

Minutes for Friends of Meriton Road Park Group Meeting– Meeting held – Monday 17th October 2005

Present: Penny Millington, Marjorie Walker, Tim Greenwood, Derrick Myerscough, Tracy Bratt, Bill Gerrity, Steve Greenlees and Sue Bradshaw.

Apologies: Christine Belfield, Barry Williams, Margaret Wood, and Paul Marlton.

Matters Arising From Last Meeting-

Election of committee – All the following people were nominated and seconded by the group members.

Chairperson –Penny Millington

Vice Chair –Steve Greenlees

Secretary –Tracy Bratt

Treasurer –Tim Greenwood

Charitable Status – We welcome Tim Greenwood to the group and thank him for offering to act as group treasurer, his accountancy skills will be of great use to the group in the future. Tim is going to look into the rules and regulations regarding going for charitable status for the group. This would aid us in applying for financial assistance such as lottery grants for future projects.

We will speak to Christine at the next meeting to enquire about details from the lottery awards meeting she was going to attend.

Liaison with local pre-schools, schools, youth organisations and churches- Penny highlighted our aim of consulting with the local community about their ideas, hopes and issues about the park. She emphasised that if we wanted to get a good level of liaison with the council for our future projects then we need to show the council that we have taken the initiative and time to consult with the people who use the park now and will hopefully use the park in the future-Handforth community. If we consult with the community then this will be our evidence to gain the councils backing for future projects.

Consultation via school fairs – Penny explained to the group that she had approached the Grange Primary School to ask if we could have a table area at their next school fair to promote the group and also to people for their views on the park and future ideas they may have. This was agreed by the school and the Grange Xmas Fair is on Saturday November 26th.

We aim to have a display with flyers stating the group's aims for the future, contact numbers and photographs of the park etc.

Our main focus is to ask people to complete a short questionnaire about the park and their use of it and offer a space for ideas or comments.

The idea of making it more fun and appealing for the xmas fairs was to enlarge the map of the park from the strategy document and use this as a treasure hunt game. To take part in the game people would have to fill in a questionnaire! We will donate a prize such as a box of chocolates to the winner.

Sue, Derrick and Tracy have offered to be on the stand at the school fair.

Sue, Steve and Marjorie have agreed to work on ideas for questions for the questionnaire. It was suggested 6-7 questions with multi-choice answers would be best and an age category on the form and having 'any ideas or comments box' would be useful.

Tracy has offered to make flyer drafts for the next meeting. She will contact Christine about getting questionnaires printed. We also may be able to approach a local printer for help with future events.

It was agreed that this is an excellent way of gaining publicity for the group and Tracy will ask at Rainbow pre-school and contact a friend who is on St. Benedicts PTA for a similar space at their xmas fairs, also she will be in contact with St. Chad's parent and toddler group where the questionnaire could be handed out. Steve's wife Jane will be our contact for St. Benedicts pre-school. Margaret Wood will be a good contact for St. Chads Church. Penny suggested Dianna Apsinal as a contact for the youth groups. Penny said she would be able to give a talk to the scouts group and Tim said he could be in contact with the brownies and rainbow groups via his children.

We also discussed the need to contact the older members of the Handforth community by approaching the local residential and care homes.

Other areas for displaying information about the group were the library, doctor's surgeries, public notice boards in the paddock area, on main road outside doctor's surgery and other areas of Handforth.

We also discussed the possibility of contacting the local press to highlight the group's work and future plans.

Drainage in the park- Discussion about the possible future use of the large field near the brook for sports area for older children led to the issue of drainage in the park. As cited in the strategy plan drainage is a major concern and will need to be highlighted before we can set our hopes on achieving future projects such as developing the children's play area, pond area development, picnic areas or further sports facilities. The group would like to ask Christine to enquire about how and if we could get the council to get a survey done into costs of drainage solutions. The safety of the brook area was raised as a real issue. Could it be fenced off in the future and what cost would that be and who would fund this work?

Any Other Business-

Name for the park and group – It was stated that the name Meriton Road Park did not feel inclusive for all residents of Handforth and we discussed different options and felt Handforth Park (short and simple!) would imply it was a park to be used by all in the area. We do not know if there is a possibility of changing the name and so would like to discuss this with Christine at the next meeting.

How do we get more interest for the park from the local community in particular those living next to the park? It is hoped by raising the profile of the group at the school fairs and with the questionnaires and flyers we will get people talking and interested in helping in the future.

Opening the park gates - It has been noted that recently the gates have been opened later in the mornings and also closed earlier at night causing people to be forced to use other routes through Handforth or even to be locked in the park! Sue will be phoning the council to discuss this issue.

Free trees – Marjorie highlighted the councils scheme to give out free trees and wondered if as a group we could apply and if we were able to receive some where would we be allowed to plant them in the park? We will ask Christine if she has further details on this scheme.

Long Term Vision for the group – It was felt that it would be good to have an idea of some of the long term projects we are aiming for but we also agreed that we could not sit down to do this until we had some of the community feedback questionnaires and also information regarding the surveying and costing for the pavilion area and drainage problems. It is essential to get the public feedback to give us the evidence for how the majority of the community would like their park to function before we approach the council for funding assistance with any future projects.

Using No.30 Knowle Park – It was agreed this was an excellent venue for the group meetings and we would like Christine to approach Jean about using this house for future meetings.

Next Steps-

Tracy to contact Christine re; printing questionnaires, possibly need 400-500 and 4 large scale copies of the map and arranging Number 30 as a meeting venue.

Tracy to contact Rainbow Pre-school and St. Benedicts about publicising the group.

Tracy to make flyers for Xmas fairs and poster boards.

Sue, Steve and Marjorie to work on questionnaire to bring to group next meeting.

Tim to look into charitable status rules for the group.

Date of Next Meeting –Monday 31st October 7pm