



# *Friends of Valley Gardens*

## **Harrogate's Award-Winning Park**

### **President: Martin Fish**

#### **Minutes of the General Meeting held Thursday 5 April, 2012**

Present: H McCallum, R Dobson, B Stone, P Kilburn, J Blayney, J Clark, D Smeaton, M Smeaton, B Exall, T Sissons, S Collier, P Collier, N Hughes, A Grange, R Grange, L Clarke, D Evans, P Walmsley

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Apologies for absence – M Fish, J Gardner, S MacKenzie, P Jones, B Jones, S Wood, S Leigh, P Leigh, J Kimpton, J Ryan, A Henson, P Blayney, B Nash, B Bentley, P Clarke, B Boden, J Travena, Rosie
3. Minutes of the meeting held 19 January 2012 – approved as an accurate record
4. Matters Arising - there were no matters arising.
5. Report from Harrogate Borough Council (P Kilburn) including questions from the community

#### **Question from the Community**

There is a lack of 'Keep Dogs on Leads' signs in Valley Gardens, can anything be done?

#### **Answer**

There is no byelaw preventing people from letting their dogs run loose. There is a clause that refers to people causing a nuisance but cannot really link that to a dog. The byelaws that cover Valley Gardens were approved in 1956 and do not really reflect the modern living environment of today. There is also the Bogs Fields Act 1986 which covers part of the Valley Gardens but again this does not mention dogs. It does however enable us to make byelaws within Bogs Field. P Kilburn has discussed with legal teams, what would be required to deal with this matter and should we choose to, what would be required to amend the byelaws. They have advised that the procedure for amending is the same as for making a new Byelaw, we would need to do a new one and revoke the old ones. This procedure begins with us drafting the byelaws. There are model byelaws available on DCLG's website (along with some guidance) at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/local/governanceelections/byelaws/localgovernmentlegislation/> The model we would use for this is model 2. The legislation that we would make this under would depend on how we derived an interest in the land and would be section 164 of the Public Health Act 1875, section 15 of the Open Spaces Act 1906 or sections 12 and 15 of the Open Spaces Act 1906. Once the byelaws are drafted (copies sent to the DCLG for provisional approval on the form and wording) they would need to be put before Committee and then before Council for approval. Once this has been done we would need to undertake a consultation period with the public including a notice in the local paper (previously we have also displayed a notice in the Library), there may be particular bodies to include in the consultation. This period is normally for a month. Any objections would need to be considered and there could be a possibility of a public inquiry if there are many. Following this consultation, and once the wording and form is agreed, we are required to have the byelaws approved by the Secretary of State who may approve and set a date that they come into force. It is a fairly easy procedure to follow, and looking back in old files it has taken up to a year from draft to Sec of State approval. P Kilburn is going to discuss this with our Cabinet Member and feels it is something that is worth doing consideration needs to be given to what is included and at which sites.

#### **Additional Information**

- The total number of visitors since 6 February is 427,297 (at 3 April).
- The new games pavilion – planning permission has been agreed. Tender for the works has been sent out and is due back on 20 April 2012. Estimated costs have now increased by £15,000 due to additional works required i.e. preventative measures against Radon and an alternative solution to dealing with the foul waste. Approval is required for the additional spend and if successful looking to start 14 May 2012 for completion 20 July.
- A skate park user etiquette session is taking place on Thursday 5 April at 6-8pm and two others are planned:
  - Tuesday 10 April – 10 - 12pm and then at 1- 3pm on the same day
- The new castle/fort was completed on 26 March and officially opened on 3 April
- The herbaceous beds have been made larger, and are nearly finished.
- Half of the large Cypress conifers that screened the back of the bandstand have been removed because they were damaged due to wind. It is intended to remove the other half at the end of this year/early next and fully replant the whole area in a similar manner to the Nectar Bar. During this summer an annual wildflower mix will be sown in the cleared area to continue with the bees, butterflies and blooms.

- A young chainsaw sculptor has expressed a wish to create a Jubilee throne/seat in VG in time for the Jubilee weekend. This could be temporary or permanent depending on how well it is received. It is planned to install the piece (that people will be able to use) on the grassed area opposite the play area (Bogs Field side). Exact location still to be determined.
- Games in Parks user surveys are available from the games pavilion or online <http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/Pages/Have-your-say.aspx> Please log on and participate.
- A Volunteer Recording Hours form was provided in order to record time spent by active members on meeting preparation / attendance, fundraising, planting etc. These should be completed and returned to HBC.

Residents in Ellis House have commented about noise from the Skate Park and have queried whether some kind of screening would assist to minimize this. HBC's opinion is that this has been provided but if there is a gap then they are happy to discuss further. It was stressed that time is required for the screening plants to mature. A and R Grange agreed to feedback to the residents.

It was noted that the park looks "stunning" and thanks were conveyed to Patrick and his team, in particular Simon and Paula Collier and their gardeners.

## 6. Events update

6.1 **Report on Play Your Cards Right Quiz Night** held 17 March – reported that this event had been very successful and enjoyable and raised a net profit of £270.00.

## 6.2 Update on forthcoming events

- **M & S Bag Packing** – this will take place on Saturday 5 May 2012, 10 am – 4 pm. £720 net was achieved at the last bag packing day. Volunteers were requested. A further date will be arranged for December.
- **40's Day** – Sunday 10 June. Stands are slowly being booked. Noted that many stall holders are prioritizing larger events which are taking place. 300 leaflets have been sent to Newark event. It has been agreed that food sales will be managed by FOVG, hot dogs, drinks etc. Hales Bar is arranging a bar. Marshalling will be undertaken by the Rotary Club. Simon Collier will assist with direction. R and A Grange will be present in the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room Building for presentations to the public. Simon Roberts is managing vintage and WW2 vehicles together with re-enactment groups. Helen McCallum is booking acts into the bandstand for the duration of the event. Jane Blayney's brother will run a book stall for FOVG profits and any books are welcomed. Tombola prizes are required and these any donations can be brought to the next meeting on 3 May. Tickets will be £1 each for quality prizes, i.e. meals etc. Suggested and agreed to have a second tombola stall with smaller prizes, i.e. for children, at £1 per strip. Suggested that a raffle could also be held. Any further ideas are welcomed.
- **Big Picnic** – 8 July – it is proposed that the OMWPRB be opened up.
- **National Play Day** – 1 August – again, proposed that the OMWPRB be opened up.
- Helen to check and arrange with organizers of the Big Picnic and National Play Day.
- **Pat Clark's Open Garden** - 19 August on Brunswick Drive. All proceeds to FOVG.
- **Allotment Show** – 19 August – agreed that this is not worthwhile and also it clashes with the open garden event.
- **Heritage Open Days** – 7/8/9 September have been registered. Over 700 visitors attended the 2011 event.
- **Gardener's Question Time with Martin Fish** – this will be held in the Sun Pavilion building. A date is to be confirmed but may be 25 September. Further details to be confirmed and publicised.
- **Social Evening** – Race Night - 15 September at Harlow Hill Club. Details will be sent out nearer to the date.
- **Santa's Grotto** – 15/16 & 22/23 December
- **Fish and Chip Quiz night** – 24 November at Harlow Hill Club.

7. **Membership** – currently stands at 215 (some are families). Much discussion took place regarding the membership process, with particular regard to dates of joining and renewal. Some members join mid-year and have not renewed January. Further consideration will be given to streamlining the system. There are 141 blocks in the membership, with only 40% who have rejoined. Some members feel that if they cannot physically help then they should not renew. However, it was stressed that just being a member is helpful. Any ideas as to how to increase the membership should be sent to Sue Clarke, Administrative Officer. It was suggested that the group be advertised in the Library and Liam Clarke agreed to do this.

## 8. Old Magnesia Well Pump Room Building update

An application has been made to the Duke of York fund for accreditation. If received this can be included in all publicity and will aid in attracting sponsorship. A decision should be received during June. Refurbishment plans have been submitted to HBC who will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State within the forthcoming months. Quotes have been received and are included in the plans. An application for listed building consent is required as part of the submission. A timeline gant chart is being prepared with dates to be considered for works.

Once we have received charity status, consent and design access statement (HBC) then we are able to apply to larger funding sources. An article written by Liam Clarke has been placed in the April edition of Yorkshire Life. Interest has been shown following the article.

9. **FOVG Jubilee Tree** – a proposal was considered to plant a Jubilee Tree in the Park. Permission would be required. It was recommended that a flower tree be chosen and the options suggested were; Kat alpha or Eucriphia. It was thought that two could be planted at the Green Park Entrance depending on finances available.

10. **Any Other Business** - there was no other business.

11. **Date of Next Meeting** - Thursday 2 May 2012, 7.30 pm, Harlow Hill Club