



Friends of Murray Park

Notes of virtual AGM meeting held on Thursday 19th November 2020 Via Microsoft TEAMS

- Present:** Sue Bird (Chair)
Glen Thimblethorpe (Vice Chairman)
Lesley Fayers (Secretary)
- Members:** Paul Gilbert, Tracy Rowe, Dennis Carpenter
- Also Present:** Cllr Sarah Barber, Cllr Bill Quinton, Nick Wilcox (IBC)
- Apologies:** Ian Hardwick (Secretary),
Paul Daley (apologies received after the meeting)

1 Minutes

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

2 Matters Arising/Updates

Action

- (i) Goalposts

NW updated members regarding the proposed repositioning of the goalposts in order to allow the grass to recover. Council staff had been to the site to perform this task but found that the goalposts were deeply embedded in the sockets and they were unable to remove them. The ground had been very soft at the time and some deep tyre tracks were left near one of the goals.

NW informed members that the soil that had been allocated for this job had been left on the "hole filling pile" at the South-Eastern end of the park. This will be looked at again once the ground has dried out enough to do so. (NW/IBC)

NW/IBC

(ii) Bench in Memory of a Park User's late Mother

NW informed members that IBC was in contact with the gentleman concerned and he had ordered 2 trees and a bench, which will be engraved in due course, once the wording was finalised, and installed in due course. NW undertook to inform us of the type of tree and send a map illustrating where these items would be installed.

NW/IBC

3 Dog attack on the Park

Many members already knew that a small dog had been viciously attacked on the Park, and was so severely injured (broken neck) that it had to be euthenased by the vet later that day. The injured dog was being walked by a 13 year old child at the time who was very traumatised. TR informed members that she knew the owner of the victim and had called on her with a card and expressed compassion on behalf of the Friends Group, and had given the lady a link to the "Winston's Wish" website, which aims to help traumatised and/or bereaved children.

The injured dog's owner had put notices on the gates informing park users of the incident and asking people to get in touch with her if they see this dog on the park without a lead or muzzle, as had been stipulated by the police.

Park Patrols have been increased in view of the above, and the Anti-Social Behaviour and littering problems had lessened as a result. Members agreed that the Park Patrol had done a brilliant job.

4 Election of Officers

The Chair and the Secretary had already informed members that they wished to stand down, and the Officers were elected as follows.

	<u>Nominated by:</u>	<u>Seconded by:</u>
Chair: Tracy Rowe	Sue Bird	Paul Gilbert
Vice Chairman: Glen Thimblethorpe	Sue Bird	Tracy Rowe
Treasurer; Lesley Fayers	Glen Thimblethorpe	Sue Bird
Secretary: Sue Bird	Tracy Rowe	Paul Gilbert

Members decided to leave the authorised signatories as they were, as it was such an onerous task to change them, as LF and SB were still the Officers most likely to do any transactions at the bank, being retired with more free time, LF and SB were still officers of the Group and therefore still authorised to do so. SB offered to support the new Chair by continuing to do this, as well as continuing to keep records of volunteer hours and attendance at meetings.

5 Mission Statement and Objectives Going Forward

GT had suggested expanding the original Mission Statement, and TR proposed a small alteration to GT's wording, so that the New Mission Statement will now read as follows.

Our mission is to create a safe green place where people of all ages, abilities and diverse backgrounds can relax, play and utilise the park in harmony.

This will help all park users bond and promote understanding and tolerance.

The new Chair agreed to email GT with the new wording so he could amend the MPF website. **TR**

6 Objectives for New Year and Beyond

GT suggested that the "Wish List" of ideas identified at the previous AGM should now be prioritised, putting the most achievable ones at the top of the list, and the more long term objectives lower down. IBC were having to make cuts in staff to save money, and in view of this, the Group would be unlikely to obtain funding for expensive projects (eg toilets).

The following objectives could be achieved relatively easily and cheaply.

- a) Improved signage on the new courts (already in hand)
- b) Establishing links with local schools. (Cllr Quinton suggested that we could do this right away and TR informed members that (in connection with her job) she had already been in touch with the Head of Bobby Robson School, a new Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) to be opened shortly, who was keen to establish links.
- c) Developing the 3 Wildlife areas already established on the Park. Some members would like to be able to clear weed and brambles for the triangular areas at the Northern end. NW said he had no problem with offers of additional help.

In the case of the larger area, where the old tennis courts used to be, NW said that several interesting wild flowers had established themselves and suggested that the Group could engage with local schoolchildren, who could be given packets of wildflower seeds in the New Year, so that they could plant them at school and, once established, the children could then plant them in the wildlife area. NW also said that he had ordered an interpretation board for the area and would chase it up.

NW

d) Refurbishment of the Cobbold sign.

The following two objectives regarding dogs, ie

- Enclose an area for training and controlling less sociable dogs, which could also be used for puppy training – possibly the south east corner.
- Establish an effective method of keeping dogs away the entire children's play area – fencing? .

... were not mentioned at the meeting but could be seen as medium term objectives.

The Group agreed that more seating/picnic area, play equipment, improved fencing and the toilets were seen as long term objectives, given the current financial climate.

7 Any Other Business

(i) Toilets

NW informed members that the toilets would be locked for the winter as in previous years, from the end of November. LF asked if a sign could be put up to make people aware of the timescale for the closure of the facility. A member suggested that the broken glass in the windows could be repaired at that time.

NW

(ii) Drug Taking and Anti-Social Behaviour

PG mentioned the problem of a group of youths congregating at the Northern end during the summer months, taking drugs, playing loud music and leaving a lot of litter. (This was briefly mentioned at the previous meeting.) Local residents had been getting irritated by this and the Police had been called. Increased Park Patrols had also helped a lot with alleviating this problem. It was thought that this was a warm weather problem and would not happen in the forthcoming colder months.

(iii) Gentleman with Mental Health problems

This man had been a frequent visitor on the park in recent months was still seen on the park very often but did not seem to be causing any problems at the moment.

(iv) Rough Sleeper

People from the Chapman Centre had been unable to get in touch with the homeless man who had been sleeping on the park earlier in the year, despite trying several times.

(v) Trees

SB reported that a young tree at the southern end (King Edward Road side) had been broken off. Also Cllr Barber said that her tree which she had planted during her term as Mayor had also died. An apple tree in the orchard area had also died. NW said that he would visit the Park soon and look at these. **NW**

(vi) Bin Bag

TR reported that a full black bin bag was regularly being left at the Northern end of the Park every Monday morning, It was not clear if this was being done by a local resident, or whether it was a lack of communication between IBC employees. NW agreed to look into this. **NW**

(vi) Gates/Entrances

The gate on Murray Road (at the Nacton Road end) was not shutting properly and there were boggy areas around both that area and the one on King Edward Road at the Northern end. **NW**

(vii) Youngsters on the Park

TR had approached some youngsters who were smashing glass because they were bored. She invited the youngsters to join the Friends Group if they wanted to have a say in the future of the Park.

(viii) MPF Bank Account

The Treasurer reported that the balance in the bank was £1,035.56. However, £1,000 of this was the money received from Tesco for the keep-fit equipment and would shortly be withdrawn to pay the bill for this.

8 Dates for Meetings in 2021

The Group discussed the frequency of meetings and the general consensus was that we should keep the bi-monthly format, still on Thursdays at 7pm, and that the next meeting was arranged for Thursday 14th January.

The TEAMS format had proved popular, especially for those who had full-time jobs. SB suggested that in the summer, weather permitting, we could hold some of the meetings on the park.

Using the agreed format above, the proposed calendar of meetings is as follows.

14 January, 18 March, 13 May, 15 July, 16 September and 18 November (AGM)

At the close of meeting NW led the group to thank Sue for all her hard work as Chair for the last five years. It was acknowledged that because of her leadership, several really worthwhile improvements had been made to the park including securing funds the multi gym, additional seating and bins, and the self -closing gates

The group also expressed appreciation and gratitude to Ian for all his hard work during his term of office as Secretary, including a lot of clean-up work on the park and wildlife area