

Community News: for 10th December 2006

Pittville

Last week Members of the Executive Committee of the Friends of Pittville met with the Cheltenham Borough Planning Group which is preparing the bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the restoration and development of the Pittville Park Estate. A bid for a Project Planning Grant must be made by the Borough to the HLF by 22nd December.

The HLF will require evidence that the bid for the grant enjoys wide public support. The initial bid will set out a conservation management plan based on historical evidence; outline proposals to restore the landscape and improve amenities; and indicate ways of involving the community in future plans. A successful Project Planning Grant will be the first step in a programme of renovation and innovation which will take several years.

Consequently, in addition to the Friends' commitment to current enhancement of the Pittville estate, there is an unprecedented opportunity for the community voice to be heard before any firm Borough Lottery proposals are made. The Friends will research the history of the Estate. They will prepare a survey of both users of the Park and the wider general public to discover what improvements or changes people would encourage more people to visit the Park. They will provide a regular conduit for public opinion to the Borough HLF Planning Group. Local schools and the University of Gloucestershire will be encouraged to participate with designated members of the Friends' Executive Committee.

The Borough Council and Cabinet have been requested to consult the Friends when major issues concerning the Pittville Estate arise. At present, the HLF project itself is concerned only with the exterior of the Pump Room. The Friends and the Borough Planning Group are however very much aware of the controversial proposals at present being aired about the future of the Pump Room. The contamination of parts of the western area of the Park is also of concern. Both subjects will be closely monitored by the Friends.

For the Friends of Pittville to exert any influence on current issues and to give weight to the Heritage Lottery bid, a large membership is essential. All who wish to have a voice on these and any other issues relating to the Pittville Estate are encouraged to join. An application form may be downloaded from the Friends website at www.friendsofpittville.org/docs/MembershipApplicationForm.pdf.

In addition, leaflets describing the Friends of Pittville, which include an application form, are currently being distributed to every household in the Pittville area. If you do not receive a leaflet, and do not have access to the internet, please write to: The Treasurer, Friends of Pittville, 11 Monica Drive, Cheltenham, GL50 4NQ requesting an application form.

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