



Friends of Valley Gardens

Charity No: 1148369
President Martin Fish



Minutes of General Meeting held at St Peter's Church on 14 November 2013

Present: Jane Blayney (Chairman), Kim Wilson, Jon Collins, Patrick Kilburn, Betty Bentley, Barbara Stone, Liz Mann, Liz Chidlow, Jenny Travena, Robert Grange, Simon Collier, Tony Sissons, Sally MacKenzie, Malcolm Neesam, Neil Hind, Anne Grange, Peter Blayney, Guest Presenter: Graham Smith.

Apologies: Wayne Trott, Mark Coston, Martin Fish, Jim Clark, Helen McCallum, Trish McLaughlin.

Welcome: **JB** welcomed Graham Smith who had brought some albums of old post cards, Malcolm Neesam who had brought an old map of the water pipes in the Valley Gardens and Neil Hind, Vice Chairman of the Pinewoods Conservation Group. FOVG has become corporate members of the Pinewoods Conservation Group and similarly the Pinewoods Conservation Group of FOVG.

Minutes of meeting 8 August: These were approved as a correct record subject to Mr Sampson's title being changed to "Chief Executive" (Any other business: paragraph 1).

Matters arising: **PK** reassured the meeting that further work on tree clearance would not be delayed as he could issue instructions for this work at any time.

Report from HBC inc. questions from the community: There were no questions for **PK**. HBC had been invited to attend the Mumbler's Dinner Awards Ceremony. The Valley Gardens had won the favourite children's attraction trophy for, **PK** had assumed, the play area. Carvings on a tree on Montpelier Hill had been done by Chainsaw Mick. Care was needed when selecting the most appropriate part of the trunk.

Exterior of OMWPR: **RG** reported that the drainage and the paving had been satisfactorily completed and the four bollards had been installed and painted. The water supply had been provided for, the pointing finalised and the algae removed from the stone. In preparation for the rockery, trees had been removed and favourable comments had been received on overall appearances. Temporary storage had been provided in the bandstand for items of equipment. Thanks were due to **HBC, TM, SC** and **PC, BB** and **TS**. The next phase had begun with the installation of the polycarbonate security guards over the front and side windows. The original windows would be removed, treated and re-glazed over the next week or so. There had been hopes that members would be able to paint the roof timbers; however, it had been felt that this was not feasible and it had been decided to contract out this work. One security light on each side would soon be in position, to activate on approach. Funding had been obtained for the disabled ramp. Lights not working should be reported to **SC**

JB reported that much work had been done by **LC** and **JT** on the rockery and path design and suitable planting. Advice on drainage had been given by **RG**. When available, HBC gravediggers would excavate the site. The group had been joined by Jo Makin, who has experience both as a lecturer in garden design and in the construction of rockeries. Thanks were due to all concerned.

Interior of OMWPR: A start should be made on the first fix electrics for which £2,500 would be needed (half the total cost). This would precede work on the boarding and beams. Apart from the installation of the seating, lighting, stove, sink and hand pump, the fitting of the flooring, together with work on the doors would be last. An appeal would be launched for the stove, sink and hand pump.

1940s Open Day: **KW** reported that **HM** was dealing with entertainment and there would be both CanCan dancers and Morris dancers. The RAF would bring a recruitment marquee with weaponry. A Battle of Britain Memorial Flight fly-over had been requested; however, its materialisation over the Valley Gardens on 29 June next year depended on it being booked to appear nearby, as well as the weather. Yorkshire Building Society would run the cake stall. There would be a tombola and a request would be sent out for unused Christmas presents. Stallholders were being recruited from the Christmas and Harlow Carr markets and it was hoped that benefits would accrue from the Tour de France being staged the weekend after. Suggestions as to how FOVG might capitalise on this event were needed. Paul Mayo was organising a dance festival the day before and there was to be an Allo Allo dinner, all of which would encourage visitors to come for a full weekend or longer. **PK** advised that the Tour de France may obstruct bedding plans which could impact on grass cutting. He wished to be advised of any areas vitally needing cutting for the event, e.g. in front of the bandstand. There were other anniversaries next year and help from volunteer gardeners was needed.

Treasurer's report: **AG** advised that £11,797 had been paid for the drainage and painting. £5,000 had been received from the Elsie Sykes Trust and £1,000 from the Duke of York's Trust. Other contributions included Heritage Open Days £292, St Peter's Refreshment Day £488, **BB**'s talk to the Starbeck Ladies Circle £20, **JB**'s presentation to Kaleidoscope £40 and a £7 donation on site. It would be advantageous to place collecting buckets outside the OMWPR when work was taking place and all working members should wear their FOVG tabards to advertise the group and invite donations. Mumblers had volunteered to help at fundraising events. The balance at the bank was £13,470, which included £1,000 from the Duke of York's Trust. £7,000 was allocated to the peat garden and £6,470 to internal works. Money receivable on completion was £3,000 HBC Arts and Heritage Fund, up to £450 from the Harry Bolland Trust for the disabled ramp and possibly £100 from the Yorkshire Building Society. To reflect true costs, all expenses should be claimed by the end of December regardless. They may be donated subsequently but gift aided for maximum advantage.

Membership: **JC** reported an estimated 85 individual members, 40 family members and 6 corporate members totaling 131 with a combined income to FOVG of approximately £1,000. Examination of the membership renewal months showed June as the most popular. It was therefore appropriate to adopt a renewal process on a month-by-month basis rather than having a set month for all – January had been suggested. 85% pay by standing order but very few subscriptions were gift aided. Measures would be taken to rectify this.

Appointments: As **JC** had taken over the role of Membership Secretary from **PB** it was necessary to confirm his appointment. This was proposed by **JB** and seconded by **AG**. Voting was unanimously in favour. **JC** was therefore elected Membership Secretary. **PB** had been carrying out the role of Acting Secretary. **JB** nominated **PB** as Secretary, seconded by **KW**. Voting was unanimously in favour. **PB** was therefore elected Secretary.

Funding applications: **JB** reported applications in the pipeline included: Santander £5,000, Wren £10,000, Yorkshire Building Society £100. Applications would continue to be made.

There would be another Bag Packing day at Marks and Spencer from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm on Friday 20 December. Volunteers were needed. Members able to offer even just an hour should contact **JB**.

Any other business: Grateful thanks were expressed to guest Graham Smith who had kindly brought a fine collection of old post cards of Harrogate and in particular the Valley Gardens. Members found them fascinating.

Malcolm Neesam was thanked personally for the excellent “tree” article he had written in a recent edition of the Harrogate Advertiser. Malcolm also brought an old map of the pipe works from the Magnesia wellhead down to the Royal Pump Room Museum before the construction of the New Magnesia Pump Room (today the Magnesia Café). His unfailing support of FOVG was greatly appreciated.

At a recent Harrogate in Bloom awards event **TS** had received the Larchfield Manor Trophy on behalf of all the Gardening Team. Congratulations were expressed to those concerned.

PB suggested the adoption of Hygeia, ancient Greek Goddess of Health, as the FOVG symbol. This would represent a highly appropriate link with Harrogate’s spa heritage and the healthy attributes of the town’s mineral waters and it may be appropriate to erect a statue close to the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room, the earliest captive source of curative water in the Valley Gardens. Hygeia was often depicted with a serpent which provides a further link with many of the benches in the Valley Gardens. Members’ views were invited.

Date of next meeting: The Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 13 March at 7.30 pm in St Peter’s Church Brostoff Community Room. The agenda for the AGM and the date of the next General Meeting will be advised nearer the time.

Chairman: Jane Blayney (01423) 505231 Vice-Chairman: Neil Hughes (01423) 504390

Treasurer: Anne Grange (01423) 522720

Acting Admin Officer Peter Blayney (01423) 505231, Marketing/Publicity Officer Kim Wilson 01423 561618

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