

Minutes of Friends of Spencer Park Management Committee
Monday Feb 5th. 2018

Present: Paul Smith (Chair), Karen Berry (Secretary), Tim Brooke, Zilpha Reed, Helen Elias, Carol Bayliss, Pat Ryan, Anthony Godber, Jane Donovan, Liz Bayton (committee members)
John Plunkett (Albany Bowls)

1. **Apologies:** Trevor Robinson (Ranger)
2. **Minutes** of the meeting on Dec 4th. 2017 accepted as a true record with one revision that it was Paul who met with Ignacio Escobar.
3. **Report back:** from meeting with Andrew Walster and representatives of the Bangladeshi community about the erection of a monument in Spencer recreation Ground in honour of the Bengali language. It transpired that Spencer Park had been offered to them as other parks weren't suitable. It would not fit in with the ethos of The War Memorial Park. They felt it would not cause political problems with the Pakistani community. The monument celebrates the Bengali language which was at one time suppressed and is now spoken in Bangladesh and West Bengal in India. There was general agreement at the park meeting that the best location would be in the corner by Anarchy bridge as it would be seen by passers-by, and has a good view of the city. In February, the monument would be the focus of celebrations so that there would be parking at Central Six as well as by the park. The monument will be paid for by the Bangladeshi community. It would have a fence and path round it and the pathway from the bridge would be improved. After extensive discussion, the majority of Friends felt that subject to limitation on its height (2m), approval of the design, and safety issues so that it cannot be climbed on, that the monument should go ahead. It would be a signal that the park belongs to the wider community, would increase footfall in the area and should lead to a messy area looking tidier.
4. **Coventry Green Space strategy meeting:** Tim attended this. He said that the maps showed that Coventry had a lot of green space. They were told there are not likely to be further cuts in park staffing and during the City of Culture year there are likely to be a lot of events in the parks. Karen will contact the City of Culture committee.
5. **Historic Coventry meeting:** Paul attended this. He spoke to Ian Harrabin who recommended going for Lottery funding rather than Heritage Park funding. SENA obtained the former for the fountain so it might be useful to speak to Mike Torbe or Pete Walters.
6. **Flat Green:** Paul has received £250 from the Co-op for fencing/hedging. We already have £600 from Coventry Recycling. Paul has been speaking to contractors about the fence and is awaiting quotes. There is plenty of space as the green is currently bigger than it needs to be for a flat green and substantially bigger than the requirements for a Crown Green. The fence can be indented and the hedge planted in the gully, which can be replaced at a future date. The Albany Club will be deciding by the end of March if they want to pursue the conversion of the flat green into a crown green. Paul will go ahead with the fence installation before their decision although part of the fencing will have to be removable to allow access to the green for the work. There still remains one year of approved expenditure on the Flat Green by the Friends.
7. **Pavilion subcommittee:** Ignacio Escobar attended the meeting to advise on structural issues. He visited the pavilion and felt that the internal walls may be taking some of the weight of the building. He will investigate this further and will present detailed plans in April. A business plan will be discussed at the next meeting. In the interim, the Friends committee would like to pursue the redecoration of the side room and reception area with a view to its use for children's parties from the Spring. Paul spoke to Tim Lewis, the

new manager of parks including Spencer Park. Karen will approach him for a meeting. Once the plan is approved we can remove the freezer and other items using Jane's van. Our items could then be kept in the shower area if the floor is boarded over. We also need to big coat rack moved to the left- hand side room which would ideally also be cleared in the longer term. We would also like to redecorate the outside toilets. If we are able to demonstrate increased usage of the pavilion this would stand us in good stead for funding applications for the pavilion refurbishment.

8. **Finances:** Although we had a sizable back dated refund from the Inland Revenue due to our charitable status, we anticipate only about £300 in the next financial year. Existing bills are paid off, but we do not have a large bank balance and no large source of income. We could get £500 from the March concert. Apart from a commitment of about £1000 to the maintenance of the Flat Green for one more year, our priorities are publicity and posters, redecorating parts of the pavilion and getting a container for storage. We will look into getting a container donated.
9. **Tennis:** One person has already signed up for next year. Prices are held at £25 per family but will probably go up to £30 in the summer. Paul will arrange to get a chain welded to the tennis court lock and fence and get a new code. The courts will be open to all on Saturday May 5th for the Earlsdon Festival. John Sherry can do some coaching on May 12th as part of the Great Tennis Weekend of May 12/13th. The courts will also be open to all on the second Tennis weekend of July 21st/22nd. Karen will see if he can coach then.
10. **Events:** Our priority is to advertise and sell tickets for the Coventry male voice choir Spring Concert on Saturday March 24th. in the Earlsdon Methodist Hall held in aid of Friends of Spencer Park. Tickets are £10 each. Karen felt that we will not need to advertise the Easter egg hunt (March 30th) till after the choir event as enough children and families will come.
11. **History leaflet:** Helen Spence has completed this and is looking into getting it printed with a cardboard cover, possible laminated depending on charges. She thought it could sell for £3.50. Some felt that this was a bit high and costs might be reduced with a run of about 500. Helen is looking into this.
12. **Gardening:** This is continuing on the first Saturday of the month. Last Saturday the group was able to plant the 48 primroses which Jackie Brown brought along. The tree roots have not yet been removed, but Dave Lewis attended this morning's park meeting and will chase up the removal of the brick building. It would be a good site for a container. The Council have laid new tarmac from the pavilion to our bed which is a great improvement. New trees are being planted. The park is looking good. Our thanks go to the council.
13. **AOB:** Helen asked for suggestions for the next ECHO article. Anthony suggested August 12th for The Fun Dog show.
14. **Next meetings:** March 5th., March 26th (April meeting). 7.30pm

Helen Elias 7.2.2018