

Pittville Park

Green Space Volunteers Newsletter July 2017

We are now well into summer and many of you are going on holiday, a well earned rest and we hope you have a good time. Quite a bit has been happening since the last newsletter and we are awaiting the results from several bids.

At the end of May it was six months since Chris took over as GSV coordinator and he has been crunching numbers and looking at where our volunteer hours have been spent. There is good news, our Heritage Landscape Architect has started work on the preparation of the Landscape Restoration Plan for the area around the Pump Room and upper lake.

Volunteering – Dec. 2016 to May 2017

Over the 6 months we had 12 working parties planned of which only one was cancelled due to rain and high winds. For the 11 sessions we had an average of nearly 22 volunteers, it would have been higher but we had two low weeks due to the race meeting (the hours of those who helped are recorded elsewhere) and the May Bank Holiday. The total number of hours worked is 504 but this may be slightly higher when Chris get through all of his inbox for extras. A fantastic start to the year.

We worked on 25 different jobs over the six months, some projects, some one-off jobs, and some ongoing maintenance.

Our biggest project was pruning the shrubs at the rear of the Pump Room on which we spent 84 hours, and there was a tie for second place with the canopy raising on the eastern border and work on and around the scout hut with 44 each. However the scout hut is not yet finished.

Interesting one-off jobs were the 'Time Team' excavations for the Pump Room steps and the clearing of the underground chamber at the gates.

Very important are the ongoing maintenance jobs that we do and top of the

is litter picking with 48 hours closely followed by sweeping the underpass 34 hours, removing epicormic growth 28 hours, and tidying the Gates 22 hours.

We always discuss with Janice which jobs are the most needed in the park for each working party and rightly that is where we apply our effort. However I thought it would be interesting to see where in the park most effort taken place. Not surprisingly the east side of the park needs more maintenance from the volunteers due to its more formal nature and unfortunately there has been a deficit of maintenance, a prime example being the rockery. This deficit needs to be put right – see Masterplan below. The breakdown of our hours is 63% east side, 26% west side, 6% at the Gates and 5% on the land west of Tommy Taylors Lane.

Queens Award for Voluntary Service

It was very good news that we were given the award and it is thanks to the hard work of all our volunteers. The Lord Lieutenant will present the award on Saturday 29th July.

Scout Hut

The scout hut looks a lot better with its new coats of paint. There is still the windows at

the front, which are a bit difficult, and the lean-to roof which needs a coat of black bitumen. Thanks to Henry for organising the painting.

Masterplan (Landscape Restoration Plan)

Adam Reynolds (CBC) and Chris met Toby Goodman from Illman Young Landscape Design Ltd and walked the area of the Masterplan from the Pump Room down to the upper lake on the 13th July. This was so Toby could get a detailed look at the area and we could discuss first thoughts with him. He will produce a draft and there will be a period of consultation. I hope we will be able to identify projects as part of the Masterplan for the GSV's.

National Community Service

FOP were asked by Gloucestershire College if we would partake in their programme for the NCS. It is a scheme they run for 16 year olds who have just completed their GCSE's. It is a 4 week course, the first is residential with activities and in the second week the students visit a number of charities in Gloucestershire to find out what they do and how they benefit the community. In the third and fourth weeks they choose a project to do based on the work of one of the charities.

Our last 2 visits are on the 2 August, making 7 in all during which we will have spoken to nearly 100 teenagers. Hopefully we will have given them some idea of what a valuable resource a park is to the community and how Pittville Park is part of Cheltenham's history. Thanks to all who have offered their help.

We have also been approached by Cheltenham College to see if they could do some practical work in the park in the Autumn term but on a Wednesday

afternoon. We had a meeting with the College and Janice and she proposed they have experience in 3 different parks. It looks as if this will proceed but there will be little for FOP to do, maybe one or two volunteers, if available for the 2-3 weeks they are working in Pittville Park.

Pump Room steps Archaeological Dig

I am sure you have all read of the success of the dig in the last FOP newsletter. The results will be used to inform the Masterplan. A lot of effort by our GSV's and the fill seems to have gone down well and the grass recovered.

GSV tools

These are now stored in the pavilion where we meet. We will take the wheelbarrow when working on the east side, so those who live on that side don't have to come all the way back with the tools. Henry has kindly changed the lock on the room door and we are sorting out the agreement with CBC for the room so we have a set of keys. Janice will bring more secateurs and gloves to the next working party.

Woodland Trees

We have put in for a grant of 400 native trees from the Woodland Trust to go on the land west of Tommy Taylors Lane. They will provide more shelter for the birds and strengthen the wild life area. We will also do our bit to combat air pollution in Cheltenham. We wait to hear if we are successful and if we are then they will arrive in November.

Green Flag and Green Heritage Site Accreditation

Janice went to the awards ceremony in Reading last Thursday. Pittville retains its Green Flag and GHSA this year but will be

visited by a 'mystery shopper'. We will get feedback but maybe not until November.

Community Pride Grant

We have submitted an application for a grant of £1000 to help start getting information about the park onto our website in a format that is easy for teachers to use. Waiting to hear result.

Paws in the Park

Janice is organising the annual event which will take place on Sunday 6th August, 11am until 5pm on the Pittville Pump Room Lawn.

Janice's other working parties

Janice would like you to know about her other working parties:

Sandford Park – 2nd Thurs. 9.30 to 12.30

Hatherley Park – every Thurs 2 -4

Hatherley Court Gdns – 1st Tues 9.30 to 12.30

St Peters – 4th Tues 10 to 12

Winston Churchill Gdns – 4th Tues 9 to 12

Best wishes

Janice Payne - Community Ranger
(janice.peacey@cheltenham.gov.uk)

Chris Archibald - GSV coordinator
(volunteer@friendsofpittville.org.uk)

Needles

If you find any needles when working in the park please do not touch them. Please inform Janice (or other CBC employee) and they will remove them as they carry a 'sharps' box in their vehicle. It also tells them where they are being used.

Useful numbers

Trolleywise – to report abandoned trollies
Tel. +44 (0) 800 316 1241
enquiries@trolleywise.co.uk

To report street lamps not working including parks, remember to have lamp column number when reporting
Telephone: 08000 514514

<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/reportit/streetlight-fault>

Underpass light not working or damaged
Property dept. 01242 262626

Environment Agency Incident hotline:
Telephone: 0800 80 70 60

Vale Wildlife Rescue hospital and rehabilitation
<http://www.valewildlife.org.uk/>
01386 882288

Upcoming events

Next working parties:
-Thursday 3rd August
-Thursday 17th August

Park Watch

A valuable contribution to Park Watch is the information that is provided by park users. If you see anything when you are walking or

working in the park that you think is wrong please let Janice know. She will take action or inform the police.

Jobs for the GSV

Also when visiting the park if you see something that you think the GSV could improve please inform Janice or Chris