

FRIENDS OF VICTORIA GARDENS
8TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
29 JUNE 2016

1. **Welcome:** Hugh welcomed the 10 attendees and thanked for coming to our 8th AGM.

Introduction of committee: Treasurer Liz Bennett; Secretary Gary Ellison; Membership Sec Diana Pasterfield; members (alphabetically): Val DGLISH; Andrew Pasterfield and new member Dorothea Tettenborn replacing Alan and Angela Hanson who emigrated to Australia
Hugh DGLISH the Chairman.

2. **Apologies:** John and Sheila Martin, David Wade & Diana and Andrew Pasterfield

3. **Minutes of last AGM** were approved Actions arising were:
 - a. Advertise beds for adoption on notice board - **Done**
 - b. Tap outside lavatory – **Done**
 - c. Ask D James to make bird boxes – **Done but not pursued to conclusion**
 - d. New matters on website - **Done**
 - e. Hugh to thank the parks officers and gardeners on behalf of the AGM - **Done**
 - f. Tell parks officers about youngsters on wall and bowlers pavilion roof – **Done**
 - g. Leaflet drop to households to recruit more Friends - **Done**
 - h. Committee to enact ideas under future plans – **Done**
 - i. Send AGM minutes to Parks department – **Done**

4. **Chairman's Report.**

- a. The Chairmen reiterated the principle aim of setting ourselves to recruit as many friends as we could, in order to demonstrate the value local people place on Victoria Gardens, in case it is ever suggested otherwise. We had been advised that a Friends Group could help protect them and steer their fate. This year we had well over **100** friends and we hope to keep that number up and indeed increase it".

The general principle steering the committee's actions is that the Gardens are a small, sheltered and peaceful place where priority is given to the bowlers, very young children with their parents and those who like to sit quietly. This does not exclude other activities but defines the Friends' emphasis for everyday use.

Additionally, we envisage occasional and uncomplicated events to promote community spirit

- b. Committee has worked as follows
 - i. Met in December and April.

- ii. Spent our time and the funds raised from subscriptions and other means as follows:
- iii. The annual neighbourhood picnic was held on a fine day in September, and much enjoyed, the substitution of donkey for ponies being proving popular and cheaper. The Bowling Club laid on "Have a go"; people brought picnics; we had a barbecue; nearly new books, cakes and produce were sold; and a raffle held. It was a chance to meet neighbours and enjoy the company of friends, and it raised a useful £300. AGM agreed It was a good effort by all.
- iv. Our "adopt a bed scheme" has flourished and is a very important part of the park's attraction, with 11 flower beds in the hands of local people who bring their individual ideas to the planting. The current holders have done a wonderful job which makes a big difference to the gardens. We make up to £50 a year available for the cost of plants. The central bed has been planted and is tended by the Committee and other volunteers.
- v. We do a general clear up on the first Saturday of every month between 10am and 12noon, at which we would be delighted to welcome new faces: it is not arduous.
- vi. David James, a volunteer, who repaired all the old green benches last year, had offered to make bird boxes, but he then suggested it would be cheaper to buy, but we have yet to pursue that option. AGM attendee recommended contact was Gene Noonan and would provide the appropriate contact details. **Action: Chairman**
- vii. We remain within the West Kirby Parks and Open Spaces Group which brings Friends of all local parks together. Although it has not met this last year we consult with others especially Martin Harrison (Ashton Park) and Peter Ryan (Coronation Gardens) and work together when helpful. The AGM meeting was informed that Sandlea Park also now has a Friends group (The Wro & Crosville club)
- viii. The Secretary maintains the website he created last year for us and this helps show commitment as well as being informative. This has been running since 2010.
- ix. We enjoy a good relationship with the Parks Department officers who have generally responded well to maintenance points. The gardeners do a very good job on lawns, ivy, hedges, and take away our waste from the clear-ups. We have an annual meeting in the park with officers to run

through our suggestions. This year the pavilion roof has been replaced and a tap provided outside the lavatories; and we had approval for major work on the Pavilion kitchen (see below).

- x. We received a considerable legacy with which we plan to refurbish the pavilion kitchen before the Neighbourhood Picnic and buy two benches. We are looking for other projects: a handrail on the seaward entrance has been suggested. The committee welcomes any suggestion to spend. AGM attendee suggestions something for the children – running track, grass maze – for the committee to review next meeting.
 - xi. The park was awarded the Green Flag in July 2014, and we were given short notice inspection on 11 May this year for renewal – we expect the result in July or August and are optimistic from the demeanor of the inspectors on the day. The Green Flag is a recognition that the park is serving the community well. For us, this was a means of getting improvements to the park made by the Council which might not otherwise have happened: paving re-laid (removing trip hazards, the bowlers' lavatories and our notice board refurbished; a large welcome sign on the corner of South Parade, masonry repaired, bowling green boards replaced and painted. The award also recognizes the excellent work done by Council gardeners, and by the Friends: money, gifts, time and concern, for the Gardens' upkeep and use which I describe below. The Green Flag is prized by the Council and we hope this means they are less likely to think of alternative uses for the land. The inspectors return every year to check that Victoria Gardens are still worthy of the Green Flag keeps everyone on their toes. Expecting notification of outcome end of July.
- b. The AGM directed the Chairman to thank the Parks officers and gardeners
 - c. We have had some vandalism but also some firm police action against alcohol consumption in the park. We quickly clear up the mess and report it to the police and to the Parks Department. In this way the police take action if the problem persists. If you ever see any criminal damage, under-age drinking or anti-social behavior, please let us know, and we will report it. Or anyone can call Merseyside Police yourself on **101** to get an incident logged. One AGM attendee was saddened by unsavory damage to their bed and wished to give it up - this was acknowledged by the committee.

5. Treasurer and Membership Sec Report.

- a. The Treasurer present the account. Currently shows a very large surplus, thanks to a legacy of £6609.00 and £100 from the Hoylake Civic Society which will be spent on pavilion kitchen refurbishment, two new benches and other projects as well as the usual on the picnic and plants. We have bought plaques to remember Brian Hinton a man of West Kirby and our first bed holder with his wife Marion and also John Tunstall whose legacy we have received. We still need your subscriptions to allow us to say we have over 100 Friends and thus demonstrate continued local commitment.
 - b. The Treasurer thanked the auditor Peter McEleavy (16/6) and proposed providing M&S vouchers as a gift – proposal approved.
 - c. We pay for public liability insurance (£151) for our events. We will have to the We will have to keep that going as the Council insurance only covers volunteers working in the gardens
 - d. Closing account 30th April was £7249.98
 - i. No expenditure this year for bowlers, hall or picnic ponies
 - ii. Main expenditure on insurance, plants and maintenance
 - e. Subscriptions were approved for next year 2015/16 – remain at £2 and £4 for a household.
 - f. So far 75 people had renewed subscriptions since the requests had been delivered over last 2/3 weeks: well on the way to maintaining over 100 Friends. The bowlers had not paid any subs yet - a letter and request had been handed to Tom. Expecting more subscriptions.
 - g. AGM attendee question as to whether Elite contributed. The Chairman confirmed not or whether the nursery should be asked to get involved excluding donations.
6. **Parks Department Update.** The Parks Department had done very well despite considerable budget cuts. The previous year's investment of many thousands of pounds work in the gardens has had a very good effect. We always say that the Council must not rely on Friends groups but manage parks properly on their own; and they have been very good at this. We do, however, add value, not least by telling them what they need to do. Recognition recorded that these two workers do a great job and cover six parks in all.
- a. AGM attendee request to remove the holly bush – Chairman confirmed it has been requested
 - b. AGM attendee commented that the bowling green was kept well, with minor issues with holes – requested asking if the gardeners could look to replace with new grass sods.

7. Achievements Summary

- a. As heard in the Treasurer's report £3,500 plus the legacy have been raised. 96% spent on the Picnic or into improvements to the Gardens' amenity.
- b. The amount raised by the friends over the years, not counting the legacy or that £100 from Hoylake Civic Society, is £4493. We have spent £3943, which is approximately. 88% of the amount raised. Approximately 4% of this has been spent on administration, the rest has been spent on the picnic, plants and maintenance, etc.
- c. We have had many donations in kind – for raffle prizes, cakes, books produce – all gifts from the community.
- d. People, not just the committee, have given their time – working on the flower beds, clearing up, putting on the picnic.
- e. The committee keeps a close eye and reports dilapidation and damage to the authorities and it organises events – time spent on the gardens.
- f. Over 100 Friends show concern for their continuing wellbeing and appreciation for the amenity.

Money, gifts, time, concern - from the community - for the gardens' upkeep and use. This demonstrates a community commitment to the gardens which must help preserve and improve them.

The result has been improvements to the gardens and greater use by the community

None of this - money, gifts, time or vigilance - would have happened without the Friends

8. The future

As we look ahead we want to

- a. Hold another "Neighbourhood Picnic" on Saturday 3rd September from 12 to 4pm, aimed at the local people. You can help by
 - i. Coming with your picnic and bringing others
 - ii. Donating a cake, books or garden produce for sale
 - iii. Donating raffle prizes – the Chairman proposed to have fewer raffle prizes. One alternate suggestion from an AGM attendee was to look at a Tombola – committee to review next meeting.
- b. Continue to encourage adopt a bed and tidying and planting by the community. AGM attendee confirmed desire to give up bed, the Chairman acknowledged this and referred the matter to Andrew Pasterfield. The AGM attendee will be present at the next tidy up.
- c. Keep in regular touch with Parks department on maintenance and improvements, and seek an annual meeting with officers to discuss maintenance priorities as shown in the new Management Plan

- d. We will develop and improve the new website for the gardens
- e. We will try to increase the number of friends

There were no further points from the floor.

Attendees were asked to encourage others to join the Friends and to come to the next picnic. The more we have, the more we demonstrate neighbourhood commitment to the Gardens and the better we can defend them against unwelcome developments.

The committee would be grateful for ideas, by note, e-mail or quiet word. If anyone would like to adopt a flower bed, please look at the notice board for details.

9. Stand down old committee – elect new committee.

- a. The committee stood down, offered themselves for re-election, and were re-elected.

10. AOB.

- a. It was suggested that the minutes were sent to the Parks Department.
Action: Chairman
- b. AGM attendee requested clarification that the Nursery was not going to requested to donate – this was discussed but decided against requesting donation
- c. AGM attendee raised the following bowling matters
 - i. Pitched roof not happened – requested friend to help pursue anti vandal measures.
 - ii. Missing bin – the chairman confirmed that a new bin has been requested
 - iii. Sailing club – issue of free community use v park bowler who pay £966 per annum. Confirmed ladies can join – current 44 members inc 6 ladies. The Chairman confirmed this is not a matter for the Friends.
- d. AGM attendee raised problems with her bed but this was passed to Saturday Committee meeting.

11. Next AGM – sometime in June or July 2017 – we will have to see when the venue is available

The AGM was officially closed at 20:47

Gary Ellison
Secretary

Hugh DGLISH
Chairman