



Friends of Valley Gardens

Harrogate's Award-Winning Park

President: Martin Fish

Minutes of the meeting held 29 September 2011

Present: J Blayney, N Hughes, J Clark (from item 9), S Mackenzie, J Peachman, B Exall, P Blayney, P Kilburn, B Stone, B Bentley, R Dobson, A Bune, T Sissons, H McCallum, L Bright-McCallum

ACTION

1. **Welcome to those present.**

2. **Apologies for absence** – S Collier, P Collier, B Boden, P Clarke, D Bune, F Jager, A Broadbent, S Wood, R Henson, A Henson, M Fish, J Luery, G Charlton, J Gardner, P Leigh, S Leigh, J Campbell, J Travena, J Jakes

3. **Minutes of the meeting held 21 July**

Minute 12.2 should read that there are **no** byelaws that refer specifically to open flames / BBQ's

4. **Matters Arising**

Minute 7	Fish and Chip Quiz night – those present agreed that this should take place. Date confirmed as 26 November 2011, 7 pm, Harlow Hill Club. Notification to be issued.	HM
Minute 8	Christmas cards / calendars – will not be pursued this year, but possibly for 2012. Planting plans for around the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room to be placed on website Last day for green discs at Waitrose – FOVG are currently leading.	JB NH
Minute 13.1	Next newsletter to be prepared. Articles of interest to be forwarded to N Hughes.	NH

5. **Police Report**

Reported that, due to rotas, cutbacks and priorities elsewhere, a police presence may not be available. It has been questioned as to the relevance and the need for FOVG to be given a full report of incidents unless they are related to criminal damage to the park and buildings. Any reports of ASB are investigated and dealt with by officers and, more often than not, the perception of the public is mostly not ASB once investigated. There have been reports about the Skate Park and Play Area which HBC are aware of. If members feel that they would like a report from the Police then the Chairman will contact our local PC to reach an agreement for future meetings. Those present stated that, if issues of ASB are distressing to others then they would like to be made aware. Each ASB report is given to HBC and very little apply to the Skate Park. A group of young teenagers had been noted early hours one morning and were taken home by the Police. There have been reports from local residents that the Skate Park is being used late at night. Noted that since its opening, there have been 4 incidents which were around 10 pm. All reports are collated to identify problems and in return, target resources to manage such issues. It was requested that the Police attend one meeting per year with a report.

HM

6. **Events Update**

6.1 **Tea Dance** – it was reported that the recent tea dance was poorly attended and that there is much competition with free venues and their own catering. At the last tea dance donations of £250 were received. Agreed that a regular tea dance will not be pursued.

6.2 **40's Day** - £100 donation given in retrospect of the previous event. Reported that £1200 profit had been achieved. For 2012 it is proposed that the Sun Pavilion building be hired for both am and pm which will accommodate undercover stall holders. It is also proposed that non-commercial stall holders be charged a nominal amount as some are raising money via sales. It is crucial that a budget and financial strategy be prepared for 2012. There appears to be much interest but the event planning needs to be better structured with much more co-operation and assistance from the membership. A small planning group will be established to list contacts and initial plans. JB/HM
The Chairman is to visit Pickering 40's weekend 14/15 October. JB

6.3 **Big Picnic** - this was a PR event for FOVG and it is worthwhile taking part.

6.4 **National Play Day** - again, a PR event for FOVG. Very busy this year and children took part in some small activities. Suggested that for both events during 2012 we offer visits to the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room Building.

6.5 **Quintessential Evening** – noted that this was a “one off” and there will be no Christmas event.

6.6 **Harrogate Autumn Flower Show** – donations of £1844 were collected over the three days. Thanks to M Fish for and to all the volunteers who attended to make this such a success. Letter to be sent to volunteers. HM

6.7 **Heritage Open Days** – The three open days attracted in excess of 500 visitors. N Hughes provided an excellent resume at intervals of the heritage of the building. £200 in donations were received together with 8 new members. An interview was given live to Radio Crewe with a focus on the “Witch’s house”. Proposed that a Halloween evening be arranged. JB/NH/HM

6.8 **Pat Clarke’s Open Garden** – this event raised £102.00. Thanks to Pat Clarke.

6.9 **Halloween in Old Magnesia Well Pump Room Building** – proposed that an event be arranged and marketed to schools/ churches/community groups. Anyone able to help encouraged to come forward. An events application would need to be made to HBC. JB/NH/HM

In general it was noted that all of the above events had managed and organised by very few. That the burden regularly falls on them and that more volunteers are needed to help for future events. ALL

7. **Treasurer’s Report** - Tea Dance raised £445.35 including donations. £1845.36 was raised in donations at the Flower Show, £212 from Pat Clarke’s open day, and £69 in new members. The bank account is currently showing £9019.96.

7.1 Successful funding applications include £1000 from the Arts and Heritage Fund.

7.2 Funding applications pending – A bid for £3K has been submitted to the Harry Bolland Trust. £3k to Harrogate Strategic Partnership.

Membership funds are used for the administration of the group. Membership has increased by 100% but likewise administration costs also have. As a result, the current membership fees may need to be reviewed in view of the rising cost of printing and postage. A proposal will be made for a vote at the November meeting. Stressed that we are not only fundraising, but we are also volunteer gardeners for the park. JB/HM

B Bentley reported that whilst she is working in the gardens as a volunteer, she also speaks to many visitors and she requested that a leaflet be available to hand out. JB

8. **Membership** – currently stands at 35 Family, 75 individual, and 2 organisations. It is proposed that the constitution be amended to add new posts to the Executive, those being an Administration Officer, primarily to be the contact with members, and Marketing and Publicity Officer to administer events. This was agreed and also that, in the interim, Sue Clark will take on the role of Administration Officer. Nomination forms will be sent out with the minutes and nominations considered at the November meeting. HM

9. **Projects**

9.1 **Old Magnesia Well Pump Room Building Update**

The NEDL boxes are being investigated further with a view to relocating them and who is responsible for the cost of doing so. PK is establishing who approved and installed them.

When it comes to the point that we are requesting planning permission for the restoration works, plans will need to be submitted to the Planning Committee who will make appropriate recommendations to the Secretary of State. If approved we will then be in a position to go ahead with restoration. FOVG can provide some of the labour free of charge and other labour may be provided by HBC within permitted budgets. The planning process can take up to 6 months. Stressed that when clearance of the area is undertaken, replanting must take place as soon as possible.

Suggested that a “fund meter” be created to show funds in hand and those required. NH

Confirmed that a consultation has been undertaken and no objections received. Any concerns that we had asked to raise funds for planting when our primary objective is to restore the building, were not prevalent I the few consultation responses received.

From intervals spent in the building many different possibilities have come to light for the interior. The concept plans may need to alter and develop accordingly. It was requested that any old photos / postcards / images, provide these for the detail to be studied when planning restoration works and also to build up a history of the building.

9.2 **Rockery Garden (Woodland Walk)** – this will remain as a pending project.

10. **Gardening Volunteer Group** - guidance packs are pending from HBC. PM
SC will notify PM of works to be undertaken and TS will complete the appropriate paperwork.
At present there are 10 volunteers. Since July the following works have taken place: - mulching in the NZ Gardens, dahlia beds tidied up, wood preserving, railings painted, dead heading of roses, winter planting, rhododendrams cut back, and weeding. PK commented that standards had been raised and he gave his thanks to those involved.

11. **Report from HBC**

11.1 **Skate Park** – This is proving to be very popular. A meeting of the users was recently held and those present very positive. They raised concerns over etiquette and many younger people using the facility without understanding how it works. HBC are looking to limit the time that younger people use the facility and have also set up a session using an expert coach to explain the do's and don'ts. This is arranged for 2 pm on 8 October. It is hoped that older/more experienced users together with the less experienced, will get together to pass on good practice. This event has been posted on the Face book page and a good positive response has been received. It is not proposed to organise formal coaching sessions, but some “master classes” could be publicized where experienced users would be available.

Concerns were raised about users going through the Park, and litter problems. Any cycling/skating through the park is being dealt with if noted and relocation of litter bins around the skate park is being considered.

11.2 **Sun Parlour** – the repairs have now been completed

11.3 **Play Area** – the additional picnic benches are in situation.

11.4 **Bio-Diversity Works** – no further report.

11.5 **Vandalism** – graffiti on the NEDL boxes has been removed.

11.6 **Signs** – At the last meeting it was suggested that signs be situated to state the timescales of the pool being filled and emptied annually. This changes each year depending on when Easter falls. Details will be placed on the HBC website in advance and possibly a sign directing the public to the site so that they can check as required.

11.7 **Lighting** – Reports have been received that six lights are not operating. These have been passed to the lighting section for repairs. If any further issues are noted they should be reported on the 500600 number. Lights out can be identified by the number on the post.

11.9 **In Bloom Report** – A report was given on the recent “In Bloom” awards. Noted that for 2012 an Olympic Trail is being considered and also to celebrate the Jubilee. Plants in red, white and blue have been ordered. FOVG are welcome to help with this scheme.

11.9 **No cycling signs** – these may not be visible from the Pinewoods footpath? To be checked. PK

11.10 **Notice Board at Entrance** – FOVG has requested a key so that notices may be placed. Noted that such notices can be emailed to PK's team and they will arrange placement as they control the notice boards.

12. **Questions from the Community**

Only one received requesting details of parking availability and other attractions in the town.

13. **Any Other Business**

13.1 **Green Park Entrance** – previously discussed that the one existing post be removed or the missing one be replaced. Noted that Sam Cryer had previously advised that this would be very costly.

13.2 **Parks and Games Hut** – PK commented that HBC's aspiration is to deliver a new Games in Park Hut similar to the existing facility but increased and with toilet facilities, 1 ladies, 1 gents, and 1 disabled, in front of the children's play area. These plans need to be publicised as the cost is in excess of £100k and a forward plan of 3 months will be required. It is planned that a member of staff will be present together with a pool attendant when the pool is in use. In the longer term it is proposed that the gardening staff will be relocated from the current mess room to the existing hut and that the mess room will be demolished. The current toilet block will remain.

14. **Date of Next Meeting** - IS NOW THURSDAY 17 NOVEMBER, 7 PM, HARLOW HILL CLUB

Helen McCallum
FOVG Secretary