

**Present:**

Trustees: Judie Hodsdon (JH), Fiona Clarke (FC), Paul Benfield (PB), Chris Archibald (CA), Gloria Jones (GJ), Adrian Allen (AA), Andy Hopkins (AH), Philippa Howell (PH), Sandy Marshall (SM), David Richards (DR), Henry Williams (HW)

Non-voting representative: Dennis Parsons (DP)

Minutes: Jocelyn Potter

**1 Apologies** (received after the meeting) John Payne

**2 Minutes of last meeting, 11 December 2018**

These were accepted as a true record.

**3 Matters arising**

**3.2 Bench near gates** CA reported that Green Space knows nothing about it, but that there is someone in CBC responsible for placing benches. JH pointed out that residents didn't want a bench there; that planning and listed building consent should have been necessary, and that she would have expected consultation with FoP. The placement is to ensure that the house of the person it commemorates (Mr Soo) can be seen from it. DP will investigate whether planning permission was needed.

The inappropriate repainting of Pump Room gates that were to be replaced was also raised. HW expressed concern that they have been painted 'gloss on gloss'; the paint is beginning to peel.

JH will write to CBC about lack of consultation.

**Action: DP, JH**

**3.3 Albemarle Gate car parking** DP reported that the council's scheme for charges will need to be in place for the next financial year, but that FoP should be able to collect money for parking during the Festival (12 – 15 March). CA and HW will organise this and will consider an appropriate charge, bearing in mind the doubling of fees by the racecourse.

**Action: CA, HW**

CA also raise the matter of the traffic island. HW pointed out that it is even more hazardous now that yellow lines have been painted across it. DP said that its removal was up to residents, and wouldn't be done until parking restrictions are in place.

**10.1 Stepping stumps on west side** CA said that repairs will be done in late spring/early summer.

**10.6 Footpath parallel to Tommy Taylors Lane** This is owned by CBC and will be repaired. (After the meeting, DP reported that the repairs will be done in March.)

**10.7 Ubico litter-picking truck** DP pointed out that these larger trucks, which are damaging the park, are useful in some places – but not in the park. HW asked what size vehicle is used in Sandford Park, which has narrower paths. JH will write to Cllr Chris Coleman about the damage being caused by the new trucks.

**Action: JH**

**4 Finance**

PB reported that finances are healthy. Expenditure is low, and the newsletter was cheaper than expected. CA has sent in the Community Pride grant claims form (for the online worksheets), and will chase the money if it hasn't arrived in a couple of weeks' time.

### **5 PRAG update and TCT consultation**

FC reported that there has been no action since the last PRAG meeting. Sarah Robertson, a new appointee of the Trust, hasn't yet responded with a meeting date. There will also be a new CEO soon, as Julie Finch is leaving the Trust. Volunteers are becoming frustrated by uncooperative staff and the use of the volunteer guides' A-boards for other purposes. FC said that the TCT review of the Pump Room is ongoing; a few trustees have received questionnaires, but not all have managed to open them. AH and DP pointed out that if some trustees are being consulted as individuals (and the Trust lists PRAG, but not FoP as a whole, as a stakeholder group), all trustees should have received the questionnaire. Hilary Simpson is investigating.

### **6 Park Masterplan projects**

These were summarised in a report circulated by JH before the meeting.

PH commended the signs which explain the work going on in the park. CA reported that the new double noticeboard still hasn't arrived.

### **7 Future events**

**7.1 Quiz Night, 18 February** PH reported that 57 people have enrolled. Raffle prizes are needed; trustees were asked to tell PH in advance what they will bring, and then bring them on the night. She also clarified that food requests are needed in advance because the pub (which doesn't contribute to costs) will be opening specially and with a reduced number of staff. PB will take a chequebook in case the quizmaster needs to be paid that night.

**Action: All, PB**

**7.2 CHS Spring Show, 24 March** An email will be sent round about this. Rob Rimell will be one of the helpers. JH will ask for other volunteers.

**Action: JH**

**7.3 FoP Plant Sale, 4 May** PH and SM will be organising this for the first time, but can consult CA and DR as necessary. Information about the event should be submitted for the newsletter (see below).

**7.4 Other ideas, especially for the summer** HW suggested a summer picnic and barbecue in the orchard at Albemarle Gate, a public space with the possibility of a power connection. This suggestion was enthusiastically received, so he will investigate further. A second idea, by PB, to use the two gardens off Albert Road (but without power) will be considered in future.

**Action: HW**

### **8 Newsletter, March 2019**

AH reported that he has already received a submission from DR on the Spring Show, and will need material advertising the plant sale. PH agreed to report on the quiz night. JH will write about the Masterplan, with a picture. AH pointed out that photographs should be a minimum of 1.5 megabytes. SM will write about – or commission a report on – History Works' achievements by their five-year anniversary. JH will report on replanting at the gates, with a picture. CA will provide a link to the management plan for the Green Flag (GF)

and Green Heritage Site Accreditation (GHSA) awards. He will also send AH a contact for the Scouts; AH will conduct an interview and report it. Other suggestions for interview topics, for future publications, were: St Paul's United FC, who play every other Saturday (DP); the facility for free tennis lessons (PB), the duck race (HW); the forthcoming Cheltenham Pride Picnic in the Park (DP); the Aviaries (PH), which CA said were looked after by Ubico, and the Pittville School sports complex, after work starts (HW). AH asked whether bird count information was available for the park; FC suggested speaking to Ali Moss-Davies, the part-time ranger at CBC, and CA suggested the Cheltenham Bird Club, who do monthly counts. AH reminded everyone that the deadline for submissions is 18 February.

**Action: AH, PH, JH, SM, CA**

### **9 Pittville Park 10-year Management Plan**

(CA's presentation was made at the end of the meeting.) For the benefit of more recent trustees, CA explained that the plan covered the management, maintenance and planned development of the historic park and estate, and Pittville Gates, and is reviewed annually before submission for GF awards.

In 2006 CBC was awarded £50,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to finance a plan to redevelop the park. The bid was strong, but money that year went to inner-city projects. However, the bid developed into the 2008 conservation management plan. Out of that came the CBC's Green Space Strategy (2009), and five of the nine GF parks in Gloucestershire are now in Cheltenham. At the same time, the failed bid led to FoP projects like the restoration of the gates.

The GF and GHSA process involved research and visits to other accredited sites; visits to parks by GF and GHSA judges, and a lot of hard work. In 2016 the 10-year plan for Pittville Park was written, and the GF award was achieved for 2016/7. The GHSA award is judged at the same time, backed by Historic England. Pittville Park is the only park with GHSA accreditation in Gloucestershire, and one of only seventy-five in the UK.

GF judging criteria are that the space should: be welcoming; be healthy, safe and secure; be well-maintained and clean; show environmental management and biodiversity in landscape and heritage; demonstrate community involvement; involve marketing and communication, and be well-managed.

GHSA criteria involve the condition of historic features; the use and enjoyment of historic features, and the maintenance of the historic character and appearance.

The contents of the 10-year management plan 2016-2026, which will be on the CBC website, are: introduction; information on the park; historical development; vision; management; qualitative analysis; inspection and maintenance; finance; monitoring and reviews; action plan.

To retain awards, CA concluded, FoP's roles should be to continue to support CBC in implementing the plan and keeping the awards; to raise money for the scheme for Character Area 1; to provide volunteer hours for Character Area 2 and the east border; to continue PRAG, the newsletter, History Works, and other forms of participation.

In response to a question from FC, CA said that a new plan will be needed in 2026. A judge has also suggested a review and updating of the 2008 conservation management plan, since some priorities may have become less relevant; this could be done before any grant applications.

The trustees thanked CA for his useful presentation, and JH pointed out that although CBC takes the lead, the council wouldn't have made much progress in gaining awards without CA's contributions.

## **10 Any other business**

**10.1 Heritage Open Days, September 2019** One or two speakers will be needed to take forward the idea of a talk or talks on the north bank of the upper lake on the history of the landscape.

**Action: JH, FC**

**10.2 Recycling in the park** DP will raise this issue again with CBC. PB pointed out that at least the Central Cross Cafe, which uses recyclable materials in its packaging, should be recycling. CA agreed that the lack of recycling facilities in the park generally is a weak point – mentioned by judges – in the Green Flag plan, although CBC are replacing some bins with double bins that can be adapted for recycling. (After the meeting, a CBC officer confirmed that the council will be implementing the introduction of recycling bins over the course of the year. After a business case has been put together, bins will be trialled – perhaps in the town centre and Pittville Park. FoP's involvement in the project will be welcome.)

**Action: DP**

**10.3 Leaning pine** DR reported a resident's concerns. CA has already raised the issue with AR, who will contact the tree officer.

**10.4 Cheltenham Crematorium Open Day** PH reported that this will be on Saturday, 2 March.

**10.5 Light Up Cheltenham** HW suggested that next year Light Up the Park should be included in the two-week display.

## **11 Date of next meeting, Tuesday 26 March 2019 at 6.15 pm**

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm.