



Minutes AGM Friends of Ashby Bath Grounds

22/05/2019

PRESENT

Committee Members:

Jeremy Birch (Chairman), Vince Mott (Secretary), Geoff Bibby (Treasurer), Clare Birch, Brian Everitt, Dave Bigby

Also present:

M. Bennett, J. Bibby, L. Mott, J. Donald, B. Coles, C. Shaw, J. Shaw, V. Ward, K. Ward, S. Grimley

1. **APOLOGIES**

D. Benson (Committee), A. Ingram (Committee)

2. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES 2018 AGM**

Approved.

3. **OFFICERS REPORTS**

a. Chairman (Jeremy Birch)

Looking back over the last year we made a number of achievements including:

1. Over 7500 petition signatures for the save the Bath Grounds campaign against the proposed development on the Bath Grounds
2. Objections against the proposed development for dwellings on Bullen's field leading to the withdrawal on the building application
3. Building stronger relationships with the Town Council, Local Police, Bath Ground neighbours and users of the Hastings Cricket Club and Ashby Bowls Club.
4. Continuing with quarterly maintenance meetings with The Town Council, which have been pivotal in making improvements and raising standards.
5. Wildlife Walk- volunteers have had a number of sessions during the autumn, winter and spring months doing prep work along the verge and the hedge including;
 - The planting of snowdrops and primroses along the wildlife walk
 - Cleaning of wildlife boxes along the wildlife walk
 - Spreading of earth to even up the banking on the bath grounds side
 - Weeding
 - Planting of new hawthorn whips and removal of dead hawthorn
 - Further wild flower seed sowing
6. Maintenance activities to Bath Grounds
 - Grass edges around the south street entrance and maintenance of the south street flower bed, cleaning of interpretation boards
 - Gary Irons Painting & Decorating services kindly painted the benches and bins located around the south street entrance flowerbed again last year
 - Agreed with the town council that they make alternative arrangements to



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driving on the Bath Grounds to empty the bin along the footpath to prevent damage to the heritage footpath.

- Ensured that the TC re-cambered the new heritage path from the Prior Park entrance to the bowls club corner to remove the potholes.
- We have also highlighted litter hotspots on the Bath Grounds including the clearing of litter particularly around the cricket club building.

7. Thanks to everyone who came down to our 'Hello Heritage' event on Sunday 16th September at The Ashby Hastings Cricket Club - The idea was to raise awareness of the heritage of our beautiful Bath Grounds over the last 200 years and how important it is to the town

8. Again we were involved in the Ashby Big Tidy up and organized a Litter pick in the spring 2018 and again this spring

9. Following the significant vandalism to the Ivanhoe Spa Mosaic which was repaired last year. We have been discussing with the Town Council a slightly different location for this mosaic to be installed back onto the Bath Grounds. We have now reached an agreement on location. The Friends are now looking into improved steel framework to remount the mosaic and once this has been fabricated we are hoping the mosaic will be back on the Bath Grounds this Spring.

10. The 'Save our Bath Grounds' petition, is now over 7500 signatures (including on-line signatures). Thank you to all the volunteers who have helped to gather all these signatures over last summer, including many Ashby retailers who kindly had petition forms in their shops.

11. We still await the submission of the planning application by the developer which they originally said would be submitted at the end of July 2018. The pressure put on the developer by the Friends of Ashby Bath Grounds petition and Ashby Town Councils motion at the beginning of September 2018 have been instrumental in the delayed.

12. As you may be aware the Town council entered into negotiations with Oaklands Hotels to buy the Bath Grounds. A deal has been agreed which by which the Town Council have agreed a figure of 620K for the purchase of the bath grounds but this is dependent on whether a new planning application by Oakland's Hotels which is due to be submitted this year gains approval.

13. We will of course keep all members up to date on any future developments.
The future;



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- Continue to campaign against any proposed development on the Bath Grounds
- Continue to improve and maintain the new Castle View Wildlife Walk
- Continue to work with the Town Council to improve planting and maintenance standards.
- Continue to address ASB, dog responsibility and litter.

b. Secretary (Vince Mott)

Informed everyone that we had held 8 committee meetings, with an average of 5 committee members attending. We also held a General Meeting in April where 5 members attended.

c. Treasurer (Geoff Bibby)

Friends account

Expenditure and balance (April – March)

There was an update by the Treasurer – financial year accounts April 1st 2018 – March 31st 2019

Total income 2017/18 - £5,861.63

Balance at end of 2018/2019 - £1,707.87

The Treasurer reported that the account had not been audited, as yet. Hicks Lodge donated £1000. Outgoings included nesting boxes, whips, weed killing and insurance. Save Our Bath Grounds stickers and shrubs for the wildlife walk. Six thousand leaflets for our campaign against the proposed housing development. The Project account which will combined with our main account this year.

M Bennett asked if the knotweed was our financial responsibility? Town Council

4. Project Reports

Maintenance (Brian Everitt)

The FOABG have continued with the 1/4ly meetings with the Town Clerk to discuss and progress agreed works aimed at improving the Bath Grounds environment.

We have carried out numerous jobs over the past year including:

- Cleaning graffiti from the benches around the flower bed. We flagged this issue up on our face-book page and also pursued with the local beat bobby, this resulted in the culprits being identified and spoken to by the police.
- Re-painted and removed graffiti under the rail arch.
- Removed, repaired and re-fitted the information board adjacent to the flower bed.
- Regularly cleaned the information boards and fish mosaic.



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- Replaced a number of plants in the flower bed and maintained the bed after the winter.
- Spread and grass seeded ten tonnes of top soil to help level the slope from the Bath Grounds to the verge on the Wild Life Walk.
- Removed epicormic growth from the mature trees along the Wild Life Walk.
- Arranged for Gary Ions to carry out the painting of the benches around the flower bed.

We expressed our serious concerns to the Town Clerk earlier this year about the Council staff driving their pick-up truck along the Heritage path when emptying the bins. Their actions were damaging the path and its retaining strips and churning up the ground at the side of the path. We sent numerous photographs of the damage which resulted in changes to the bin emptying regime and the Town Council purchasing a more suitable vehicle for use in maintaining the Towns green spaces.

We raised the issue of litter in the Castle Field and following our request a new litter bin was installed just inside the Prior Park entrance to the field.

We have continued to press the Town Clerk to improve the fencing around the Japanese knotweed areas and have provided some suggested low-cost suggestions as to how this could be done.

We have agreed the new position for the Spa Mosaic with the Town Clerk and we will be looking to re-install the mosaic in the near future.

We have agreed with the Town Clerk that if he will supply the paint, the Friends volunteers will paint the lamp posts from the South Street entrance. We will also treat the wooden posts just inside the entrance with dark wood stain.

The Town Clerk has agreed to our request to install one of the redundant 'Ashby' benches in the space adjacent to the flower bed, we will progress this through the maintenance meetings.

Pride (Annie Ingram)

Derry Benson and I have overseen Pride during the last year. Pride is made up of ASB, litter and dog waste.

Over the last year we have continued to be vigilant to any ASB on the Bath grounds and have encouraged users to do the same. Some cases that have been reported by ourselves and / or others are:

1. Damage to the cricket pitch June 11, 2018
2. Disposed Nitrous Oxide containers, which the Police said they do wish to know about for their drug awareness work
3. A motorbike that drove across the grounds and police visited the registered keeper of the motor bike seen riding across the Bath Grounds, including the cricket square, on the evening of Wednesday 24th April. He has been issued with a Section 59 Warning under the Police Reform Act 2002.



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We notice users are becoming increasingly protective of the grounds and following our advice to call 101 and report the incident.

Litter

Considering we had such a marvellous summer last year and the grounds were well used for picnicking and socialising, we feel they were kept a lot tidier than years gone by. Last Spring, we had re-located some bins and increased the number of bins. We also believe that the main deterrent of litter is to not have any around, as litter breeds litter!

Having been keen in the past to re-condition and re-use existing bins we have taken up the offer of the Town Council to have new bins for the grounds, which we hope will be installed soon. Our bins will be a darker colour than the other wood composite bins you may have seen appearing in other areas of the town. We feel by being the same, they will smarten the area. We are also working with the TC to re-locate two bins near the flower bed, so they are more convenient and further away from where people may be sat eating on benches (for smell purposes). Our analysis shows that if people bin litter, they will walk several steps to do so, which is not the case the other way around.

An additional bin is to be added near the cricket club.

We joined in with the 5th Ashby's Big Tidy this year, on April 6. This is organised by Ashby's Hastings Rotary Club, in liaison with Ashby Town Council and Keep Britain Tidy. A much better weather day than last's years snowy day. Several years ago, we collected 30 bags on our first litter pick, this year just five bags were collected from the grounds and surrounding areas, which means we are keeping things so much tidier.

Dog waste

Again, we feel dog waste on the whole is being kept to a good level. We have done some random flagging during the winter when it can slightly deteriorate, which seemed to encourage people to remain aware during darker days when walking their dogs. One regular offender was soon picked up by flagging and spraying an area quickly, we noted this brought it to an immediate stop.

We would like to thank Gary Irons, from Gary Irons Painting and Decorating, for re-painting the three benches and two bins by the flower bed last September

Wildlife Walk (Clare Birch)

The Ashby Mayor officially opened the wildlife walk during our Hello Heritage event in September and there is now a plaque indicating the project as Friends of Ashby Bath grounds, TC and DC support and sponsors

5. Membership Report (Clare Birch)
2014 – 62 members



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2015 – 79 members
2016 – 136 members
2017 – 90 members
2018 – 92 members, of which 12 are new
2019 – 116 members

6. Election of Officers

Jeremy Birch was nominated for Chairman, seconded by Geoff Bibby and accepted
Vince Mott was nominated for Secretary, seconded by Clare Birch and accepted
Geoff Bibby was nominated for Treasurer, seconded by Dave Bigby and accepted.

Election of committee members

The following people volunteered and were accepted as committee members:
Annie Ingram, Brian Everitt, Clare Birch, Derry Benson and Dave Bigby

7. Any Other Business

Ken Ward – Lyn Varden, encouraging more wildlife in Ashby. C. Birch has been in contact with her and would be happy to help her.

Ken Ward – What work is going on at the gardens at the Royal Hotel? District Council (DC) are meant to check regularly. D. Bigby will chase as he is now on the DC. C. Birch suggested that it was cleared to make it more exposed to stop ASB.

Ken Ward – Tree planting? C. Birch explained we haven't looked due to the recent campaign and Town Council (TC) buying Bath Grounds. D. Bigby said that trees had been planted along the Wildlife Walk. J. Birch said once things had settled, then maybe it will be something to look at. D. Bigby mentioned that the TC offer trees to Green Space.

Jeanne Donald – Pet stones? Maybe the Felix Family (Ken Ward) D. Bigby has their contact details, so will let her know