

Friends of Murray Park

**Notes of Meeting held at 7:00pm on Thursday 17h September 2020**

**Via Microsoft TEAMS**

**Present:**

**Officers:** Sue Bird (Chair)

Ian Hardwick (Secretary)

Lesley Fayers (Treasurer)

Glen Thimblethorpe (Vice Chairman)

**Members:** Paul Gilbert, Tracy Rowe, Dennis Carpenter

**Councillors:** Cllr Luke Richardston, Cllr Bill Quinton

**Also present:** Nick Wilcox from IBC

**Apologies:** Cllr Sarah Barber

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| **1**. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** | | | **Action** |
| The minutes from the last meeting were deemed acceptable by the group. | | |  |
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| **2. Excluded People** | | |  |
| There were no excluded people. | | |  |
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| **3. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings** | | |  |
| **(i)** | | **Toilets**  Members discussed the ongoing issues as regards the toilets. NW said that these were presently locked because of plumbing problems within the toilets, and the group also discussed the merits (or otherwise) of removing the privacy walls to try to alleviate the problem of people defacating in the area, as well as other anti-social behaviour, using cover provided by the privacy wall  There did not seem to be an answer to the problem that would not in turn cause other problems, for example, if the privacy walls were removed, people would be able to see inside the toilets from the road.  Some members felt that there was little point in having the toilets at all if they are not available for use, and suggested bulldozing them.  It was also mentioned that the toilets were often used by passing taxi drivers, lorry drivers, council workers (eg dustmen), and others, not just park users, and were therefore a public facility.  IBC had had to prioritise other work in recent months because of the Covid pandemic. |  |
| **(ii)** | | **Bird Boxes**  The Chair asked if and when the bird boxes which were made on the Wildlife Day a while ago were going to be put up on trees in the park, as was originally intended.  NW said that more staff were being trained in the safe use of ladders, and that hopefully the boxes would be put up before the Spring, in time for the nesting season. He confirmed that the Wildlife Team had been extremely busy of late and that this matter was still on the “to do” list | **IBC** |
| **(iii)** | | **Large Wildlife Area**  The Chair said that nothing had been done in this area for some time and NW confirmed that the area would shortly be mown (in fact it was done the very next morning). |  |
| **(iv)** | | **Signage**  The Chair asked about the two large signs that had been promised for the new courts and NW informed members that some staff members had been furloughed due the Coronavirus pandemic, and that this would be done as soon as possible once the furlough period was over. | **IBC** |
| **(v)** | | **Dog Fouling and Hole Digging**  The Chair said that these problems, while still happening, were not as bad as in the past. |  |
| **4. Park Maintenance** | | |  |
| **(i)** | **Dead Trees/Orchard Areas in General**  The Chair said that there were two dead trees on the park, one being that planted by Cllr Barber, and the other a cherry tree in the triangular orchard area on the Murray Road side.  NW said that he would discussing this with the appropriate person to determine which species of tree may do better than the ones which had died, and would shortly be ordering new trees to replace them.  Council lorries with water bowsers on had been noticed and NW explained that these were not for watering trees but were used by the graffiti team.  The orchard area was also very overgrown with weeds and NW said he would look at that matter at the same time.  There was also a tree at the southern end of the park (Murray Road side) which had a large dead branch still attached and felt that this should be removed as soon as possible, before ti fell down and potentially hurt someone. | | I**BC**  **IBC** |
| **(ii)** | **Goal Areas**  The Chair said that the grass in the goal areas on the football pitch was very bare due to much more use that usual, because other venues had been closed during the pandemic. The Chair therefore asked whether the goalposts could be moved to allow the grass to recover, now that the posts were not rusted in, as had been the case before the new goal posts were installed.  NW said that he would look into the situation regarding sockets, and would make a decision once he knew if extra sockets were available. New lines would also have to be painted if the posts were moved.  Positive feedback had been received following the replacement of the old rusted posts.  A member queried the situation regarding footballers using their own nets. This is fine as long as they take them away when they leave the park. The Group discussed whether hooks could be provided for these nets to be hung on. NW suggested that plastic ones would be safer than metal ones. | |  |
| **(iii)** | **Basketball Net**  The broken basketball net had been replaced. | |  |
| **(iv)** | **Concrete Post**  The broken concrete post had been replaced. | |  |
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| **5. Request to Install a Bench and Trees in Memory of a Park User’s Late Mother**  The Chair had received a request regarding this during lockdown and had passed the matter on the IBC. The Chair had suggested that these items be installed at the Northern end of the park, as this area had already been identified for development. The Group had discussed this at previous meetings, with the hope of eventually establishing more of a picnic area at that end, making use of the shade.  Members were informed that the Parks Department were in contact with the gentleman who wished to do this, and once the type of tree(s) was decided, this matter should be dealt with shortly. | | | **IBC** |
| **6. Theft of Dog(s) on the Park**  Members were informed that at least one dog had been stolen from the park, and that men had been seen acting suspiciously and trying to distract dog owners while another person was seen to be encouraging the dog away.  TR said that she could put a warning about this matter on Facebook and the Chair asked if a notice may also be placed in the notice boards advising vigilance. | | | **SB (Chair)**  **TR** |
| **7. Litter and Other Anti-Social Behaviour**  Members noted that Cllr Barber, Cllr Maguire, Cllr Connelly, the Chair(SB) and the Treasurer (LF) had recently completed a litter pick in support of the Keep Britain Tidy campaign. The Chair expressed thanks to the people involved in this for giving up their time to do this.  The Chair informed the meeting that, other than the usual items of litter, a large amount of broken glass was found in the toddler area, and a doll in the Wildlife area.  Littering on the park is still a major problem, especially on Wednesday evenings and at weekends. The Chair and LF had spoken to people using the football pitch as these seemed to be the worst culprits. The Chair asked whether there could be a Park Patrol presence on Wednesday evenings in particular, and NW said that he would inform Park Patrol and they could treat it as a “hotspot”.  Another popular area for dumping litter was near the kickboard at the northern end.  Members enquired about the possibility of extra bin(s) being installed on the park, possibly a blue bin, as the majority of the rubbish was recyclable  There had also been attempts at damaging the new gym equipment, and also the bid next to the MUGA.  NW said that littering was a significant problem everywhere, not just the park.  He pointed out that it was not just the cost of providing the bins themselves, but the resources required to empty them regularly. Cllr Richardson offered to see if there was any funding available for this matter. | | | **IBC**  **Cllr LR** |
| **8. Moving Forward: The Future of Murray Park Friends**  The Chair informed the meeting that the Secretary (IH) intended to step down at the AGM because of pressure of work. She thanked IH for his hard work over the period that he has served as Secretary.  The Chair said that she was also considering stepping down.  Members thought that another recruitment drive might help, and TR offered to put an item on Facebook about this. She and the Chair agreed to get together soon to decide on wording. | | | **SB (Chair)**  **TR** |
| **9. Any Other Business** | | |  |
| **(i)** | **Rough Sleeper** | |  |
|  | Members noted that there had been a man sleeping rough on the park and Cllr Richardson said he would get in touch with IHAG to try again to contact him, and see if they could help the gentleman to find some accommodation.  It was understood that the gentleman in question had some mental health problems and had “been through the system”  If anyone could find out his name, this might be helpful in solving this matter.  Contact number for IHAG: 01473 232426 (Chapman Centre)  Contact name: Robert Wragg  The bedding which had been used by the man had been cleared away. He had also been seen drying clothes on the children’s play equipment, which was seen as unhygienic. | | **Cllr LR** |
| **(ii)** | **Drug-Taking** | |  |
|  | A group of young adults are often being seen taking drugs at the Northern end, on the King Edward Road side, which was causing concern. | |  |
| **(iii)** | **Use of Gym Equipment** | |  |
|  | Members reported that the gym equipment was often being used but some have complained about getting wet because the grass growing through the matting has been allowed to grow too long. NW agreed to get this cut more often. | | **IBC** |
| **(iv)** | **Increased use of the Park** | |  |
|  | It has been noticed that the park is being used a lot more in recent weeks and months. A group of people have been seen meditating.. | |  |
| **(v)** | **10K Run** | |  |
|  | PG informed members that he is organising a !0K cross country run, which would start and Murray Park, include other parks an woodland, and eventually finish at Murray Park; TR offered to publicise this on Facebook. | |  |
| **10. Date of Next Meeting** | | |  |
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| The next meeting of the Group would be the AGM, originally scheduled for October. The Chair said she would select a couple of dates in mid-late November and see which was most convenient for members.  Once a few teething problems had been solved, the format of TEAMS meeting worked fairly well, and the Chair expressed thanks to GT (Vice Chairman) for setting it all up. | | | **SB (Chair)** |