



Minutes of Friends of Pittville Executive Committee Meeting – 16 November 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)
Ward Cllr Tim Cooper (TC)
Desmond Fitzgerald (DF)

2 Minutes of Executive Committee (ExComm) meeting – 29 September

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

3 Matters arising

3.1 PC Lynn Aston Plaque unveiling (item 5.3) - FC reported that this had had to be postponed at very short notice because Lynn's husband, Eamonn, had had an accident and was unable to attend. She had informed all key invitees. As the volunteer working party was planning to meet in the aviary area, it would inform anyone who came that we hope to reschedule for 15 December.

Note: FC informed members on e-mail of the postponement on the morning of the event, 17 November.

3.2 Annual General Meeting (item 6) - JL thanked everyone who had attended and helped out in several ways. She thought that the guest speaker, Richard Gilpin's, talk was appreciated and had perhaps altered some people's impressions of Pittville School.

4 Budget 2011-12

JL distributed copies of the draft budget. This was in two parts – one general, the other, the Gates project. Earlier versions had been reviewed by the Gate sub-committee and the Hon. Treasurer. She asked for comment from the whole committee.

DF asked if the £20,000 from the Cheltenham Environmental Fund was ring-fenced. DH said it was secure unless we could not raise enough to do any part of the Gates project. As presented in the 2010-11 Financial Report at the AGM we have raised £2370 through our own efforts (£1447 donations £630 from booklet sales; £293 from other sales, raffles etc). Over £420 has come in since the AGM, including £390 from Waitrose.

JH asked for a fully up-to-date Gates financial statement for the next Gates sub-committee meeting on 28 November. **Action: FG**

JL asked DH for clarification on the possible contribution from Gloucestershire County Council. JH noted that there is information on their website <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=105873> It seems we will not be informed at this stage about a specific amount and that there is a form to be completed, which DH will do at the appropriate time.

DR asked about the VAT situation and DH said that this needed to be sorted out. JL noted that the Gates estimates included VAT at 20% and contingency at 20%. If these could be minimised, the budget looked about right. DF said that some thought we would never get any money at all, so this is good progress.

5 Pittville Gates Restoration Project

JH reported that Gloucestershire Environmental Trust and Summerfield Charitable Trust were meeting next week and she expected we would hear soon after that as to whether our applications were successful. She had e-mailed the news about the Cheltenham Environmental Fund and GCC's community scheme.

The Heritage Lottery Fund application needs a lot of work still. We have to gauge what we ask for as they give exactly that amount (or not) and look for learning and community value against investment. We also need to get people to do things – we are not supposed to start any activity before funding is made available, but HLF needs evidence of participants being signed up.

HW, JL and FC are currently checking a list of other charitable trusts for our eligibility and this will be discussed at the next Gates sub-committee meeting.

JH said we want to work alongside CBC and DH said that its Chief Executive had agreed to offer help on this. We don't know if we should tender for the project manager role. JL noted that we had come a long way in a year, since 2010 AGM, and that the council had provided a lot of help.

JH said that it was best if we applied for listed building consent; TC noted that certain listed building work was VAT exempt and he offered to ask a VAT expert he knew for advice. **Action: TC**

DR congratulated the Gates sub-committee on all the work it had done.

6 Proposed ice rink in Pittville Park

JL reminded committee members that two e-mails from DF (13 and 16 November) and a letter from the manager of Central Cross Cafe (dated 13 but received on 15 November, via Hon. Secretary) had been circulated before this meeting.

She wanted to clear up a couple of issues before opening the discussion. One was that FOP is not a residents' association. She outlined how FOP was set up; that in June 2009 the ExComm decided against amalgamating with the Pittville Area Residents' Association (which folded in July 2009 and its assets were split between several charities). This does not mean that we are not interested in the residents of Pittville.

The second point was that, in 2008, ExComm had decided not to express a group view when there was a local planning issue relating to the land next to Dunalley School. JL said that the proposed ice rink was not a planning issue in the same league and that FOP had been asked to give its opinion.

The initial discussion covered a range of issues including: was it appropriate that we came to a group view on the ice rink proposal; if it was, we would have to ask the whole membership; there are not many occasions when we are asked for a view; the letter to residents in Pittville Lawn and Evesham Road had said that FOP gave its support to the proposal, when we did not have a collective view; the information we were given about the proposal was incomplete; it is dangerous for us to take information at face value; we need an action plan for how to deal with similar situations in the future.

FC at that point referred ExComm members to the minutes of the 29 September. When these were circulated on 2 October all ExComm members were, in addition, asked to read the attached proposal from Central Cross Cafe (which had been discussed at the meeting) and to comment by end 5 October. The idea was to give the whole ExComm's opinions to the Cafe and there was no intention to write a letter of support. She had not expected that any individual committee member would co-ordinate a campaign against the proposal. She said she may have been naive in not imagining this, and did not think the Cafe manager had deliberately misled us and used our name without realising the implications.

Further discussion ensued, which covered: why would FOP be concerned with planning matters; if there was a planning issue that affected the enjoyment of the users of the park and other green spaces, this should be referred to the two Pittville ward councillors who would take receipt of users and residents' views; there was another planning issue with the removal of the golf course to the west of Tommy Taylor's Lane; the borough council would be looking to maximise the rental possibilities of the cafe (which they own) and they would feel that the park is there for the public to enjoy, including the proposed ice rink; the cafe management should expect pressure to ensure a speedy erection and dismantling of equipment and structures, to reinstate any damage, and to manage noise levels and behaviour; that our Constitution says that we promote use of the park and that an ice-rink is an appropriate activity; most of the ExComm are residents of Pittville, but we have to balance the interests of all the people; maybe not go as far as expressing a view but

that we should publicise such proposals so that everyone knows about them and can have a say should they wish to; any views could be passed to the ward councillors; FOP does not publicise purely commercial events but does publicise those of other charitable groups and borough council owned or sponsored events, and concerts in the Pump Room and Park; we do have dealings with businesses which offer us sponsorship and we expect them to get some benefit from this; we will be going to larger companies for a contribution to the Gates restoration; there had been a BMX event in the west park which had affected residents in Albemarle Gate – based on this year's experience, the organisers have been asked to make some changes for next year, it was not for FOP to be involved with it; we live in a capitalist society and that is the world in which we operate.

It was agreed to continue the discussion by e-mail addressing issues such as how we should deal with future request for a view or for support; to what extent we engage with any commercial organisations; how we conduct ourselves as committee members.

Action: FC to write to ExComm

The discussion continued briefly: when anything is put in, what is displaced, e.g. donated park benches are there for quiet contemplation by loved ones, should their enjoyment be destroyed by noise and obstructions; should nothing then ever change; BMX can put on a festival or a group organise a picnic in the park, these may not be liked by everyone but the park belongs to the people of the town as well as the people of Pittville; we don't want to be seen as 'stuck in the mud' and Pittville was already suffering because of lack of events and investment.

It was agreed to continue the discussion about what we want of and in the park and green spaces, by e-mail.

Action: FC to write to ExComm

7 Community Pride 2011

FC had circulated the proposed list of equipment purchases (put together by HW, JL and FC) with the draft agenda. These amounted to about £800 including the gazebo which cannot be ordered until the new year.

JH requested that the balance from the £1000 grant pay of (or contribute to) a LCD projector which she could use for the presentations she will be making next year. TC said he might be able to arrange for cheaper purchase through local companies, It was agreed to purchase the type of equipment listed. **Action: FC to discuss with TC before ordering**

FC had asked for thoughts on what ethos we wanted to communicate in the three roller banners; TC liked the drawing of Pittville Gates on the booklet and JL liked the style of 2008 HLF bid image of a skateboarder juxtaposed with the Pump Room. It was agreed to give further thought before approaching the supplier, who also offered a graphic design service.

Action: FC to ask ExComm again

8 Promoting Cheltenham Fund

JL reminded members that she and FC had been successful in applying to the 'Promoting Cheltenham Fund'. £2,500 was allocated for two heritage boards in the park linked to self-guided walks. If possible, further information could be accessed by mobile phone, using a quick response code appearing on the heritage boards or at strategic points along the route.

JH asked that this project be linked into the Gates project which would be one of the learning and participation activities. This was agreed. It was also agreed to ask who else on ExComm would like to be involved with developing the project. **Action: FC**

9 Forthcoming events

9.1 Auctions – JL reported that she had not received many more items for auctioning. There are no forthcoming general auctions in Cheltenham at the moment (although there are some in Stroud, Malvern and Winchcombe).

She is taking all the items of quality for valuation on Thursday 24 November, and these might be accepted for a local fine art auction. She will proceed in the most appropriate way with all the donated goods.

9.2 Concert – HW reported that Gloucestershire Police Male Voice Choir and St Matthew's Church in Clarence Street was booked for Saturday 31 March. He recommended a 7.30 pm start; 45 minutes, then 30 minutes for refreshments, than another 45 minutes concert.

It was agreed to sell tickets at £5.00 concession (the choir would require a certain number of tickets, possibly 30) and £7.50 full price.

The venue holds 700 seats, but a more realistic audience of 200 was the aim. All ExComm members would be encouraged to sell tickets to friends and family. It will be advertised to Friends, featured in the December newsletter and on the website.

HW offered to design and print the tickets. A printed programme would be needed – the choir will perform a varied programme. **Action: FC to e-mail HW the Gates and FOP logo/headers for the ticket and programme.**

HW and DR will handle ticket sales and purchasers will be asked to include a SAE envelope with their cheque.

He will also organise a raffle which will be drawn on the night.

ExComm members would need to be there at 7pm as FOP is responsible for health and safety, ticket collection, refreshments and cleaning up afterwards. People also need to be told where the nearest car parks are located.

DR said the choir would need a letter of confirmation. **Action: FC and HW**

HW may be able to get sponsorship for the cost of venue hire and the choir. JH asked if it were likely that this company might tender for any part of the Gates project.

JL said this might be the opportunity to approach Barclays Bank for their matching funds sponsorship.

The choir was keen as they had not had a concert in Cheltenham for some time.

9.3 Cheltenham Horticultural Society fairs 2012 – these will be on 17 March and 19 August. Tickets for the concert could be sold at the spring fair.

9.4 Diamond Jubilee/Big Lunch 2012 - JL said FOP must mark the HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee by an event of some kind. There are several options – 'piggy backing' on another event such as Prestbury's celebrations; joining Pittville School or Central Cross Cafe; our own event in Pittville Lawn near the Gates. None of these organisations have been approached as yet.

HW would like to hold another event in the park, similar to the 'virtual treasure hunt' in July 2011. We could have an afternoon tea or a BBQ, with people booking a table space - it would be like a street party within the park.

It was agreed to ask ExComm for proposals by e-mail ASAP because we need to get on with deciding, consulting the membership as to what they might like, and planning.

Action: FC

10 Christmas cards

FC gave each ExComm member 20 cards to sell to friends and family. They sell at £1 for one to four cards; £4.50 for five; £7.50 for ten cards. There are two designs (Pittville Gates and the Pump Room) and are available with a message or are blank.

11 December newsletter

This goes to the printer on 28 November and is for members only. JL suggested a 'Did you know' section and JH that the Gates booklet be publicised again (it could be a special 'stocking filler').

HW, CA, FG and JH offered to help distribute the newsletter (in early December).

12 Any other business

12.1 Dunalley nature reserve

DR reported he had had agreement to plant about 70 plants adjacent to the school. He also mentioned the possibility of more bulb planting and FOP applying to the Woodland Trust for a Diamond Jubilee pack of 100 saplings.

Action: FC and DR

13 Date of next meeting

This was agreed for Tuesday 10 January 2012.

Action: DH to book room