

Minutes of Friends of Spencer Park and Recreation Ground Management Committee Wednesday April 1st 2015

Present: Paul Smith (Chair), Karen Berry (Secretary), Helen Elias (Treasurer), , Tim Brooke, Zilpha Reid, Pat Ryan (committee members) Trevor Robinson (ranger)

1. **Apologies:** None
2. **Minutes** of the meeting on March 4th.
3. **Matters arising:** Paul attended the Well being project meeting and made some useful contacts. Paul contacted Brenda Hillier who will organize an Arts in the Park event in late July.
4. **Petition:** Tim reported that we now have well over 1500 signatures. We are still collecting petitions as the Council cancelled the April 1st meeting at which we would have presented the petition. The online deadline was March 28th. but Tim will apply extend this till mid May. Presentation of the petition is likely to be after the election as councilors have instructions not to do anything controversial during the Election period. Tim will contact Abdul Khan, cabinet member for parks to set up a meeting to see when we should present the petition. Ann Akerman has announced the closure of the pavilion. She will change the signs to say that the pavilion will not open at Easter. The flat green bowls groups have been moved to the Memorial Park. The Crown Green bowlers will not have access to their equipment in the pavilion. Pat suggested we make contact with media/press. She will look into this and contact Coventry and Warwickshire radio.
5. **Strategy for next month:** Paul presented a draft action plan, which formed the basis of discussion.
 - Tim suggested a big article in May's ECHO (deadline April 13th) Paul will write the article.
 - We also need publicity in the Coventry Telegraph. Paul will contact Steve Chilton who wrote an article in Red Button. The possibility of a public meeting after the Election was discussed.
 - Tim felt we should raise with councilors the problem of Ann Akerman not communicating with or meeting the Friends group, particularly in view of the fact that Ces Edwards, with whom we have had good communications will be reducing his work to one day a week and his duties will be split between Ann and Michelle at Coombe Park.
 - Helen will post on Facebook and the web page the need to lobby councilors, M.P.s and candidates.
 - We can write to candidates and bring the issue of Spencer Park up at the hustings, emphasizing the increased use of the park, the new play equipment for children, the importance of the pavilion and the fact that the park serves as a community focus. We need the café and toilets open on family fundays etc.
 - Paul has applied to Sport England for £5000 to subsidize bowling for a month to get it going in conjunction with the Stroke Association, Mencap and the Sikh Union.

- Karen will contact the police about potential anti social behavior as a consequence of reduced council presence including the reduction in ranger numbers. She will ask for a meeting with an Inspector. The possibility of having volunteer park guardians with training from the police was discussed. A better job title might be Friends of Spencer Park.
 - Tim has met Maureen Metcalf of the Council's Community Development Team. She is keen to meet with us, which would be a positive move for the group working through existing channels. Tim will set up an additional meeting before the next Friends meeting.
 - Karen is looking at quotes for public liability insurance that is coming up for renewal.
6. **Strategy for next year:** Paul will work on this for the next meeting.
 7. **Gardening in the Park/Easter egg hunt:** Saturday April 4th Helen, Zilpha, Karen (and Alexandria) will be there. Karen will bring the petition to sign.
 8. **Tennis ladder;** Helen reported that take up had been very low. Only three people had paid and twenty four are needed to make it financially viable. She approached Manjeet at the Well Being project who said that there would be no problem moving the start date to the summer. Hollie Sharman suggested starting May 9th. so the ten weeks would finish on July 11th before the summer holidays. She also queried having two five week series. Tim questioned whether some sessions could be in the evening. Helen said that she was unable to continue organizing the tennis ladder. Paul kindly agreed to take it over. Helen will send him all the information and he will contact Hollie. The three paid up members will need informing and the new dates will need to be re-advertised.
 9. **Earlsdon Festival:** Gardening in the park will take place on Saturday May 2nd. 10-12 am. Tennis and bowls will also be offered. On Monday our stall will be stall 2 opposite Age UK. It will be a tombola and plant sale as well as publicity for the group with information about the petition and updates on the children's playground.
 10. **Bands in the Park:** June 21st, July 19th, and Aug. 23rd. We were unsure if the pavilion would be open for refreshments. Could we organize a tea urn (would need electricity) and cakes?
 11. **A.O.B.:** We will discuss plans for the centenary of the park in August at our next meeting. We need to check the date on the web site. The deadline for tendering for the removal of asbestos on the site for the children's playground (old tennis court) was March 20th and no one tendered. Karen will follow up with Ces. The equipment has been manufactured. We may need to look at the possibility of installing the play equipment on the grass, which is not ideal and doesn't solve the problem of the state of disrepair of the old tennis court.
 12. **Next meetings:** Wednesdays April 29th and June 3rd.

Helen Elias 3.4.15