

Minutes of Friends of Spencer Park Management Committee
Monday Feb. 29th.2016

Present: Paul Smith (Chair), Karen Berry (Secretary), Pat Ryan (Treasurer), Tim Brooke, Zilpha Reid, Helen Elias, Ken Taylor, Carol Alcock (committee members) Trevor Robinson (ranger) Will and Mairead Leigh

1. **Apologies:** Scott Crowther, Dal Singh
2. **Minutes** of the meeting on Monday Feb. 1st. accepted as a true record.
3. **Matters arising:** Pat expressed her concern that a further meeting had taken place in the park after the last committee meeting which reversed the decision to carve the stump of the tree to be felled, replacing it with more shrubs. She said this should have been referred back to the committee for a decision. The Chair acknowledged this, but had felt there was insufficient time as the tree was about to be felled. However, the tree is still standing!
4. **Pavilion:** Will and Mairead Leigh submitted a proposal for a pop up café in the park this summer. This would involve minimal refurbishment of the pavilion as the preparation of cakes, and savouries would be prepared in their house in Broadway. They would provide folding tables and chairs for outside use and install a barista coffee machine. The café would be open at weekends initially extending to more days during the school holidays and if successful could be further developed in the future. They would be willing to unlock the toilets and the tennis courts. They would require exclusivity i.e. no vans onsite during events. The committee formally moved to back their plan. They will approach Ann Akerman with their plan. We informed them that another party was interested and were being shown round the pavilion today.
5. **Flat Green:** The Council is keen for us to take on the running of the flat green. Carol expressed concern about the condition of the Green and misuse by dog walkers and footballers. We have increased awareness that the Green will continue to be used through the ECHO, word of mouth and signs on the gates so there has been less misuse. Michael will be cutting the Green fortnightly. Use of the Green will be initially fortnightly so Paul will try to co-ordinate with Michael. Paul is targeting groups of people with long term illnesses for whom bowls is an ideal sport. This fits in with the Council's policies to promote health. Storage of equipment is an issue. The bowls need to be kept in an accessible location and we cannot expect the council to staff access. The Crown Green bowls are currently in the ladies' toilets, which is not suitable and will be less so when the toilets are in use during the summer. Karen and Paul will meet to meet about access to the pavilion. We also need the costings of the Flat Green which were promised by Graham Hood.
6. **Tennis plan:** We received a negative response from Jayne Ashton of the lawn Tennis Association to our request to register Spencer Park with them as a place to play. Their reservations were that they had been told that the Council had closed the courts to public access due to the standard of the facility and health and safety issues. They felt there needed to be a meeting with the council to establish the best route forward to enable access to local people. Helen had emailed Graham Hood to clarify the situation, pointing out that the courts were closed due to funding issues and were used last summer by the coaching sessions when health and safety had not been raised as an issue. In our meeting with Graham and Ann Akerman, they had agreed in principle to

the establishment of a community tennis club although Ann raised the issue of the Spencer Park courts not having an all weather surface so that play could not take place in the rain. We suggested having two padlocks – one combination lock used by members and one ordinary padlock, which we would install when rain prevented play. There are plans for Henry Eighth School to use the courts this summer and no safety issues have been mentioned. We need to show sufficient interest and use of the tennis courts if we are to take on further responsibility and obtain funding for the necessary improvements to the courts. Helen has had no reply to this and will phone Graham this week.

7. **Report back from the meeting with the Parks team:** The Friends met Graham Hood, Ann Akerman and Ann Doyle on Weds. Feb. 24th. The meeting focused on three main areas: the flat green, the tennis courts and the pavilion. A summary of this meeting has already been sent out but will be added to this email. In short, the Council would be happy for us to take on all three areas at a peppercorn rent. To do this we need to show feasibility by small scale trials this summer. The Coventry University students preparing plans for the pavilion will be making presentations at our next meeting and at the Earlsdon Festival. We need to establish a pavilion working group and will need funding for a viability study. We will need more members with business expertise/contractual legal skills to move our plans forward. We will pitch for this at the Earlsdon Festival and through the media, particularly the ECHO.
8. **Gardening dates:** Saturdays March 5th, April 2nd and May 7th. We need the tree to be cut down so we can replant the uprooted shrubs as soon as possible.
9. **Events: Easter egg hunt** on Friday March 25th 11-12 **Earlsdon Festival** - on Saturday April 30th there will be bowls, tennis and disco golf. The models of the pavilion will be available and we will be looking for volunteers, particularly with skills, to move our plans forward. Refreshments will be provided by us. On Monday May 2nd the purpose of the stall will be to inform people about our aims, gauge interest and try to tap volunteers. **Big lunch:** Sunday June 12th. NENA street sale – Sunday June 26th. **Bands in the Park** – Trevor has the list of bands and dates but not all the locations are fixed yet.
10. **A.O.B.:** questions have come up on Facebook as to when the football posts will be re-installed on the larger park. The committee felt that installing one football goal would remove some of the play from the small park onto the larger park without encouraging official football matches for which players weren't paying a booking fee. Ken will contact Andrew Walston. Also since the sign excluding dogs has been put up by the playground there has been some demand for a fence. Our position is that a fence is only needed if problems arise and we would not be paying for it. We still need to sort out a WREN or Friends plaque which could possibly go on the back of the existing sign.
11. **Next meeting:** Monday April 4th. at Paul's house.

Helen Elias 1.4.2016