

Minutes of the Annual General meeting of The Friends of Spencer Park
Tuesday July 5th 2016 7pm Albany Club

1. **Present:** Paul Smith (Chair), Karen Berry (Secretary) Pat Ryan (Treasurer) Committee members: Helen Elias, Carol Alcock , Carol Bayliss, Dal Singh, Tim Brooke. In attendance: Richard Jones, Katie Hitrova (Coventry University, Janis Firminger, Jaqueueline Brown, Liz Dayton, Jane Donovan, Anthony Godber, Gill Brooke, Diana Slocumb, John and Chris Wilkin, Rory Donovan.
2. **Apologies:** Ken Taylor, Zilpha Reid, Scott Crowther
3. **Approval of Minutes of the 2015 AGM, Oct. 15th:** Proposed Karen Berry, seconded Pat Ryan. Carried.
4. **Accounts for the year ending March 31st 2015 and update on current finances:** Pat Ryan presented the accounts. The largest outgoing in the period was payment for the playground. The closing balance included money put aside to pay for benches and tennis so was in reality about £750. This has since been boosted by a tax rebate on donations and other donations for the lavender beds, flat green preparation and from Worldsong. Pat felt we could increase our income if we requested donations for cakes and drinks rather than charging as we would get a tax rebate of around £75 based on our past income from that source. A table top sale in the park, a Per Una sale, a plant sale and an allotment surplus produce sale were also proposed to raise funds.
5. **Appointment of an independent examiner of accounts:** Colin Scott has done this annually and is willing to continue. This was approved.
6. **Chair's report** – Paul Smith reported that despite the effects of the council cuts leading to the closure of the pavilion and the flat bowling green the Friends Group has succeeded in keeping the park going. There is a need for local community parks and he listed the activities organized by the Friends Group which have resulted in a vibrant park. The young children's playground has proved popular and is providing a focus for the community and with the expansion of the Albany Crown Green Bowling Club, the increased presence in the park has helped inhibit anti-social behavior in the park. The playground had to be sited on the grass area because of the presence of asbestos under the old tennis courts. The latter will be resurfaced shortly providing a further play space. The tennis club is developing well thanks to Karen and Peter Elias. Work on the development of the pavilion is now needed. It was suggested that we should keep a record of numbers using the playground. There will be consultation about playground markings on the refurbished old tennis court area.
7. **Election of officers:** The current officers are willing to continue. Paul Smith – nominated by Pat Ryan and seconded by Carol Alcock will continue as Chair. Karen Berry – nominated by Pat Ryan and seconded by Tim Brooke will continue as secretary and Pat Ryan – nominated by Karen Berry and seconded by Diana Slocumb will continue as Treasurer. The current committee members – Helen Elias, Tim Brooke, Zilpha Reid, Dal Singh and Carol Bayliss agreed to continue and were accepted by the

meeting. Three new members – Liz Bayton, Jane Donovan and Anthony Godber were welcomed to the committee.

8. **Designs for the Pavilion:** Richard Jones of Coventry University made a presentation based on the work of three student groups, which has been compressed into two projects. Both projects reflect the sense of community in the building and both use the downstairs and upstairs area and remove the two interior walls. They conform to building regulations and use a wide staircase rather than a spiral one. The designs have to be approved by a structural engineer. Both designs include decking outside to bring the verandah floor up to the level of the inside of the pavilion. The results of the students' survey of park user showed that the demand for cafe came top. The **first design** by Katie Hitrova has a Japanese theme and is the more expensive of the two. There are sliding doors around the outside which opens up the pavilion. Shutters would be drawn down when not in use. There could be access to the bowls storage area and toilets at the rear when the pavilion is closed. She hopes to open the ceiling up to the roof. The upstairs area could accommodate 60 people sitting so there could be a café. She plans for moveable/stackable furniture to accommodate community use e.g. a dance class. The **second design** by Justina Wozniak would replace the interior walls with pillars. It would be possible to close off the bottom floor and open the top so that either could be used independently. The catering facilities would be more of a snack bar than a restaurant, but it would be possible to use the area she has designated an office as a kitchen instead. The upstairs area is smaller than design 1 – more like a gallery, but it would be possible to make it bigger so it could be a multi purpose area. The feeling of the meeting was that it would be better to keep the café downstairs and keep the upstairs as a multi purpose area that could be rented out for birthday parties etc. Paul stressed that the Lawn Tennis Association had emphasized the community aspect of the tennis club so that there should be a community café. The two students will still be at the University next year and could carry on working with the Friends group. It should be possible to pick and mix from the two designs.
9. **Future plans:** These include the pavilion, the development of the community tennis club, the development of the flat green, continuing to work with Albany Crown Green bowling club and planning the restored “old tennis courts” area as well as events in the park. Pat stressed the importance of all working together and prioritizing our objectives so individuals do not go off on tangents without working with the rest of the committee members. Communication and co-operation are essential.
10. **Next AGM:** will be held in mid June to be closer to the end of the financial year. Paul thanked everyone for coming.
11. **A.O.B. :** The issue of fencing round the playground was raised as an issue for dog walkers. Paul said that this is a controversial area even within the committee. The situation is being monitored.