

**Minutes of the management committee of Friends of Spencer Park Monday
Nov. 2nd 2015**

Present: Paul Smith, Karen Berry, Helen Elias, Zilpha Reed, Trevor Robinson, Pat Ryan, Ken Taylor, Tim Brooke, Scott Crowther (Crown Green Bowling)

Apologies: None

1. **Minutes of the meeting of Sept. 7th** were accepted as correct record.

Matters arising: Paul will continue to liaise with NENA but will not be on their committee.

2. **Feedback from meeting with Parks team:** Good progress has been made in ongoing maintenance and the refurbishment of paths and bench bases. More lavender will be planted.
3. **Play Area:** Work should resume on Nov. 4th. with the installation of the equipment. The safety surface will be added after. It is difficult to say when the playground will be completed, so hard to plan for the opening ceremony. Ken agreed to see if he could find out more about completion dates. Karen will liaise with Michael Hammond about the opening ceremony, which could possibly be Sat. Dec. 19th. or Mon Dec. 21st. Karen will speak to WREN about a commemorative plaque acknowledging the work of the Friends group and the WREN funding. Paul agreed to tidy up some of the notices on the gates.

Pat reported on a meeting of the Coventry consultation group that she had attended at which Phil Hibberd, the Coventry dog warden had reported that there had been few problems with dogs. He prefers not to have anti dog regulations unless an area is fenced off , as they are difficult to enforce. Pat and Paul have offered through NENA to meet with the dog walkers in Spencer Park, but have had no reply. The group discussed the advisability of installing fencing around the children's playground and agreed that we would be happy to manage without a fence, but monitor the situation. We would not be able to fund fencing, but other groups might be interested.

4. **Future plans:** The **Art in the Park** event during half term did not attract as many as the previous session. It clashed with children's activities put on at the War Memorial Park so we need to check dates for clashes in future as Brenda is keen for it to continue. **Pavilion:** Paul has not managed to get architects over to look at the pavilion, but will pursue this. We need to find out what the Council's plans are for the pavilion. It seems likely that they will want to continue ownership but would be happy for a group to take over the day to day running. Nigel Clews is responsible for buildings. Ken agreed to find out what the Council's general view is. There was a broad discussion about possible uses for the pavilion. These include a café, meeting areas, Art Gallery, storage of Sports facilities. Grants might be available from the Arts Council. We need a clearer idea about what we want and what is feasible. **Bowls:** Scott has met with Ann Akerman and Andrew Walston about the future of bowling at Spencer Park. He would like to convert the current unused flat green to Crown green bowling. The number of paid up members has increased to 32. There have been junior training sessions and University matches. The profile of Crown green bowling is rising nationally and Scott has raised

the profile locally. They will be doing winter bowling from January. Andrew Walston is willing to give them keys and access via the front shutters and is working on a legal agreement to cover liability. They will be loaned a leaf blower. There is access to water by the Green (which the gardening group did not know about and felt it would be useful) Scott has looked at all purpose artificial surfaces for winter use. He talked about progress made by the bowling group in Warrington who have restored their greens and pavilion. Scott said that his bowlers need storage, electricity and water but not changing facilities. Paul is keen for disabled groups such as the Parkinsons group to continue on the flat green. Tim said that the Stoke bowling group has worked with a variety of disabled groups. Any groups using the greens or other parts of the park need access to toilets. **Tennis Courts:** We would like to see the courts in use next Spring. We need to demonstrate demand so one suggestion was for the Friends Group to pay the cost of opening the courts at weekends and either allow access without charge or charge a small fee. John Shelly, the tennis coach is keen to continue coaching sessions, particularly for children, so there is the potential for both coached and uncoached sessions. If there was sufficient interest in the tennis courts we could look into the feasibility of an annual fee and use a key or fob scheme so that staffing would not be necessary. We could also consider lighting at night so the courts could be used for a longer time. The Tesco grant for increasing fitness might be useful. Use by schools was also discussed. We agreed to prioritise tennis at our next meeting.

5. **Gardening Dates:** Sat. Nov. 7th., and December 5th.
6. **Feedback to VAC:** their funding from the Council is to be cut by 30% so they are seeking feedback from users. Karen will respond on our behalf.
7. **A.O.B.:** Zilpha wondered if we should be sending out punchier, shorter statements if people are not reading the minutes. The minutes are actually only sent out to twenty people and are also on Facebook and the web page. Shorter items are largely already covered by Facebook entries, the web page and the ECHO entries, but perhaps it could be extended.
8. **Next meetings:** Mondays Dec. 7th., Jan 4th., Feb 1st and 29th.

Helen Elias 3.11.15