



Friends of Murray Park

Notes of virtual meeting held on Thursday 14th January 2021 Via Microsoft TEAMS

- Present:** Tracy Rowe (Chair)
Lesley Fayers (Treasurer)
Sue Bird (Secretary)
- Members:** Tracy Rowe, Dennis Carpenter
- Also Present:** Cllr Sarah Barber, Cllr Bill Quinton, Nick Wilcox (IBC)(from 7.30)
- Apologies:** Glen Thimblethorpe (Vice Chairman),
Malcolm Ebbs and Jenny Ebbs, Paul Gilbert

1 Excluded Persons

There were no excluded persons.

2 Minutes

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

3 Matters Arising/Updates

- (i) Goalposts **Action**

LF mentioned that only one of the goalposts had been moved across a small distance, but it did not seem to bother anyone that they were now not exactly opposite each other.

NW said that this was probably due to the recent very wet weather, as the ground would have been too soft to perform this, and the workmen had probably chosen a time when it was frosty, thus making the ground firmer. The other one would be moved as soon as the ground was firm enough.

- (ii) Gym Equipment

The Treasurer reported that the £1,000 money from Tesco had now been paid to the Council.

(iii) Dogs on the Park

Action

Members noted that there seemed to be more dogs being walked on the park recently, many of them puppies. Certain areas were becoming very muddy with the increased use, but it did seem to drain fairly well once the rain had stopped.

It was thought that many families had bought dogs during the Covid lockdown period, and also that owners from other parts of the town were using Murray Park because it is flat and open and therefore not so easy to steal a dog. Members were told that the dog thieves were even marking certain addresses where they knew that a dog was living, so that they could plan to steal it at a later date.

In view of the recent attack by a dog which resulted in the death of a puppy, as well as the recent spate of dog thefts, the Chair said she would put some useful information on the Facebook page about these matters, which hopefully would help in preventing future incidents.

Chair

She said it would also be good to have some info on Facebook about the RSPCA, and about recruitment of new members.

The Secretary said that she had seen the young girl involved in the dog attack (above) on the park with a new Pomeranian puppy recently and that she had told her that the new pup was helping them get over the loss of the one that they had lost, and the whole traumatic episode.

(iv) Mission Statement

Members discussed various points regarding the new Mission Statement, as follows.

- a) There had been positive responses on Facebook regarding diversity.
- b) One item on our "wish list" was the refurbishment of the Cobbold sign. This really only needed a bit of a clean up and maybe some varnish to brighten it up a bit, This could be done easily and relatively cheaply.
- c) Another item on the "wish list" was the separate area for the training of puppies (or to separate unsocial dogs from other park users) was again mentioned. This was even more desirable now with the increased population of dogs now on the park.

- (v) NW confirmed that the notice informing park users that the toilets would be closed during the winter had now been put up on the toilets.
- (vi) NW also informed the Group that the orchard area had been tidied up and some apple trees had been planted. Some more trees had been ordered to replace the ones which had died or been vandalised, but delivery had been very much delayed due to the pandemic.

The Group discussed the problem of young trees dying because of lack of water, and NW informed members that this situation would remain, but said that members would be welcome to water the young trees if they wished to do so, as long as this can be done safely. There is a tap within the toilet block which may be able to be made available.
- (vii) The rough sleeper who had been using the park had not been seen for a while. The Chapman Centre were aware of him.
- (viii) NW said that he had sent information regarding the proposed placement of the seat and trees in memory of a park user's late mother.
- (ix) NW said that the two signs for the new courts had been ready for some time but the problems caused by the lockdown had held things up somewhat. They would be put up shortly.

4 Any Other Business

- (i) LF drew the Group's attention to a man who regularly walks round the park, then goes to urinate in the bushes. He is usually seen at around 2.00pm to 2.30pm and wears a flat cap and a dark blue coat. NW said he would make the Park Patrol aware and ask them to see if they could persuade him to discontinue this practice.
- (ii) The replacement bin near the MUGA was considered to be much better than the previous one.
- (iii) Wildlife Area
 - a) NW informed the Group that the new lectern//information board for the wildlife area would be put up shortly. It was a generic one, ie not specifically designed for Murray Park.

b) It was hoped that we could organise a wildlife day on the park later in the year, if the Covid situation had eased somewhat, but in the meantime, there was no reason why we could not go ahead with giving the children wildflower seeds to scatter on the area, and Mr Dabin hoped to be able to organise a trip to the park with the children to do this.. After half-term was considered to be the best time for this. Cllr Barber asked to be included. Chair would liaise with Mr Dabin to facilitate this.

Chair

The Chair reported that she had liaised with Adam Dabin, Head Teacher at the new Sir Bobby Robson PRU school, and he had expressed a an interest in joining the meeting but unfortunately was unable to do so this time. The Chair said she would invite him to our next meeting in March, as he may be interested in being involved in the wildlife day.

5 Date of Next Meeting

As NW had only been able to attend for half the meeting, as he also had to attend the Friends of Holywells Park meeting, the Secretary asked whether this would be a recurring problem, but were informed that Holywells usually held their meetings on a Tuesday but that this had to be hurriedly rearranged, resulting in him having to share his time between the two, so hopefully there would be no more clashes like this in the future.

The next meeting would therefore be held as scheduled on Thursday 18th March at 7pm, again through the medium of Microsoft TEAMS.