

Friends of Towneley Park

Minutes from the meeting held on 27/7/17 at 10:00 am in the Friends meeting room

Present: Maureen Frankland (Chair), Gill Robinson (Minutes), Richard Moss (Treasurer), Barbara Nutter, Roger Leach, Keith Buchanan, Pat Ashton, Pete Ashton, June Pritchard, Anne Mason, Ronnie Pollard, Margaret Crane, Mary McNeile, Andy Buck & Rob Richards (Burnley Borough Council)

Apologies: Pat Colbran, Grayson Holden, Denise Motley, Mavis Hancock, Phil Dykes

1 Maureen welcomed everyone to the meeting, with special thanks to both Andy and Rob for attending.

Parking passes – anyone who needed an up to date pass to let Maureen know.

Towneley Hall – Maureen has negotiated 2 free passes to TH for all FOTP members.

2 Minutes of the last meeting were agreed with the following matters arising:

Andy was asked to provide a list of forthcoming events in the park by February each year so that they could go into the Towneley News. Andy confirmed that some events would not be confirmed by this date, but all events are listed on the Council's website.

Maureen asked if the notice boards near the bowling green had been ordered, Andy said that Sean was waiting for funding before proceeding.

3 Officer Report – The Council gardening team are struggling to cope with all the work that needs doing in the park. Their apprentice has left, Rob has to work in other parks, as does Ray, so this leaves Towneley short staffed. However, 2 new apprentices are starting in September on a two year Level 2 course. It has not yet been decided where these apprentices will work.

There has been some turf die back on the Bowling Greens and Golf Greens, but this is now being treated. Barbara mentioned the weeds on the lawn of the Italian Garden and has had a conversation with Green Thumb who may be interested in sponsoring the lawn.

Andy also confirmed that the fenced off area adjacent to the avenue is a result of a collapsed drain and this will be repaired over the winter period.

Maureen suggested that it would be good for the new apprentices to be given/loaned a toolkit so that they would always have their own tools to hand. Andy was not sure if this was possible, Gill put forward the idea that the FOTP could purchase one tool kit if the council purchased the other. Members thought loaning the tool kit might be a better option as they could then be passed on to other apprentices in the future. Andy will consider this idea.

Pat gave Andy details of a lady who was offering to look after a plot of land in the park (near to where an old toilet block used to be). Andy will contact her.

It is soon to be the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Passchendaele, and there will be 41 crosses placed on the cenotaph to remember the 41 men from Burnley who died at the battle. The cenotaph and surrounding areas have been tidied up for this occasion.

Balsam – the parks team have cleared several areas, mowing the balsam where possible. The wavy path by the river near Fullede Recreation ground has been 90% cleared, although there are still areas where it is taking over. However, the Balsam Bashing season is coming to an end, so Andy advised that no one touches it after the end of July. Advice is to pick and drop where it grows before it flowers, do not put picked balsam on the paths.

Other invasive plants that need dealing with are Knotweed, Giant Hogweed and Ragwort. Knotweed needs specialist treatment, but Ragwort can be pulled up and dropped as long as gloves are worn.

A litter bin, which Andy has already bought, will be installed at Barwise.

Ronnie has identified some loose wooden posts near to the Rotunda. The Council team are planning to replace the worst ones during the winter.

Maureen asked when the 2 benches will be installed, Rob will need help to do this so any FOTP volunteers to contact Rob asap.

Maureen thanked Andy and Rob for attending.

4 Treasurers Report – we have £8057 in the bank account, and that is after paying for the new playground. We keep £2000 in reserve for a scooter replacement, and £500 for further Barwise benches.

Main sources of income for the period are:

Lottery and other Grants, Gift Aid and Events: Totalling £21251.

Expenditure £31,551

Most of the Gift Aid comes from donations for memorial benches. The oak benches now cost £900 each, and whilst this seems expensive they are good quality and will last about 20 years. There are other options (such as metal benches), wooden picnic benches or shrubs for Lime Walk that are a cheaper alternative for families that Maureen will discuss with them at the time of ordering.

The FOTP pay a small charge to Charity Checkout for collecting Gift Aid on our behalf, all agreed that this was good value for money. Maureen thanked Richard for his report.

5 Area reports

Barwise – Keith highlighted the Balsam problem at Barwise

Lime Avenue – Denise has been picking Balsam regularly, especially between Barwise and Causeway End.

Causeway – Grayson reports two small areas of Balsam which it would be good to clear before they seed.

Thanet Lee – Maureen and Andrew have been picking, guess what, Balsam! There is a particularly muddy path that needs attention, beneath the large Yews.

Smallholdings Trail – some of the wooden sculptures need repairing and replacing. Richard Colbran has been working hard in this area. The base of the wooden posts are now being strimmed, this should help to slow down the rotting process in future, and there is lots of Balsam.

Fulledge and Woodgrove – Janet Smith is no longer able to be involved so Ronnie has volunteered to patrol this area

Riverside car park and playground – Pat and Pete to monitor

6 Chair's update - Thirteen new memorial benches have been purchased. Some of the older benches around the hall have been removed meaning there are now two vacant spots. Thanks to Janet Smith for negotiating with owners whose benches needed to be replaced.

Maureen thanked all the volunteers who helped with the sale of plants from the Italian Garden, this raised £230. Next year, bulbs to be put in lots of 10 and colour coded.

Also from the Italian Garden, 900 polyanthus plants were removed and replanted in Small Lime Walk. The idea is to put these plants back into the park for next Spring.

Maureen asked that everyone check History plaques in the park for damage, recently a plaque that marked the old Towneley School was destroyed, so we need to be vigilant and report any damage so that they can be repaired or replaced.

The leaflets in the Rotunda are being topped up weekly. From next week we will stop putting out Balsam leaflets, but continue to put out News, Walks and the History leaflets.

MORE BALSAM NEWS! – As previously mentioned, the Balsam Bashing season is drawing to a close, but plans are in place to develop a strategy for 2018, maybe with some volunteer days and installing information posters. This is a project for early next year.

The FOTP have purchased some Slasher/Thrashers, these sharp tools help to ease the process of cutting down weeds (including Balsam).

Phase 1 of the Barwise play area has been completed, and we received good press coverage in both the Burnley Express and the Lancashire Telegraph. A great day was had by all on Woodchip Wednesday, thanks to all volunteers, friends and family who turned up to spread the woodchip. Thanks also to Tesco for supplying fruit and water for Springfield School and Brunshaw Primary. Roger has filmed the project and will be putting the finishing touches to his latest blockbuster very soon.

Phase 2 of the project will see improvements to the picnic area and car park, new benches, a willow tunnel and further additions to the woodland area.

Pete asked if the play area is getting used regularly, and whilst we have not been monitoring numbers, feedback has been positive. Maureen has made some posters, Pat and Pete volunteered to put these on the notice boards, and Gill will contact pre-schools in the area.

The latest edition of the Towneley News is out now, next year the Towneley Hall Society would like to work with us on this and will provide a donation of £50.

7 Activity feedback

- a) Brass Band concert – Lots of cakes were left over and had to be taken home. Sales were down on previous years. After lots of discussion it was agreed that all cakes will be sold for £1.50, tea £1 and juice 50p. Paper plates will be provided

- b) Bric-a-brac – This was a lot of work for the volunteers for not a lot of profit. The event was not promoted and even on the day visitors to the park did not know what was going on. However, Calico, who organised the event, will learn lessons for next year to improve numbers. Calico looked after the volunteers very well with refreshments
- c) Craft Groups and meeting room– The mosaics have been moved to the hall and will be installed soon. They are very heavy so need specialist fixings. Maureen will provide some text to explain to visitors the story of the mosaics. An official launch date will be arranged. Pauline's craft group have had lots of quality material donated, members are busy making items to sell. This group to meet fortnightly on a Monday. The other craft group will meet on the in-between Mondays starting on September 11th and will start with air dried clay activities.
- d) The meeting room cleaning rota is working well, thanks to all involved. Maureen will contact Property Services about a small area of damp in the roof. Andrew has installed some brackets to store the chairs neatly. Ronnie volunteered to keep an eye on the room in winter.
- e) The comments box is not being used, but is there if people want to offer suggestions.
- f) The scooters have recently been serviced, £43.50 has recently been received in donations
- g) Litter – Barbara confirmed that the bins are emptied twice a day. We had a discussion about providing extra bins, but for now this was put on hold until we know how the council will be taking forward their litter strategy.

8 Future Plans

- a) Gardening Club – all going well although the FOTP would appreciate confirmation from Simon Goff about plans for the Rotary Bed. The Café bed is looking good. Pete asked all members to put tools away clean and tidily in the shed
- b) Small Lime Walk – an extra Thursday session at the end of August will take place on 31st. More woodchip has been provided by the parks team and spread out over the area
- c) Heritage & Woodland Day – more volunteers needed please! The new car park area may be ready, the Air Cadets and possibly some Police trainees to look after car parking. FOTP to man the Money Tree as well as providing Teas etc. and depending on volunteers maybe sell plants, bird boxes etc.
- d) Halloween – Pat and Pete to provide the trail based on the same format from last year
- e) Bonfire planning meeting 16th August, event will be on Saturday 4th November
- f) Christmas planning meeting Thursday 12 October at 10.00am in the Meeting Room. Everyone welcome to come and help plan this year's event.
- g) There is a sponsored new bench to be installed at Barwise, Andrew and helpers to install.

9 Outstanding items The Wetlands Bridge is still outstanding, the Ribble Rivers Trust to be invited to next meeting.

10 Any other business All agreed that a meal after the AGM on Saturday 21st October would be good, Gill to book The Stables for 1.30pm.

For further information contact Maureen on 01282 432423 or fotp1902@btinternet.com OR Pat on patpeteash@yahoo.co.uk OR Gill 07746620654 or gill.robinson@ymail.com