



## Friends of Murray Park

### Notes of Meeting held on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024 at 7pm at Murrayside Community Centre

**Present:**

**Officers:** Tracy Rowe (Chair)  
Lesley Fayers (Treasurer)  
Sue Bird (Secretary)  
Joanne Mansie (Vice Chair)

**Members:** Dennis Carpenter, Paul Gilbert, Jill Richardson  
Malcolm and Jenny Ebbs

**Apologies:** Nick Wilcox (IBC), Cllr Roxanne Downes, Jimmy Knight,  
Natalie Longley

**1 Excluded Persons**

**Action**

There were no excluded persons.

**2 Minutes**

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

**3 Matters Arising**

(i) Alteration to Gates

There had been a mixed response to the alteration to the gate to allow better access for use of people using mobility scooters.

While the gentleman who made the original request had been very happy with the alteration of the South East gate, someone else complained that it made it easier for young children and larger dogs to get out of the park.

The Group discussed the matter and decided to ask IBC whether a sign could be put on the gate explaining that it had been done to aid use by people using disability scooters. (TR)

**TR**

In the interim, LF offered to speak to the gentleman who made the original request, maybe even ask him to join the Friends Group, as we do not at the moment have anyone to represent disabled park users.

**LF**

(ii) Football Pitches and Goalposts

Some time ago it had been requested that the goalposts be moved in order to allow the grass to recover in the existing goal areas. This still had not been done. The Group also noted that the goalposts themselves had become very rusty at the bottom.

**IBC**

The Chair reported that someone had approached her to ask whether they could book the pitch on a regular basis. She had explained that the pitches are a public facility and available to all, on a first come first served basis.

(iii) New Notice Boards

The new boards had been erected but the maps which had been put inside them with the "You are here" arrow, had been put in the wrong ones. SB had changed them over and they now show the correct information.

There was also a notice which read "No cycling on the Path" in the North West Notice Board, which should read "No cycling on the PARK".

(iv) New Trees

LF reported that a number of the new trees were either damaged or dead altogether, as follows.

Beech opposite 68 Murray Road  
No tree opposite 78 (was Rowen)  
Beech opposite 94  
Beech opposite 122  
Oak opposite 128 ( some lower down signs of life)  
No tree opposite 69 King Edward Road  
Oak opposite 45 King Edward Road

(v) Dog Waste bags/dispensers

There had been some improvement in the instances of dog fouling. However, the dispensers were needing to be refilled very often, as masses were being used, including some people pulling off yards of bags and taking them away.

TR had asked NW whether IBC would be able to fund replacement supplies of bags, but he had thought it unlikely, as IBC were having to make a lot of cutbacks. NW had suggested that maybe SCC could help.

It was thought that it might help if a notice stating that the bags were supplied by the Friends (ie not IBC), and were intended as a back up, if people forgot to bring their own, or had run out.

We did have some cash in the bank account but maybe we should look at some fund-raising ideas.

It was also suggested that members pay a small subscription which could boost funds but the Chair was not willing to do this, as we felt lucky to have the members that we have, without having to ask them to pay for the privilege of serving their community.

(vi) Family Fun Days

The Group discussed the Fun Day, but it was unclear whether there would be an IBC run event on Murray Park this year. The Friends await confirmation of this one way or the other.

There would be a Windrush event on 22 June, where we could possibly have a stall. However, this date was not convenient for several members, so there would not be enough people to run any stall for MPF, even if we had been invited to attend.

(vii) Training Area for Dogs

It was thought that this may be accomplished at the same time as the refurbishment of the Play Area, when it was also hoped that a drinking fountain would also be supplied, as well as the demolition of the old toilets.

## **5 Website/Social Media Support**

There had been no information from the IBC team who had set up the original media support. Glen Thimblethorpe (the previous Vice Chairman) had kindly agreed to continue to update the website as appropriate.

## **6 Refurbishment of Children's Play Area 2024/25**

This had not moved any further forward and the Group agreed that it would be advantageous to invite Lisa Stannard to the next meeting, so that some decisions on the format of the new Play Area could be made.

JM asked if there could be an area where some shade was available, and TR mentioned the Autism communication board which had been previously discussed. There was a folder on FB which contained pictures of some good ideas, which we could forward to Lisa Stannard when appropriate.

## **7 Anti-Social Behaviour and Nuisance Noise**

A small group of members had met up recently with PC David Goodwin, Nick Wilcox and others to exchange ideas and information about the escalating Anti-Social Behaviour on the Park. This informal meeting was arranged because neither of our nominated police officers would be able to attend the May meeting, and it was seen as important to be pro-active in finding some resolution to the matter, which is causing extreme distress to several local residents. The notes of this meeting are attached to these minutes as an addendum. The Group discussed the matter further and added the following information.

On one occasion a police car had been seen to drive past – the youngsters had not noticed the car and the police did not appear to notice the youngsters, so if that was indeed the case it was a pointless exercise.

It was thought that some of the kids who were drinking alcohol were under age, and they had been seen at the local shops on Felixstowe Road, asking adults to buy alcohol for them.

PG said that on one occasion he had seen a group of about 40 youngsters on the Park, but they had soon dispersed.

LF reported that the gate into the Wildlife area had been kicked in and (on a different occasion) one lad had been seen smashing glass bottles with a bicycle chain. The police had said that we should not put ourselves at risk by approaching the youths while this sort of behaviour was happening.

LF said that if anyone contacted the emergency contact number (which was operated by HEARS when Park Patrol was not available) they did not appear to know how to pass the message on, but had offered to send them an email.

Hopefully the addition of various CCTV cameras in the area would deter some of the behaviour.

## **8 Roles and Responsibilities of Officers**

TR said that the Constitution Document for Murray Park Friends was very dated and ambiguous and thought that it would be good to address this at the AGM later in the year. TR had completed an on-line survey in which MPF had received a high score, apart from diversity (see 10 (i) below)

## 9 Finances

LF reported that £23.98 had been spent on dog waste bags and locks for the dispensers during this 2 month period, leaving a balance of £229.24. The invoices did not tally properly, probably because TR subscribed to Amazon Prime, so was not charged postage on the transactions.

LF said that if there were no transactions during a statement period, a printed statement was not generated, so there was a gap which was not covered by a statement. However, the closing balance did tally with the opening balance of the next statement, even though there was a gap in dates.

## 10 Any Other Business

### (i) Recruitment

JM said that it would be good to have a recruitment drive to attract new members, as she was aware that there were several new families in King Edward Road, who were probably not even aware that there was a Friends Group.

TR agreed and said that the membership was not very inclusive with regard to age/race. SB said that we were also very short of members who had young children (JM being the only one at the moment).

SB offered to update the recruitment leaflets which she already had on file, and email the document to JM for distribution to local addresses. TR and DC also requested a supply of leaflets for the same purpose.

**SB**

### (ii) Cobbold Sign

ME asked whether the wooden Cobbold sign in the North East corner had been spruced up, as had been promised for a while, and other members confirmed that it had now been done.

### (iii) Inappropriate Use of Tennis Court

ME reported that the tennis court was regularly being used for playing a form of football over the net, possibly by Eastern Europeans. This appeared to be at Sunday lunchtimes at around 1pm to 2pm, and wondered if Park Protection Officers could intervene.

**NW**

### (iv) Ball Stop Net

LF said that this needed to be repaired again.

**IBC**

(v) Mature Trees next to Murray Road

Some of the mature trees were overhanging the public footpath in Murray Road, and when there had been a period of heavy rain they were hanging so low that several people had been hit in the face by soaking wet branches. The Group agreed that perhaps the Tree Surveyor should be tasked with inspecting these, with a view to cutting some of them back to alleviate this problem.

(vi) Wire Cages round New Trees

Someone had pulled some wires out from inside the cages, leaving them sticking out, reportedly resulting in a dog being injured. IBC had already dealt with this.

There was also a lot of weeds growing inside the cages, which needed to be dealt with. This was also a problem on the keep fit equipment, where weeds had been allowed to grow uncontrolled.

**IBC**

(vii) Table Tennis Table

The table tennis table had a hole in it, which looked like a cigarette burn. Table Tennis England had been contacted on a previous occasion and their solution was seen to be much too expensive. The Group wondered whether there was some sort of resin which could be utilised fairly cheaply.

(viii) The new courts would benefit from being pressure washed if possible, as they were looking rather green.

**11 Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> July at 7pm.

## **ADDENDUM**

### **Anti-Social Behaviour and Nuisance Noise**

A small group of members had met up recently with PC David Goodwin, Nick Wilcox and others to exchange ideas and information about the escalating Anti-Social Behaviour on the Park. This informal meeting was arranged because neither of our nominated police officers would be able to attend the May meeting, and it was seen as important to be proactive in finding some resolution to the matter, which is causing extreme distress to several local residents.

At the meeting were:-

PC David Goodwin  
Nick Wilcox, and Ray Youngs (Park Protection Officer) IBC  
Tracy Rowe, Sue Bird, Lesley Fayers (MPF)  
Martin Cherrington and Nathan Horne (Murrayside)  
Natalie Longley (local resident whose home borders the Park)

The Secretary had been keeping a log of all reported incidents on the Park, which she tabled as a spreadsheet, and which had been sent to the Police. PC Goodwin said that the Police were keeping their own log as well, and all information was helpful. Members are asked to let Sue know about any ASB they see on the park, which will be added to the log and sent to the police in due course.

Martin Cherrington told the group that some youngsters had been using the Centre after taking drugs. The drug taking was not happening in the community centre. They had regularly been trashing the toilets. Martin hadn't initially stopped them coming in but the youths wandering round smelling of weed was a concern and a safeguarding issue, so he had had to ban them, ultimately moving the problem to the Park and the local library

The problems appear to begin at the age of around 11, 12 or 13, when the youths are "finding their feet", pushing boundaries, experimenting with drugs/alcohol etc. It appeared to be a "rolling cycle" as each year a new group of kids start causing problems.

Ray Youngs (Park Protection Officer) confirmed that other parks in the town were having similar problems, the worst being Christchurch Park, being close to town centre. He had witnessed drug dealing on Murray Park and had found needles.

PC Goodwin reported that he had confronted a group of 10 lads on bikes, wearing balaclavas and hoods, filming themselves.

Natalie Longley (NL) reported problems on many occasions and had recently tried to report an incident to Park Patrol, but had been directed to reporting it on line. She was very despondent, saying that there was no point in reporting things, as nothing gets done. Ray Youngs said that the direction to on-line reporting may have been because Park Patrol do not turn on their radios until about 9.10am, as they were busy unlocking gates and courts around the town. Ray informed the group that his day starts at 6am, and he asked for his mobile number to be made available.

Natalie had had to fight to get the shrubbery cut back next to her home, as this had become an easy place for the ASB to occur. She had seen or heard people having sex, starting fires, profanity, regularly smoking drugs and drinking. She said that the bushes should be cut back regularly to discourage this, and said that she did not feel able to let her small daughter play in the back garden, and would certainly never bring her onto the park because of this.

PC Goodwin said that when he was on a late shift (3pm - 11pm) he would regularly walk around the park late at night when it was known that the worst ASB was happening. He said that if the person was under age 16, there was not much they could do other than move them on, but once they reached the age of 16, Police could approach the Housing Department (if the person was living in a council house) and apply for a Community Protection Notice, whereby the family could be moved somewhere else, as they were seen to be detrimental to the local community.

Martin Cherrington said that when the building which was currently under construction was completed, there would be CCTV cameras and he could feed footage to the police when they were operational. Nick Wilcox said there would also be cameras installed along with the new play equipment.

LF said that NL had frequently contacted the police to complain about noise and other ASB. The area was now being seen by the police as a "hot spot" for ASB, as it was being reported so much.

LF had spoken to the group of youngsters on several occasions and found them to be chatting quietly most of the time. She asked other residents of Murray Road (on the Murray Road FB Group) to go over and speak to the youths if they were causing a nuisance, instead of leaving it to her to do all the time.

PC Goodwin told us that the police were now going into primary schools and high schools, making children aware at a very young age that ASB was not a good idea.