.

The suggested wording, based on suggestions from HW and further discussion with JL, and this meeting's discussion was as follows: "In memory of Lynn, whose inspiring work with the community in Pittville and other areas in Cheltenham will not be forgotten". **Action: FC to send the wording to PC Aston's husband**

5.4 para 9 - Waitrose Community Matters: Friends have been informed that we had the highest number of tokens in the August 'draw' and JH reported that we will receive a cheque towards Pittville Gates in a week or two.

She will write a letter of thanks to Waitrose (and the public) on receipt of the cheque; and also inform the Glos Echo. **Action: JH**

5.5 para 9 - Community Pride: FC apologised for not having organised a meeting between her, HW and JL and anyone else interested, to agree what equipment we should buy with the £1000 which we had obtained from CBC for 'The Friends of Pittville Roadshow'.

HW had already researched display boards and bought some tables; FC wants to look into roller banners.

A meeting will be set up immediately after the AGM. **Action: FC**

5.6 para 10 - Cheltenham Horticultural Society and Heritage Open Days: FC thanked DR for the key location he had given us in the Pump Room on 21 August. We had not taken as much money as the last two times but had met many interesting and potentially useful people. DR said that the Echo publicity had brought new people in but overall the numbers were average. This was symptomatic of the economic climate. CA noted that the CHS posters were very eye-catching (being on bright yellow paper) and that we should endeavour to have brighter posters in future. **Action: FC and JL**

JL reported that the 'walk and talk' researched by FC and herself and delivered by FC on 10 and 11 September for HODs had been successful. 65 people had engaged in conversations with us at Pittville Gates and 26 people had participated in the two walks. The Scout Hut had been opened for us on Saturday and the Central Cross Cafe staff wore boaters which we had rented. The two of us wore semi-period clothes which had amused visitors but was also positively received.

Doing the research had increased our knowledge of Pittville and will be useful when the time comes to develop the content for the Gates heritage boards.

It was interesting to learn that several people had come especially to Cheltenham for HODs.

JL thanked TC and DH for being at the Gates with her during the walks.

5.7 para 13.4 - Neighbourhood Coordination Group: JL reported that she'd gone to the meeting at Pittville School on 19 September. Last time there had been only two people, this time there were 20, of whom 19 had come as a result of our newsletter notice. Some were Friends, some were not. Items covered were the high burglary rate in Pittville compared to the rest of the town; security (DF's item in the newsletter was especially timely); keeping drains in the street and the park clear of leaves and dirt; road cleaning; fly tipping at Hudson Street; perhaps having a graffiti wall in the park although there were concerns with increasing far-right graffiti around the town; and that the Racecourse paid for extra lavatories during race weeks and ensured that beer glasses did not leave the racecourse grounds.

CA asked about speeding along Tommy Taylor's Lane; JH said it had been discussed at the previous meeting but only in relation to Swindon Road and New Barn Lane. JL said that Mark Stephens, from Glos Police was thrilled with the response. The next meeting will be on 16 January, at Pittville School. Nothing had been said about anyone other than the police chairing and running the NCG.

6 Annual General Meeting 2011

This will be on Wednesday 5 October at Dunalley School. It will start at 7pm as usual, and finish at 9pm, with ExComm members there at 6pm.

JL handed around a draft agenda and list of tasks to be done before and during the meeting. All were assigned to the ExComm members who will be at the meeting.

It was agreed the business part of the meeting would be no more than 45 minutes (it was 30 minutes last year without the Pittville Gates update which was linked to Steven Blake's talk).

It was also agreed that the Word Count Competition result would be done after the talk by Richard Gilpin. **Action: HW**

7 Budget 2011-12

Copies of the 2010-11 budget had been required for the two Pittville Gates funding applications. The 2011-12 budget will be on the agenda at the next ExComm meeting, now that new membership fees have been agreed.

Action: JL and FC with FG

8 Christmas cards 2011

FC reported that we needed to quickly get on with Christmas cards for this year. They had all sold in the first year, and only a few were left from 2010 (because of a realistic print run) and they made a reasonable profit for us.

It was agreed that anyone with suitable photos should submit them to JL within the next day or two so they could be put onto a sheet, or sheets, for AGM attendees to vote on. The ones with the most votes would be ordered. Different wording options would be offered as well.

Action: FC and JL

9 Pittville Gates Restoration Project

FC reported that she and JL had submitted applications to Gloucestershire Environmental Trust and Summerfield Charitable Trust by the end of September deadline on JH's behalf, as JH was away.

It had been quite a lot more work than anyone had anticipated as there was a lot of supporting documentation required, such as the group's budget; letters from the borough and county council on ownership and permissions; a fundraising strategy. However, now this was done, future applications should be easier.

FC had brought a folder with hard copies of all the documents; e-copies of any could be made available to those who wanted to see them.

She also reported that an exploratory e-mail to Heritage Lottery Fund with JH's second draft pre-application had resulted in the go-ahead to make a full application for 'Your Heritage'. This was very encouraging, although HLF's requirements are far more demanding than either GET or SCT. (Not mentioned at the meeting but a Friend of Pittville, Sarah Brice, had offered to help with the HLF application and had thought we were on the right track.)

JH thanked JL and FC for their work.

JL mentioned that she and FC had also been working on another application – not for the Gates - to 'Promoting Cheltenham Fund', to be submitted 30 September. This was also from the New Homes Bonus fund. It was for heritage boards in the park to develop our self-guided walks idea; the walk guide itself and publicity flyer. , New technologies will be used in these walks. There would be a board at the Gates, one at the Pump Room and one near the Boathouse, subject to CBC granting the money of course, and obtaining permission from the council. It would be crucial to ensure that the board at the Gates linked with that project.

10 Forthcoming events

10.1 Auctions – JL reported that she had received several more items for auctioning but would like to have a further few before proceeding. She will thank people who have donated items already and call for additional items at the AGM.

Action: JL

10.2 Concert – FC said there had been a misunderstanding about which night the concert should be – a Friday or a Saturday. DR had spoken to the Gloucestershire Police Choir about a Friday night and FC had pencilled in three dates in March 2012 with them, after checking with Holst Birthplace Museum and avoiding the CHS Spring Show and Race week. HW said that the church would prefer a Saturday,

It was agreed to go back to the choir and try to negotiate a Saturday night in March 2012.

Action: DR

11 Any other business

11.1 Winter ice rink at Central Cross Cafe – JL reported that we have received a proposal from Central Cross Cafe to have an ice rink near the cafe, on which they seek our views. It is also going to the Borough Council who will have the ultimate say.

Overall, ExComm members thought it an excellent idea to have an ice-rink for six weeks over Christmas into January, as it would provide a family activity for the winter evenings and keep people coming to the park. Before Christmas there was also to be a 'Santa's grotto' for children. The cafe itself cannot stay open as it has no heating and cannot be used on a regular basis.

Possible issues were noise, if music provided; damage to the grass (this is catered for in the proposal); and quality of the ice rink and Santa's grotto itself. FC said she had sent the Cafe staff examples of our letters to residents, opinion seeking etc. which we had used for the Gates project.

ExComm members were asked to comment further on receipt of the proposal.

Action: FC to e-mail/post

12 Date of next meeting

Wednesday 16 or Thursday 17 November were proposed. All ExComm members are to be canvassed.

Action: FC, then DH

Appendix 1 AGM List of tasks

FC - Purchase of tea, coffee, biscuits, for which people will be asked to make a small contribution. This had been suggested last year by former ExComm member, Colin Eynon.

FC's husband and one other to be agreed on the night (HW's wife can do it from 6-7pm) - Manning the kitchen

FG - Take receipt of invoice for the room hire, if made available that night

FC - Display boards provision

JL, FC, JH, HW - Display boards content and setting up (to focus on Gates restoration project and on achievements since last AGM – Community Pride; Waitrose Matters; volunteers; Heritage Open Days; Promoting Cheltenham Fund application; Long Gardens event in July; Open Garden event July; photos of Pittville.

HW – Bring tables already purchased (to come from Community Pride fund)

(FC and) DH - Layout of room, to be given to caretaker

JH or husband - To check members as they arrive and count non-members, using Membership list provided by JL

JH or husband – To man membership table and sign up new members or renewals

FC - Agenda (50 copies)

DH and FG - Annual accounts (50 copies)

FC - Minutes 2010 AGM (5 copies, as members asked to check them on the website or request them before the meeting)

FC - List of nominees for ExComm with brief personal details

FC and JL - List of council staff to thank (to be put on display boards)

FC - Thank you gift for the speaker, Richard Gilpin, Headteacher, Pittville School

HW - Word count competition result, to be done after the talk by Richard Gilpin