

Friends of Murray Park

**Notes of Meeting held at 6:45pm on Thursday 6th February 2020**

**At Murrayside Community Centre, Nacton Road, Ipswich.**

**Present:**

**Officers:** Sue Bird (Chair)

Ian Hardwick (Secretary)

Lesley Fayers (Treasurer)

**Members:** Malcolm Ebbs Jenny Ebbs

Paul Gilbert Stephen Wright

Tracy Rowe Dennis Carpenter

**Also present:** Nick Wilcox from IBC, and 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** |  |
| NW stated that a slat on a picnic bench is set to be replaced, if it hasn’t already been replaced very recently. |  |
| Members said that while some of the areas around the entrances to the park have been attended to, there were still some problem areas where large puddles appear regularly. A plan to place a large slab at the south end of the park to attempt to alleviate this, but it hasn’t appeared yet. | **IBF** |
| LF also suggested at least one litter picker be purchased from funds use – it was agreed this was a worthwhile expense. | **LF** |
| Members discussed the on-going matter of the public toilets and what should happen to them.  The idea of distributing leaflets to local residents asking their opinions was abandoned.  Members also discussed public toilets in other areas of Suffolk, and ideas from them that could be used to improve the toilets in Murray Park, in terms of location and design, for example cubicles rather than a privacy wall.  Costings for refurbishment and/or rebuilding had been previously established. Cllr SB said IBC is currently reviewing all public toilet provision across Ipswich, and she agreed to forward opinions that there doesn’t appear to have been much progress lately and would therefore ask what the latest developments are.  It was also asked if Suffolk Coastal might be able to assist.  It was also made known that faeces is still being found outside of the toilets at times, putting people, dogs and wildlife at risk. |  |
| Although the bug boxes made on the wildlife day last summer had been put up in the wildlife area, nobody thought that the bird boxes (which had been collected from The Chair’s house) had been put up in trees. Cllr SB agreed to check as to where they are.  It was also discussed whether it would be a good idea anyway, as there are many larger birds (magpies, rooks etc) already established on the park, which would take young birds as soon as they come out of the boxes. |  |
| In the large wildlife area at the southern end, the plants which established themselves last year will have dropped seeds but as yet no further work had been done on the area. |  |
| The Chair distributed copies of a sign designed by IBC (which would be produced in an A1 size) that clearly illustrates the rules of use for the new playing courts, worded as follows.  “This place is for you! Please look after it.” It also had much larger symbols prohibiting chewing gum, drugs, smoking, dirty footwear, footwear with studs, blades or spikes, roller skates, skateboards and bikes, litter, climbing and dogs.  It was suggested that a picture of a bike replace the picture of the skateboard as this is one of the major problems, not skateboards.  Members were invited to suggest what might improve this sign, and TR suggested a multicultural approach some park users do not have English as their first language and may not understand the signs very well. It was agreed that while this could be helpful, it was also agreed that the pictures were very clear and easy to understand.  The Group agreed that, with the minor modifications detailed above, IBC be asked to provide 2 signs and install them by the gates of each court.  ME said he has seen evidence of the Park Patrol team being more successful in reducing the number of children and young adults riding bikes on the park and destroying the grass. When put up, these signs will be protected from damage and the weather by plastic guards. | **IBC** |
| **4. Any Other Business** |  |
| IH said a work colleague, KK, may be joining future meetings, as she frequently uses the park with her dogs, and that she has made it known she is often unwilling to touch the dog waste bin because it frequently has bird mess on it, meaning other waste bins tend to be used. |  |
| LF stated she has removed some racist stickers from the park, and she has made Cllr SB aware of where they were. Members were asked to monitor this and make it known if any more are found. |  |
| TR said positive feedback has been received from a number of people about the workout equipment that was installed in the park recently, and a number of people who use a gym that’s close to the park use it to warm up before gym sessions.  Members also commented on the trees in this area appear to still be going strong, and remain undamaged.  Some people feel some weeding could be done within the wire frame around the young trees at the north end of the park, although it was agreed that, in general, the park is looking good. |  |
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| ME said he had recently met with The Chair of the PTA from Rosehill Primary School, who said the children who attend the school would love to be involved with the park’s upkeep and activities held on it. |  |
| It was noted that there are dogs still digging holes on the park, despite signs having been put up about this – it was suggested by some that refilling them may need to become a more regular occurrence, meaning a regular supply of topsoil to do this with would be required.  The Chair would be contacting members shortly (once the weather improves) to arrange another hole-filling and litter picking day. | **Chair (SB)** |
| Cllr SB spoke about the Race for Change: a group that was created for people in the area who feel strongly about fighting anti-social behaviour and racism, in the wake of the murder of Tavis Spencer-Aitkens, and other incidents. All were made welcome to collaborate with this. |  |
| The Chair spoke of the need to create a new mission statement, using the aims agreed at the AGM in 2019.  She said she will contact GT (Vice Chair) about getting this made into a document suitable to publish on the group’s website and social media. | **SB Chai**r |
| **5. Date, Time and Location of Next Meeting**  9th April 2020 at 6.45pm, at Murrayside Community Centre. |  |