

Minutes of the Spencer Park Meeting  
Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup>. 10.30 – 11.30 Visitors' Centre War Memorial Park

**Present:**

City Council: Dave Lewis, Simon Walden, Ann Akerman

NENA: Karen Berry, Paul Smith, Zilpha Reed, Helen Elias

(apologies: Esther Higden, Kevin Noble)

The meeting was held at the request of NENA and was chaired by Karen Berry.

1. It was agreed that NENA should set up a **Friends of Spencer Park Group**, inviting other groups e.g. SENA to join us so that the Council would have one body to work with about the park. To be placed on the agenda of the next NENA meeting 31.1.12
2. **NENA's draft proposal** for the park was shared with the Council staff and it was agreed that NENA would update the draft proposal and send it to Ann. It would include a draft consultation strategy following the council guidelines. Karen undertook to do this. The proposal would then be the basis of our funding application.
3. **Funding** : It was proposed that an application would be made to Parks for People: Heritage Lottery Fund. This fund stipulates that the land owner leads the application process so this would need to be done by the council with the support of the Friends Group. If we applied for £25,000 we would need 10% matched funding from the Council. Ann confirmed that a sum approaching this (£22 thousand) has been allocated for play improvements in Spencer Park, but she would need to find out if the Council would approve use of this for matched funding. The Council would not support an increase in running costs for the park, which would preclude sand as a play surface. The possibility of potential income from the restored pavilion was mooted as possibly offsetting costs. The deadlines for applications are the end of February and August. It was decided to aim at August for the first round, which is an expression of interest. The second round has to take place within twenty-seven months of the first application. It was pointed out that we need to use the correct names for the two parks. The enclosed park, which we have called "the little park", is called Spencer Park. The open area across the road, which we have referred to as "the big park" is called Spencer Recreation Ground. Ann raised the issue of access to the park. The Group would like to see three hour parking on either side of Spencer Ave. next to the two parks. We would need to contact Traffic Management.
4. **Immediate short term issues:**
  - Signage: Dave agreed look into the feasibility of installing signs to keep people off the bowling greens and clean up their dog mess.
  - Planting: Zilpha referred to her document about improving the natural features of the park and spoke about the need to brighten up the park and make it more colourful. Simon agreed with her and said he would look into it. The Council would do the major digging work but the Friends group would assist with planting and ongoing maintenance. Volunteers would need to work with a City employee or the Friends group would have to take out Public

liability Insurance if they wanted to work on their own. Communication between the Council and the Friends group would be essential to ensure they are working together. The areas needing work are the north-west edge by the vehicular access – Area A; the eastern edge in the corner of Dalton Rd. and Spencer Ave, right up into the corner between the path and the hedge – Area B; and the south west edge Area C which would involve moving shrubs and planting perhaps berberis and bluebells etc. The order of work should be Areas B, A and finally C. There was no objection to getting rid of the little round bed by Area B. Simon agreed to get a list of what he has available with a view to starting with Area B.

- Bird boxes: NENA has money for bird and bat boxes. Paul will get information from the RSPB and the British trust for Ornithology so that we get an appropriate range of boxes. Zilpha will contact Bill at the Gilbert Richards Centre about construction.
5. **Consultation:** There was further discussion about the consultation process. This needs to match the proposals and not be open-ended. We must ensure we use the correct terminology. There is no need to consult yet – just integrate our draft consultation plans into our proposal and this document can then be presented to the Council.
  6. **Play area:** We need more information about available equipment and costings for the proposal. This could be achieved either by appointing a designer who would co-ordinate our ideas and put the proposal out to tender or by approaching a number of Play companies who could design and build from a brief. The latter was the approach at Gosford Park. The Council no longer has in-house facilities for design and planning.
  7. **Peace trees:** NENA asked about the possible replacement of the explanation board that was by the trees on Spencer Recreation Ground. Similar signs are in Lady Herbert’s Garden and by Copsewood Terrace off the Binley Road. NENA would look into this although there were some concerns about over signing areas.
  8. **Memorial trees:** Dave said that he gets three or four requests a year city wide. We will need to take this into account when considering new trees. Also there needs to be a consistency of seat and bin design.

**Summary of Main Actions needed:**

- Ann to contact Councillor Townsend about the general plans
- NENA to form a Friends group
- Simon to find out about plants for the agreed areas.
- NENA to update the proposal including consultation
- Dave to look at signage
- NENA to pursue bird boxes

Next meeting Monday February 20<sup>th</sup> 10.30 at the Visitors’ Centre War Memorial Park when we will discuss the “Expression of Interest” document to be submitted to the Parks for People Heritage Lottery Fund.

Minuted by Helen Elias