



Friends of Valley Gardens

Harrogate's Award-Winning Park

Minutes of the meeting held 7 October 2010

Present: T Holleman, J Blayney, H McCallum, P Leigh, S Leigh, S MacKenzie, M Holleman, S Witman, S Boden, A Jordan, P Kilburn, P Blayney, B Bentley, D Edwards, L Bright, T Sissons, A Howard, J Clark, J Gardner

Those present were welcomed to the meeting and thanks were given to Harlow Hill Club for use of their facilities.

1. **Apologies for absence** received from – R Henson, A Henson, C Stewart, D Smeaton, M Smeaton, G McCormick, J Leury, M Mann, S Wood
2. **Minutes of the meeting held 28 July 2010** – confirmed as an accurate record.
3. **Matters Arising**

3.1 Comments from the Chair

Thanks were given to members for their continued support and accomplishments over the summer period. Special thanks were given to the Vice-Chairman and Secretary

Thanks conveyed to HBC for the addition of two extra swings in the play area.

Thanks conveyed to the Civic Society for paying and replacing of the urns at the Main Entrance.

Crocus planting took place for entry to the Guinness Book of Records. However the 7,000 planted did not achieve the planned 10,000 bulbs. Further planting took place at the Main Entrance with three schools assisting.

The Chair then confirmed that the group would now focus on one project, that being the Old Magnesia Well. The division of resources and time with significant limitations on both FOVG and HBC would be too complex and costly if two projects were in place. Future fund raising will be allocated to this project.

The group will continue to seek grant funding for the Woodland Walk project and will progress this as resources and personnel allow, including the availability of HBC support.

3.2 Update from HBC

To replace the orientation maps is estimated at £550. It was felt that these should be considered when new projects are underway and / or complete. The group was requested to consider sharing of the cost.

New signs pointing to the toilet block and signs at the toilet block are to be reviewed at a site survey planned for mid – October and FOVG will make recommendations to HBC regarding appropriate locations.

Gates at the Bandstand are being progressed. The current black steel fencing is a temporary measure.

Repairs to the Sun Parlour ceilings are an issue and HBC are currently obtaining further quotations to undertake the repairs which to date over the last 2 years have totaled in the region of £8K. The previous repairs had reinforcing mesh but this has limited effect due to the extent of vandalism. Alternative options have been identified by a Building Surveyor which includes the provision of lockable gates, netting, and / or CCTV. All of these could be visually obtrusive and restrictive in terms of access. HBC will inform the group as soon as prices have been received and a date agreed to proceed.

Graffiti – it is hoped that this will be removed very soon.

Pillar at Green Park Entrance - An estimate of £900 has been received for this work. HBC are obtaining further quotes and will provide the group with a copy of the specification.

Maze – Member's comments were requested as to whether the maze should continue. It was noted that it is currently under staffed and that the financial contribution to HBC is nil. A vote was taken and 3 members were in favour of retaining, 10 not in favour.

Skate / BMX Park – the process has taken longer than expected. The planning application is due to become public and posted on the website for comments.

Toilets at Children's Play Area – cost estimated as £120K. At present there are no approved plans, timescales or budgets and this project is subject to finances and potential budget cuts.

No Football Signs – these are now in place however the contact number for the Police has been omitted. PCSO to be asked if the number can be placed on the signs.

Lighting – it was noted that a number of lights are not operating. P Kilburn agreed to pass this issue on to the lighting engineers for appropriate action to be taken.

Rubbish / Litter – A meeting with Environmental Services is pending to consider locations and sizes of bins. It was noted that there are no litter bins on the Lime Walk pavement.

Code of Dress – on Sunday 12 September a male was noted sitting on a bench, dressed only in brief underpants. Two young girls were occupying an adjacent bench. It was stated that the code of dress is the same as in any public place, and that if members of the public feel dress codes are inappropriate they should report such sightings to the Police on 0845 60 60 24 7.

Smoking in Play Area – confirmed that there is no legislation or enforcements in place to stop this therefore challenging is difficult to deal with.

3.3 General Updates

Open Garden at Pat Clarke's – this was a great success which raised £650 and recruited new members. Lily Bright – McCallum presented flowers to the Lady Mayoress.

Display Boards, a Gazebo and banner have been purchased for public events. This gives a professional impression.

History of Valley Gardens talk – Malcolm Neesam conducted a very interesting and popular talk. 39 people attended and the event raised approximately £200. A £20 contribution was paid to Harlow Hill Club for hosting this event.

Japanese Garden – £500 has been awarded towards planting.

Press Releases – HBC are happy to assist with the preparation and circulation of press releases.

Information Packs – Volunteers at public events feel that they should have some kind of information pack so that they can answer questions to the public. Also, Andrew Jordan is retaining a file of interesting information, please send any press releases or items of interest to Andrew.

4. Old Magnesia Well Project

An update was given by J Blayney (Project Leader) on progress to date. The sub – committee progressing this project welcomes anyone with an interest in any aspect. During the summer several fundraising events have taken place. The group is continuing such activities and also applying for grants. A meeting with a landscape architect is planned during October after which a detailed brief will be prepared in readiness for requesting quotes for works. Assuming that sufficient funds are available, it is hoped that the project will commence early in 2012.

Stressed that this project must be cost neutral. It is hoped that tours of the gardens may take place which would be charged for.

A major issue is the replacing of a sub-station currently located at the rear of the building.

The sub – committee will continue to work with other interested groups such as the Civic Society and Harrogate Lions Group.

A further fund raising event is being considered with will consist of Mr Bevington giving a talk about Fountains Abbey. Also a Gardeners Question time scheduled for January 2011.

5. Woodland Walk Project

T Sissons is researching and obtaining ideas to develop this scheme. A councilor's letter has been sent to local residents for feedback regarding the project. Feedback is pending.

6. Membership

We now have 71 paid members. Noted that unpaid members no longer receive correspondence in order to reduce costs. Information can be obtained via the web site.

7. 40's Day

Date set for 18 June 2011. Volunteers and ideas welcome.

8. Election of President

The following nominations have been received:-

Prince Charles / Matthew Wilson / Barron Willis of Knaresborough / Alan Titchmarsh

Query "What does the group want from the President" and "What do they have to offer"?

Agreed that a resume of merits for each should be prepared and brought back to the group for further consideration.

9. Questions from the Community – there were no new questions raised.

10. Any Other Business

10.1 Formation of a Gardening Volunteer Group to assist with maintenance. Any members interested should contact a member of the committee. Requested that volunteers are provided with ID badges of some sort in order to be recognisable.

10.2 FOVG Talks – T Holleman has agreed to give talks on the work of the group to community groups. S Leigh has provided information of possible interested parties.

10.3 Agenda – confusion of some members present that the agenda did not reflect the order of business as set out in the original agenda issued.

10.4 Website – will be updated at least fortnightly.

10.5 Titles of Committee members – noted that the term Vice-Chair is deemed offensive. Proposed that this be considered when the Constitution is reviewed.

11 Date of Next Meeting

Date to be notified at this meeting once agreed with Harlow Hill Club

Helen McCallum
Secretary