



Friends of Valley Gardens "Harrogate"
Harrogate's Award-Winning Park
Charity No: 1148369

President: Martin Fish

Minutes of the meeting held 10 January 2013

Present: J Blayney, M Fish, H McCallum, P Blayney, S Collier, P Collier, P Kilburn, T Sissons, B Stone, B Bentley, D Smeaton, S McKenzie, A Jordan, S Wood, J Clark, R Dobson, K Wilson

1. Apologies for absence – B Boden, S Clarke, N Hughes, C Stewart, J Gardner, A Grange, R Grange, D Lowrey, J Lowrey

2. Minutes of the meeting held 6 September 2012

Item 6 – noted that £1k had been received from Harry Bolland Trust

Item 9 – noted that £100 had been received from Yorkshire Building Society

The minutes were then accepted and signed as an accurate record.

3. Matters Arising – none

4. HBC Report

Question from the Community – What has happened to the Main Entrance sign?

This had been referred to at the last meeting. The sign has been removed in order to update to include the Skate Park and to re-orientate it so that it reflects the layout of the gardens. A new sign is due imminently.

Skate Park – at the last meeting it was mentioned that there was an issue of signage following concerns about people cycling/skating through the park. This work is currently being undertaken and should be completed in the near future. This also includes the main signage as mentioned above. Members raised concerns that skating continued to occur in the colonnade area and around the Sun Pavilion. P Kilburn agreed to pursue this further. It was reported that the contract for the position of Park Ranger had been re-tendered and S Williams had been re-appointed but with improved methods of tracking and reporting. This is subject to a 10 day cooling period but it is hoped that the re-appointment will be successful. Also confirmed that this position covers all key sites in the HBC area, not just Valley Gardens.

OMWPRB – the two trees mentioned at the last meeting (Birch and Robinia close to the building) have now been removed. The proposed tree near to the café, to be removed is still in existence. Other trees near the OMWPRB that are leaning over the main path have been inspected and so far HBC judge do not prove to be a problem or risk. However, the movement will be re-inspected on the next windy day. See item 7 below for further reports on the peat garden, and other trees.

Youth Offenders – HBC have been approached to see whether Youth Offenders could take on some responsibility for maintaining an area of the gardens. They will be closely supervised (but not by the gardeners). This initiative helps such people to rehabilitate and reintroduce them back into the community. PK will talk to the gardeners re potential areas they could work in.

5. Old Magnesia Well Pump Room Building (OMWPB) - Exterior

Roof – work complete but noted that this had been in a worse state than originally thought which incurred an additional £5K to restore. Period colouring and design has been followed. The building had also dropped resulting in fall pipes having to be moved to the rear of the building. The work was delayed due to weather which also hindered the work programmed adding additional costs.

Stonework – this is near completion

Utilities – Electrical proposals designed by N Hughes will be progressed when funds are available.

6. OMWPRB – Interior

A contact has been made for reclaimed pine flooring. M Coston has received quotations. Noted that the floor is showing signs of dampness but this will be reassessed once the outside works have been completed. Quotes for information boards are being obtained and the Royal Pump Room will assist by providing some input. Glazing is being stored in council stores. Stressed that the interior must be designed in a flexible way in order to meet differing events etc.

7. Peat Garden

Hard Landscaping – reclaimed Yorkshire Stone will be used on delivery ,approximately March. The company “Prices” is providing the stone and Robert Grange is liaising with a Harrogate firm with a probability of them receiving the contract to lay the paving. R Grange and P Kilburn have met to discuss laying of foundations. Prices have stated they will store the stock until we are in a position to commence the work, alternatively it can be stored in an HBC depot storage unit. A 40% deposit has already been made for the paving.

Drainage – there is a requirement for water to drain off the building and surrounding areas and it is essential that any drainage system can cope with the extra water. There is a possibility that we could connect with a Yorkshire Water drain but this may need to be a contractual agreement with them. R Grange has a YW contact and will pursue if necessary and possible.

Paving – In principle, R Grange will prepare a specification working with HBC Building Management Team. This will then be sent to the company who will lay the paving. Subject to agreements with HBC (acting as Clerk of Works) and they will place the order and FOVG will forward necessary payment.

Retaining Walls – significant drop at the rear of the building. Options to be considered for dealing with this problem. Concerns were expressed over earth coming onto the paving due to the incline.

Lead Pipe – plans to replace but we need to know if this work would be covered under “replacement of lead pipe agreement”. This work will be considered as part of the complete process.

Trees – It is planned that Golders will revisit the landscape plan during the next 3 to 4 weeks, in discussion with HBC and FOVG, in relation to vistas and density, and a framework for progressing agreed minimising resources for future maintenance as much as possible. It was requested that some signage be provided showing plans, once agreed, so that the public can see what we are undertaking. Much discussion took place regarding the Handkerchief Tree which overhangs the building, and concerns were raised about its potential risk to the building. Also a Laurel at the rear of the building which may need to be removed. P Kilburn will consider pruning that does not harm or disrupt the trees and if proved necessary, will prune back as far as possible.

Planting of the area – Yorkshire Garden Trust will provide a list of plants but FOVG stressed that minimum maintenance must be considered. The Chairman will discuss with P Kilburn when received. Yorkshire Building Society may also assist with volunteering as part for their management scheme.

Replanting – Nigel Harrison of Askham Bryan College would like to help with planting and assist in other areas of the gardens as part of practical assessments for students.

Pinewoods Conservation Group – proposals by RHS to lease part of the Pinewoods are available on HBC website and also a notice is in the Harrogate Advertiser. This proposal would be under lease therefore allowing retention of interest. A controlling document would be in place for management of the land . Individual views and opinions can be made as per the notices to Peter Jordan at HBC. It was stressed that this opportunity to comment should be taken by all who have views.

8. Volunteer Gardeners

T Sissons reported on a successful 12 months. More volunteers would be appreciated. Again, noted that Yorkshire Building Society may help. A future work plan is being prepared with Simon Collier. There is still a requirement for a promotional leaflet to hand out to visitors. K Wilson and N Hughes are working on updating of the 3 fold leaflet which Enid Taylor have the art work for and have provided acceptable quotes for reprinting. It is suggested that the term “member” be altered to “friend”. This may encourage more take up as it infers we do not expect all to provide hands on help, simply an annual payment would be appreciated. Also to add a section “ways you can help”. Suggested that High Viz jackets with a logo be provided for volunteer workers. Helen to pursue through HBC.

9. Treasurers Report

A Grange has taken on the role of Acting Treasurer. In her absence the Chairman reported that the group is solvent. Invoices for works undertaken on the OMWPRB have been paid. The invoice for stage one of the joinery works will be paid by the Arts and Heritage Fund on receipt of invoices. When settled the bank account will hold £8526.55. More funds are required in order to progress future works.

10. Membership update

It is not possible to provide details as it is still very early in the new joining year. Sue Clarke needs to meet with A Grange to view bank statements and identify standing order payments and then chase other payments outstanding.

It was requested that a note be sent to all asking them to opt for Gift Aid and this option needs to be placed on revised membership forms and all future correspondence regarding membership.

11. Election of Publicity / Marketing Officer

Kim Wilson was duly appointed, nominated by J Blayney, seconded by P Blayney and unanimously agreed by those present.

Kim reported on a number of possible ideas she has for raising further funds and methods to raise public awareness which could also increase revenue, and potential sponsorship deals that could be pursued in person or via the website.

12. Funding / Sponsorship / Community Support Awards and Applications

The Chairman has sent out a letter to all previous and current sponsors thanking them for their support. Grants achieved:-

Arts and Heritage Fund - £5k application granted but not awarded until works completed and invoices produced

Free Masons – pending

Yorkshire Building Society - £100 donation received.

K Wilson recommended that contact be made with the Harrogate Beer Festival organisers, taking place during February at the Crown Hotel. They offer to pay profits to a chosen charity. Application will be made by the Kim and Chairman will forward a specimen letter previously used as guidance via email.

Asda Community Board – please collect your tokens at the till and place them in the FOVG slot at the entrance/exit.

13. Duke of York Patronage

This was achieved and received in October but the Duke of York not being able to attend because of the weather met awardees in December.

14. Events update

Race Night – only 7 FOVG members attended but the event was open to those present in Harlow Hill Club and it raised £151.00.

Gardeners Question Time – again a low turn out due to inclement weather, raised £171.00

Santa's Grotto – and again the weather hampered this event run over two weekends. £206 raised minus £20 for the printing of fliers.

1940's Day – Sunday 16 June. Working Committee to comprise of J Blayney, P Blayney, K Wilson, H McCallum, N Hughes, A and R Grange, B Bentley, S Roberts. A meeting will be called in due course to commence planning. Over £3,000 was raised last year but with better organization this can be improved on. The Yorkshire Building Society is offering some volunteers which is to be confirmed and possibly some bakers.

M & S Bag Packing – raised £260.00

15. Jubilee Tree – pending

16. AOB

16.1 Licensing – The Chairman has appealed against the levying of £49.99 Market Traders License charge, per stand in various areas of the town classified as public land, along with other community groups. This was to apply to certain areas including the Valley Gardens. The OMWPRB is going to be exempt as it cannot be classified as an enclosure. The charges for stands however the committee voted no charge this year will be subject to review in 2014.

16.2 Reported that, due to visitor counter on the entrance gates, 2,575,900 members of the public visited the Valley Gardens during 2012, from when the counters were installed.

17. Date of Next Meeting

AGM followed by General Meeting – Thursday 14 March 2013, St Peters Church, 7.30 pm

H McCallum
Secretary