

**Minutes of the management committee of Friends of Spencer Park  
Monday Sept. 7<sup>th</sup> 2015**

**Present:** Paul Smith, Karen Berry, Helen Elias, Zilpha Reed, Trevor Robinson, Pat Ryan. Invited guest: Bill Malley (NENA)

1. **Apologies:** None
  
2. **Minutes of the meeting of July 29<sup>th</sup>.** were accepted as correct record.  
**Matters arising:** Pavilion – Paul’s architect friend did not get back to him about plans, but the Umbrella Club is interested in the pavilion. Art in the Park: Janis is meeting with Brenda Hillier about the calendar and a session in the Autumn.
  
3. **Working with NENA** – Bill Malley said that at the last NENA meeting, concern was expressed that NENA and Friends of Spencer Park were drifting apart, particularly over the children’s playground. He felt that the consensus is that we are sister organisations and should be working together. The Friends group agreed with this and questioned where this information had come from, as apart from seeing negative comments on social media about the siting of the playground, we hadn’t been aware that we had been taking a stand against NENA. We had in fact stated on Facebook and our web site why we had to agree to the new site for the playground. We had not known anything about the Dog exclusion areas before the Council published them. We also had little prior knowledge about the installation of the bollards and height barrier on Spencer Recreation Ground as the Council had worked very speedily on the construction to prevent further traveller incursions so hadn’t had time to consult. We agreed that communication between the two groups was a good thing, but pointed out that we regularly post developments on Facebook and the web site, our chair is on the NENA committee, we send information out to NENA regularly for them to distribute to their members and send our minutes out to NENA, so wondered how we could improve communication. Bill said he didn’t have time to read the minutes. It was felt that we should phone each other if we have any questions about the purpose and content of meetings about the park and keep lines of communication open. Pat, who is on the Coventry dog owners’ committee spoke about the use of the Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) being used by Coventry to control dogs and that it is therefore a criminal offence. Most local authorities use the PSPOs to deal with vandalism and antisocial behaviour of people. The PSPO is quite different from the previous Dog Control Orders. Dog walkers are opposed to the PSPOs as they are too heavy handed and can lead to a criminal record. The Friends group felt that we should be encouraging increased usage of the park, which would include families with children and dog walkers. We did not generally feel that there was much conflict of interest as most dog walkers in our park are responsible. We had not felt that a fence round the playground would be necessary or useful but thought we could suggest that the mounds to be created by the removal of

top soil to put in the foundations for the safety surface could be around some sides of the area to discourage dogs. Pat will report back from the Coventry Dog walkers meeting to be held next Wednesday.

4. **Play Area:** Although we had been told the equipment would be installed in late September, Karen felt there had been some slippage. She will talk to Dave Lewis as she wants the playground to be available for the half term holiday.
5. **Meeting with Parks team:** We will be able to have lavender in the seasonal beds. The hedges have been cut. The group wanted the council officers to know that we are very pleased how thoroughly it was done.
6. **Tennis:** The nets will come down at the end of the month. We need to think about ways of renting out the tennis courts. This will be on the agenda for our next meeting.
7. **Centenary picnic in the park:** The rain did not stop till three o'clock so picnics did not take place. However the activities went ahead under the shelter of the pavilion and the marquee (except for tennis) and the free hot drinks and cake went down very well. Over forty people were there for the ceremony. Paul talked about the history of the pavilion and Lindsley Harvard, the Deputy Lord Mayor, cut the cake. We made some money through sales of books, donations and face painting but did not cover the costs of installing the marquee. The volunteers from the Challenge were very helpful.
8. **A.O.B.:** Trevor said that McDonalds have donated some bird boxes, which will be installed in the park and the recreation area shortly.
9. **Gardening dates:** Saturdays Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> and Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday evenings from 6.30 on Sept 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>.
10. **A.G.M.:** to be held on Monday Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>. Karen will book the room and then confirm the location.
11. **Next meeting:** Monday November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Helen Elias 9.9.15