



Friends of Murray Park

Notes of Meeting held on Wednesday 18th January 2023 at 7pm at Murrayside Community Centre

Present:

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

Members: Dennis Carpenter, Paul Gilbert, Malcolm and Jenny Ebbs

Also Present: Cllr Roxanne Downes, Nick Wilcox (IBC)

Apologies: Cllr Bill Quinton, Hannah Canning, Lisa Brambill, Joanne Mansie

1 Excluded Persons Action

There were no excluded persons.

2 Minutes

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

3 Matters Arising

a) The Table Tennis sign and No Cycling signs have not yet been installed - the team has been delayed by the bad weather and having to do other work on Holywells Park. Hopefully the mats would be installed, and preparation work for the ball stop net on the MUGA should be carried out at the weekend.

b) NW was not sure about the situation with the proposed demolition of the old toilets, but there is a team looking at all redundant toilets in the town's parks, and said that the work should be carried out in the new financial year.

We also have to decide where the new drinking fountain will be sited, as this should be done at the same time.

Members discussed the fact that there was an old drinking fountain on the King Edward Road side of the park (ie South

East corner), but this was thought to be so old that there was very little chance that it could be restored to working condition, and anyway the position was not seen to be very convenient, and too far away from the water pipes to be feasible.

4 Composting Toilets

- a) There had been some small fires set by children in the new toilets, and the instances of fouling had decreased, so things had been fairly good overall in this respect.
- b) LF reported that there had been a group of 4 youngsters in there, who had done a lot of damage and just walked off. She had also seen a group of about 5 lads going into a toilet together and had opened the door and sent them off.
- c) It was thought that a sign advising people how to report vandalism (ie to the 24 hour Park Patrol service) would be helpful, and to encourage people to ring them if they had any concerns, although it was noted that they could not answer the phone if they were driving. SB offered to renew the notices on the notice boards, including one about recruitment and the Calendar of Meetings for 2023. SB
- d) Another idea put forward was having springs put on the doors so they would be self-closing. NW said he would look into this. NW
- e) NW thought that maybe one of the compost toilets could be left locked at quieter times on the park, so that if one was vandalised, we would still have one good one.
- f) There had been enquiries about the closing time of the toilets, which NW verified was at dusk. This meant that sometimes children who went onto the park after school had to go back into school to use a toilet as it had already been locked.
- g) With regard to the cladding on the toilets, NW said that the Wildlife Ranger planned to make the toilets blend in better with the surroundings, but had to be careful not to establish a fire risk. They were still looking into what to do with the space in between the toilets, as people were fouling that area.

5 Benches

NW had talked to the Landscape Officer regarding the provision of a bench around the cherry tree. This would be looked at later this year.

One problem with siting benches around the perimeter of the park was that youths would use it late at night, being quite noisy, smashing glass

and smoking drugs etc. It was thought that any new benches would be better placed further into the park than around the edge, to hopefully discourage this practice.

Another problem which had to be considered was that benches, especially those under shelter, were in danger of being used by homeless people for sleeping on.

6 Keep Fit Equipment

Park users had expressed a wish to extend the keep fit equipment area and include other items. NW said he would enquire to see if there was any unused equipment available. The Table Tennis Table had been well received and was being used a lot, and extending the keep fit equipment was seen as a very positive move.

7 Planned Renovation of Children's Play Area

The racecourse theme had been well received, and some additional ideas were that there should be plenty of shelter and shade in the area, the equipment should be brightly coloured, also with a view to sensory enhancement.

Although the play area was designated for all children aged 14 and under, it was thought that there were too many toddler swings and not enough play equipment for older children under 14. However, the MUGA, tennis court, table tennis table and gym equipment were available for all age groups.

8 Turf Maintenance and Standing Water

With the recent very wet weather, turf maintenance had not been carried out, apart from the football pitches. Park staff do not aerate as a matter of course and the grass had been slow to recover from the very hot summer and the soil had become very compacted, making standing water a major problem.

Some members considered that this situation was steadily getting worse every year, but some thought that it did drain fairly quickly on the Murray Road side. There was standing water in several places on the park and at the gates, especially at the North West corner. NW said he would get the team to see what they could do on this.

NW

9 Banking/Finance

LF reported that she had gone back to using the original login method, and that bank had been less than helpful with setting up the online banking system, so she was leaving it as it was for the moment.

10 Any Other Business

- a) PG reported that there had been two gang fights on the park, when weapons had been used.
- b) The woman who had been using a motor scooter on the park seems to have stopped this and is using the road. NW hoped to be putting signs up about this soon.
- c) PG reported that a large branch of a tree was overhanging the park (opposite 83 King Edward Road). The tree was alive but the branch appeared to be dead, so may be hazardous.

NW

NW said it was standard practice for trees to be checked over every eighteen months (so that they could be seen when in leaf and when not in leaf on a regular basis), but would ask the team to look at this. NW explained that there were only three people on the team, who had to deal with a large number of jobs.

- d) Our website was very out of date and the Chair said she would chase up GT to update it.
- e) The Chair was trying to access the Wifi in the Community Centre so that some members could possibly attend via TEAMS if they could not make it to the meeting.
- f) It was planned (once the better weather arrived) to hold a working party on the park and make use of our gazebo and table.
- g) It was hoped that we would be able to get the school involved in some wildlife projects.
- h) There would be more trees planted and work done on the orchard, and Cllr Barber's tree would also be replaced soon.

TR

11 Date of Next Meeting

The Secretary had drafted a Calendar of Meetings for the remainder of 2023 and there were no problems with the suggested dates, so this was approved by the Group. The next meeting would therefore be held on Wednesday 15th March at 7pm.