



Friends of Murray Park

Notes of Meeting held on Wednesday at 7pm, 17th May 2023 at Murrayside Community Centre

Present:

Officers: Tracy Rowe (Chair), Lesley Fayers (Treasurer)
Sue Bird (Secretary)

Members: Paul Gilbert, Jimmy Knight, Malcolm and Jenny Ebbs

Also Present: Cllr Roxanne Downes, Max Thomas (for item 4 only)

Apologies: Dennis Carpenter, Nick Wilcox (IBC), Claire Willis, Ruman Muhith,
Joanne Mansie

1 Excluded Persons

Action

There were no excluded persons.

2 New Member

The Chair welcomed new member Jimmy Knight to the meeting, and we did a quick introduction around the table.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true record.

4 Matters Arising

a) Windrush Event

Max Thomas attended to give and receive feedback from the recent 75th Anniversary Windrush Event held on the park.

Max said that the plan had been for the parade buses, which had been specially decorated, to be parked on the road right outside the entrance to the park. Unfortunately, as no cones had been put in place by Traffic Control, this had not been possible.

The Transport Museum had been brilliant in providing the buses for the event.

Max agreed with the Friends Group that we had all hoped for more stalls and kids' activities to have been available, although the Group thought that the dinosaurs and the bouncy castle went down well. Max stated that a lot of local volunteers had come forward.

The infrastructure (eg bandstand etc), part of the match funding from IBC, had cost more than expected, and lessons had been learnt from this experience. There was some misunderstanding between the organiser and the Council about how match funding actually works, so they had had to cut back on a few things. Discussions with IBC were still ongoing.

Everyone thought that the general public as a whole were brilliant, there were no incidents and litter bins were well used. The table tennis table had been well used, and all the bats and balls had been returned to the MPF table after use. It was noted that it had been difficult to find them in Murrayside originally. The Chair had donated some more table tennis balls.

The steel band which had been booked since March did not appear, as the expected funding had been received very late and they could not be paid in time to secure the booking, although Max had persuaded one musician to perform on the parade.

Everyone agreed that the singer Claire Angel had been very good. The Friends agreed that all the food provided at the event was very good, and prices were not exorbitant, as was often the case at major events. Max said that he thought this was because caterers had not been charged for their pitch, so were able to keep their prices at a reasonable level. There were no facilities to pay by card, which would have made life easier, and it was thought that it should have been advertised as a cash only event if this was to be the case in future events.

ME complained that when the artists were tuning up before the event opened, it was too noisy, and the Group agreed that it was very loud early on in the morning. Max apologised for the noise.

Many thought that our area was often overlooked as far as major events were concerned and it was good to have such a positive event here, and Cllr RD said that it had been a good way to showcase the park, and everyone had enjoyed the day.

SB expressed disappointment that no promised application form had been received, and there had been no confirmation that MPF had been allocated a stall. As a result, members of MPF had struggled over with our own table, gazebo etc, only to be told that we did indeed have an allocated stall. Max apologised for the oversight.

Everyone thought that the park had been well prepared by IBC staff and looked very good, especially the wildflower meadows at the Northern end, which looked especially good.

b) **Bill Quinton**

At the previous meeting, it was agreed that we would like to have a tree planting ceremony with Bill Quinton, but this has not proceeded any further. Members were concerned that, as Bill's health is poor, we would like to do this sooner rather than later.

c) **Dog Fouling**

Members reported that the dog fouling problem had been bad recently, and although some members actively picked up after other dog walkers, the problem still was ongoing. At the May meeting, the Group had discussed the possibility of providing waste bag dispensers and this was being looked into.

5 Memorial Plaques for Dogs

Jimmy Knight had suggested that it would be nice to have a board or similar on the park to remember dogs who had passed away. There is an extensive dog walking community on the park, many of whom had been very supportive of this idea.

Members discussed ways of achieving this at a low cost, including a board or perspex attached to the back of notice board(s) onto which plaques could be bolted. Plaques could be easily purchased from Etsy and other websites for about £10. The plaques would have to be the same size and style, and it would have to be stipulated that no other memorabilia, eg leads, collars, flowers etc, could be placed there.

Lisa Stannard from IBC had emailed that this sort of thing had been turned down for other venues in the town.

6 Family Fun Day

IBC had scheduled a Family Fun Day on the Park on 4th August, JK offered to obtain some merchandise and/or tickets from his place of work which was involved in promotion of the music and entertainment events, which could be raffled off at our stall on the day.

The Group agreed that it would also be a good idea to obtain donations from local businesses for raffle prizes.

We also decided to have another plant stall at the event, as we had raised £96 from donated plants at the Windrush event. Cllr RD said that there would be a stall staffed by IBC Councillors, of which she hoped that

four would be able to attend. She said that perhaps some of these Councillors could also help at our stall if we so wished, which was welcomed by the Group.

The Chair said that she would make some wildflower and herb posies in small jars.

7 Renovation of Children's Play Area

The general consensus of opinion from park users was that the new play area should be completely enclosed, ie not just the toddler area, with a strict "No Dogs Allowed" rule.

The ball-stop-net had been installed and was proving to be very effective.

LF agreed to circulate information about the Padlet site, on which users could post ideas for the new Play Area.

The Group reiterated that they would like to have seating around the cherry tree which was close to the Play Area, as people often sat on the grass under the tree to make use of the shade it provided, but as dogs are not excluded from that area, they could be sitting where dogs had urinated.

LF thought that simple wooden benches would suffice, but it was thought that these could be easily vandalised and that maybe a better solution would be a metal one. This would be more expensive but maybe we could apply for some funding for this.

8 Banking/Finance

The Treasurer had received a letter from NatWest Bank that the branch on Ransomes Industrial Estate was to be closed.

LF produced a small spreadsheet showing the balance and expenditure of the account, which now included the £96 made from sale of plants at the recent Windrush event.

9 Any Other Business

a) New Trees

It was noted that the new trees were being watered regularly on Wednesday mornings. However, two of the new oak trees appear to be dead or dying. One support post had also been broken.

b) Established Trees

One tree appeared to be top-heavy and needs to be reduced in size. The trees had been surveyed recently.

c) **Wildflower Meadow**

In the wildflower meadow, it was the original intention to have a mown path leading from one gate to the other in a semi-circular shape, but this did not seem to be continued. There was also a plan to have lecterns giving information about the wildflowers and insect population which could be expected in the meadow, but this had not yet materialised.

10 Date of Next Meeting(s)

The date of the next meeting has had to be altered again, due to meeting clashes and booked holidays, and will now take place on 27th September and the AGM will be held on 22nd November.