

## **Minutes for Friends of Meriton Road Park Group Meeting– Meeting held - Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2005**

Present: Christine Belfield, D.T Myerscough, Tracy Bratt, Ashley Pettifer, Laurence Pettifer, Paul Marlton, Bill Gerrity, Steve Greenless and Sue Bradshaw. (Please excuse any misspellings this time!!)

Apologies: Barry Williams, Penny Millington, Margaret Wood, Joan Colledge and Marjory Walker.

Chairpersons – Proposed to stand next meeting-Penny Millington

Vice Chair – Proposed to stand next meeting- Steve Greenless

Secretary – Proposed to stand next meeting-Tracy Bratt

**Christine welcomed the group** and handed out copies of the Macclesfield Borough Council Parks Strategy for Meriton Road Park for those who had not received or read it previously.

Christine clarified her job title and explained how as Park technical Support Officer she has the role of covering 9 parks in the borough that have been highlighted as needing community input. She is establishing friends of groups for these parks and will be able to share ideas, activities and information from the other groups to aid our future projects with Meriton Road Park.

**The issue of funding was highlighted** – Meriton Road park has a maintenance allowance which stays the same but we may be able to alter how it is spent i.e.; if we feel the hedges need priority one season or litter bins need installing we may be able to dedicate funds to these rather than another regular maintenance job.

**Trying to get extra funding is where the group need to focus energies and use all of their influences in the local community.** We may be able to use different agencies from within the council such as sports liaison team, countryside agency, young people's agency such as anti-social co-ordinators etc.

Also we need to look towards local businesses that may sponsor small projects such as providing benches, bins or plants etc. BASF, Astra Zeneca, B&Q, Manchester Airport, Travis Perkins, Local Banks and Development Firms such as Jones Homes may be useful contacts for fundraising and publicity for projects.

There must also be a wealth of professions amongst the people who use and will use the park so we must use this valuable resource in the future!

Christine is going to look into the possibility of lottery funding for projects as there is to be a meeting about criteria for applications for lottery grants soon.

Christine explained how the group would be working in partnership with Macclesfield Borough Council as we would have to put forward project ideas to be agreed with the council.

**Role of Group raising money-** any money raised by the group would have to be put in a group account and could then be used for agreed projects. We could go for charitable status.

**Pavilion-** This was the main focus of discussion as it is seen as a health and safety issue and because the position of it is so prominent in the park. The group felt it is essential to establish whether it is a viable option to renovate the building or would we

need to be demolish it and replace with a different structure. It was felt essential that a structural survey be made on the building before we could plan any future projects such as using the building for sports storage, group meeting venue and local information/education/activity centre. Christine said she would enquire about the cost of having a survey done through the council agencies.

If the pavilion were an option for the future it was felt people would be able to develop the sports facilities available in the park and offer equipment rentals, timed usage of facilities such as tennis, pitch and putt, bookings for use of pavilion rooms etc which would require a business approach to keeping accounts for monies taken on a regular basis.

**Liaison with local pre-schools, schools, youth organisations and churches-** This was highlighted as an essential part of future plans. If we want our park to be a place to be respected and used by the community then we need to develop a close link with the youngsters of Handforth and their families. If we are able to develop projects that have been designed and implemented by the children such as planting a wildflower area, renovating the pond area, making a new adventure play area or developing sports facilities then we would instil in them a sense of ownership and pride in their park.

Our aim is to see the park used by the community in a variety of ways; it would be great to see annual family events taking place in the park and for the community to help to monitor the condition of their park and offer ideas for future improvements we could help with. Consultation with the community needs to be ongoing and the group need to discuss ideas of how we can achieve this.

**Lighting** – It was highlighted that there is a definite need for improved lighting in the park as this may be a reason for people not using the park. The use of solar lights was discussed as a possible option.

#### **Next Steps-**

Christine will ask about costs of surveying the pavilion.

Christine will look into lottery funding criteria.

The group will begin to think of small scale projects which will highlight the park in the local community.

Christine will look into the availability of using the Knowle Park meeting room for our next meetings.

**Date of Next Meeting** –Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 7pm