



Friends of Murray Park

Notes of meeting held at 7pm on Thursday April 4th 2019 at Murrayside Community Centre

Present:

Officers: Sue Bird (Chair)
Ian Hardwick (Secretary)

Members: Malcolm Ebbs Jenny Ebbs Paul Gilbert
Stephen Wright Tracy Rowe Dennis Carpenter

Also present: Nick Wilcox, from IBC

Councillors: Cllr Sarah Barber

Apologies: Lesley Fayers (Treasurer), Cllr Stephen Connelly, Cllr Bill Knowles,
Cllr Bill Quinton SCC

1. Minutes of last meeting

Meeting minutes were deemed acceptable.

2. Excluded People

There were no excluded people.

3. Attendance of Councillors

Cllr Barber informed the Group that Cllr Bill Quinton has been very ill recently, and also that Cllr Bill Knowles is going to be stepping down from his position soon. Cllr Barber confirmed that she is now the group's nominated councillor, and advised that the other councillors may or may not continue to come to meetings, depending on circumstances at the time.

3. Matters Arising

Action

Dogs digging holes remains a major problem, some holes being quite deep and dangerous. PG suggested a working party to fill the holes, as we have done on a previous occasion, as IBC are unable to help with this.

NW agreed to look into having a large quantity of topsoil delivered to the park for this, and it was agreed that this soil be stored in the wildlife area at the southern end of the park, so that any remainder can be used in the future when more holes appear.

NW

The Chair would be contacting members shortly to arrange a date for the working party, probably on a Sunday, weather permitting.

Chair

4. Tesco Funding

The Chair informed members that we had come third in the Tesco scheme and will receive the sum of £1,000. IBC officers were in the process of ascertaining whether the original prices for the various pieces of exercise equipment would be honoured by the suppliers, as quite a lot of time had elapsed since the original quotes.

5. Toilet Block

Regarding funding for work on the toilet block, Cllr Barber said what happens with this depends on what people want to happen to it. The Group discussed various options, ie demolition and re-build, or refurbishment, which would cost less. Cllr Barber said that she has a list of various costings.

It was noted that antisocial behaviour is still a problem in and around the toilet block.

Members also discussed the possibility of a drinking fountain being installed at the same time as work on the toilet block, which members agreed would be desirable if at all possible.

6. Wildlife Area

Regarding the development of the Wildlife area in the site of the old tennis courts, as the Grow Wild funding has not been granted, we will need to explore other avenues.

NW informed members that a 'Wildlife Day', involving bird boxes, bug and hedgehog boxes etc is in the process of being arranged. Members are very much in agreement with this, and a provisional date of May 11th was highlighted (time TBC). It was also proposed that the Ipswich Wildlife Group be contacted to discuss provision of materials, tables, gazebos, etc.

NW

A survey, possibly using 'Survey Monkey', at the wildlife event was proposed, to establish what local people think should happen, both with the toilet block, and with the park in general. This is also being seen by members as an opportunity for a recruitment drive for FOMP.

It was also suggested people's postcodes are obtained at this event to establish how far people are prepared to come to get to the park, and where they are from.

DC suggested that a third party be brought in to assist with reducing the risk of problems around liability insurance.

NW agreed to get some more specific details together and distribute them.

NW

NW also shared a number of ideas for work that could happen on the wildlife area to improve it:

- For a path to be mown from gate to gate,
- Woodpiles to encourage various insects,

- Habitats suitable for stag beetles,
- Bug hotels, which could be made from old wooden pallets and other freely available materials,
- Bird and bat boxes (these would be mounted on trees around the park),
- More on-going maintenance to be carried out on the area by IBC, including adding more wild flowers to it,
- Installing a self-closing mechanism on the area's entrance / exit to keep dogs out.

The Chair also said that she particularly wanted to see Yellow Rattle growing in the Wildlife area, as this was a semi-parasitic plant which would help to prevent grasses from taking over, as is the case at the moment.

5. Any Other Business

NW also had some other suggestions for work which could be carried out in the main park area:-

- Replacing the current dog waste bins with wheelie bins for **all** waste to go in – these have appeared in Christchurch Park.
- Replacing and/or refurbishing the benches.
- For the heritage plaque at the North West corner to be tidied up.
- The concrete base on which a pavilion had once stood, be put to use as a picnic area, to provide some shaded seating, as the current picnic area had no shade.
- More highly visible signs about security, no littering, no cycling, picking up dog faeces, etc. This could be a project for the children at Murrayfield Primary Academy.
- Although the existing notice boards are sound, it was agreed that the information inside them, and how it is presented should be reviewed.

Regarding the play area – Cllr Barber said that a survey of all play equipment in parks across Ipswich is being carried out, to establish what needs to be replaced / refurbished / improved.

On reflection, members were pleased to note that the original mission statement when the group was established is being well on the way to being achieved.

6. Date of Next Meeting

19:00 on Tuesday May 14th 2019, at Murrayside Community Centre.