

Minutes for Friends of Meriton Road Park Group Meeting– **Meeting held – Monday 13th February 2006**

Present: Penny Millington, Derek Myerscough, Tracy Bratt, Margaret Wood, Bill Gerrity, Steve Greenlees, Sue Bradshaw, Tim Greenwood and Josie Bird.

Apologies: Irina Wood

Main Issue this meeting-

The use of Friends of Meriton Road park group in the Conservative Intouch publication

A photograph of Rod Menlove and write up about the group had been published in the conservative leaflet and we felt that this was highly irregular as we, as a group, had not been notified in any form. We need to decide how we deal with this issue as it has many implications on our work as a community group.

Penny had contacted the council on the matter and no-one there had been contacted by the conservative group representatives or were aware that it had been published and felt very concerned about the matter as they have to remain impartial.

They did suggest that we could as a group contact all the political groups and ask them to highlight the group and it's work. This was felt inappropriate as we do not want to be aligned to any political groups and our group is an independent community group.

The decision was made to write a letter to Mr Menlove, Mr Osbourne and the Tatton Conservative Committee to ask –

Who is Mr Menlove?

Who did he contact to get permission to refer to our group in their political leaflet? How does he feel involved in the group's work?

How are they planning to rectify this issue? We feel very upset that he has chosen to associate us with the conservatives, as we are a non political group and the implied association with his party has meant that we have had to stop some of our plans until the issue is resolved publicly.

We could use this incident to gain an advantage from the Conservatives by suggesting if they are **so** in support of our group "put their money where their mouth is"!

We want a reply and a public apology from the Conservative party for the implication that they are working for the park group.

We will put a statement on the website to emphasise that **We are a non-political, community group. We are working towards gaining charitable status which will enable us to plan and develop projects to highlight and improve the park for the people of Handforth.**

Action- Steve to draft a letter, Mike Bratt to update website

Penny's meeting with Richard Doran (M.B.C)

Penny met with Richard primarily to discuss the above issue but also discussed the issue of dog waste bins. He was impressed to hear that we had been surveying the public and used our figures to emphasise the need for a dog bin in the park. He wanted to know where the group felt it would be best placed.

Penny will feed back to him.

We are on the official list for more dog bins so we shall wait to see when they arrive.

Penny also highlighted the fact that our ordinary bins have not been replaced and that we wanted to know how many we should have and when will they arrive?

Opening/closing times was also highlighted by Penny and he will give us the official times and then we need to get back to him about how we can best publicise them.

Next step will be to have a park noticeboard or maybe one at each entrance?

The group felt it might be of interest to do a rough check of when the park was being opened and closed at present, we can then feed back this information to Mr Doran.

Pavilion –Mr Day (the person who is looking into all park buildings in the district)has written to Penny to say he will be interested in hearing about our survey responses as this will help him to know how the community feel about the pavillion. This will allow him to consider this in his plans for the future of the pavillion.

Questionnaire responses

Many thanks to Tim for analysing the responses and producing such an informative feedback sheet.

We had 142 responses and the main findings from the feedback are people's concerns over the dog waste; wanting to see the pavillion used for clubs,societies or for a base for sports equipment storage/hiring and wanting the gates to be locked at nights.

The next step is for all the group members to re-read the existing survey and consider how we can re-word or re-design it for our next leaflet drop to all of Handforth. One immediate change would be to

add columns so that there could be multiple replies from each household, this will then allow us to gain responses from all family members.

Action – All group members to consider changes to enclosed survey.

It was mentioned that there used to be attendants in the park until a few years back when a dispute occurred. We would be interested in their opinion on how we could develop the park and its facilities and any information about their role as attendants.

We would like to invite them to attend a meeting or have a chat with one of the group.

Action – Sue to contact.

Play Day 2006

Tracy attended the first meeting on 8th February and it was explained that it is hoped the event will take place in the school holidays, possibly August 2006. It may be a half day or full day. It will be linked into the national Play Day scheme but the focus East Cheshire will take is in highlighting issues to the whole family such as smoke free environments, anti-social behaviour prevention, drug and alcohol abuse awareness and disability issues.

It is not definite that they will use Meriton Road park but Tracy will ask for a definite decision at the next meeting.

Initial thoughts on the event were to hold an old fashioned sports day with events encouraging children to play against their parents/grandparents/carers.

The park rangers will be involved and running games and craft activities. The different agencies will be there to promote the health and social issues on stands or through information giving activities.

They hope to have local sports and dance workers to put displays and activities on.

Tracy will emphasize the great effect this event would have on Handforth and that the group could offer a lot of local help in the form of promotion, volunteers and links to schools etc.

Action-Tracy to feed back to Play Day group our interest and enthusiasm for the event.

Future Events – any further ideas or information –it was felt the idea of an Easter egg hunt to promote the park and the group was a great idea but due to time restrictions and the issue over political interference in the group we would not be able to organise such an event this year but would try for it next year. The other ideas which we felt were more manageable were to organise a “plant a bedding plant” event in June/July to involve local groups such as brownies, cubs, scouts, guides, the T.A. and local music groups such as Handforth Jazz or the Grange School band.

We would then hope to host Playday 2006 in August and then we felt we would like to involve the schools from Handforth to do a bulb planting in September.

Penny had asked Richard Doran about how we organise events in the future and he said we had to submit a detailed plan of the event and he would then get it reviewed at the council for health/safety and any other official requirements and he would then feedback to us the decision.

Action – Penny to ask Richard Doran if the council could supply us with surplus bedding plants, a tree and bulbs for our schemes.

We would then approach the local organisations to see if they would be willing to be involved.

Date of Next Meeting –

Monday 13th March 2006 at 7pm Community House Knowle Park

<http://handforth.net/>