

Friends of Priory Park (FOPP) meeting 31/03/2021
Online meeting via Zoom 19:00 - 20:30

<p><u>Attendees:</u> Jerry Birkbeck (Chair); Jo Birkbeck; Andy Stewart; Nic Ruch; Christine Hodgetts; Lesley Hall; Linda Bromley; Trevor Day; Angela Day; Dianne Loftus; John Holland; Sue Roy; Hilary Budd; Richard and Veronica Phillips; Richard Lewis; Maureen and Michael North; Johnathan Branson; Maria Denney; Dave Skinner (Minutes)</p> <p><u>Apologies:</u> Dennis Crips; James Mackay</p>	
<p><u>Welcome and Introductions</u> Jerry welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly to new attendees.</p>	
<p><u>Last AGM minutes</u> Minutes of the AGM 12/06/2019 accepted as a true record.</p>	
<p><u>Chairman's Report</u></p> <p>The Chair gave a verbal report, noting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The past few months have been very bizarre for all with the pandemic, though good that many have been able to use the park. ● The new medical centre where the police station stood was objected to at the Planning Committee, particularly with the visual impact it has on the park. ● Fundraising - donations needed to help keep the website going. A Warwick Town Council grant had been successfully applied for to fund the hosting and domain name costs for three years. However, we have had a very kind offer from Dianne who is currently taking on the hosting of the website and re-designing it. This has helped enormously and is very exciting to see the new website coming on. Many thanks to Dianne. ● Have been working with the District Council, who owns the park and other stakeholders in the community in giving our viewpoint on how it should be managed. ● Looking at access problems to the park, for example talking with WDC to see how a path along the bottom of the park could be paid for. This would be from the railway 'tunnel' to the Coventry Road entrance by the nursery and could be a non-tarmac surface to allow those less ambulant to use the park fully, particularly in the winter months when it is extremely muddy and boggy. Comments welcomed. ● Looking to see how we can address screening the new medical centre from the park and perhaps considering going for a grant to provide planting some trees to screen and perhaps finally replace the current Beech trees in years to come. ● Signage - have been trying to see how we can incorporate signage in the park for example information boards to provide some detail of what the park can offer. 	
<p><u>Treasurer's report</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Signatories have now successfully changed after some issues with the bank. ● £348.00 currently in the account, with £280 owing for the last 2-3 years website hosting and domain name costs that Andy has kindly covered out of his own 	

<p>money. Agreed to pay that asap. This will be £68 left in the account.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andy noted that when Dianne takes over the hosting of the website the costs reduce drastically. 	
<p><u>John Holland (Local County Councillor) report</u></p> <p>Well on the way to getting the current / old Priory Medical Centre as a new Community Centre. WCC are actively looking at purchasing it. A Public Health type committee is being formed. This is right on the edge of one of the park entrances and could be useful for FOPP to use in the future.</p> <p>The path from Cape Road to Wathen Road is a cycle path and the hill alongside the park often has cyclists going dangerously fast down there. Bollards are now going to be installed by the County Council approximately half way down to reduce the speeding. These are hopefully to be installed some time in April 2021. There will also be an additional bollard by the tunnel entrance alongside the current three.</p>	
<p><u>Election of Officers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair : Jerry Birkbeck re-elected. Jerry commented he would like to be able to at least do a few months to look into the 'Green Shoots' grant funding for the tree screening and may stand down afterwards. It was suggested to have a Deputy Chair to offer support to the Chair. Dave Skinner agreed as Deputy Chair. • Secretary : Andy Stewart elected • Treasurer : Trevor Day re-elected. <p>Though not an officer's role, it was agreed that Dianne Loftus would be the webmaster to manage the website.</p>	
<p><u>Facebook and Website updates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dianne has been busy working on a new design website and also setup the Facebook Group and Page. The new website was described and Dianne gave some ideas as to what content it will have. • Angela Day has been adding pictures to the Instagram account and now that will be linked in with the new website following working with Dianne. • Johnathan Branson offered help with working with QR code signage that would link into the map on the website. Johnathan also suggested a FAQ section with local information about the park. • Richard Lewis offered help from the Records Office too. • Dianne noted that the Facebook group and page grew quickly and has done well to already connect many people together. • Andy asked what the difference is between the Facebook Group and Page. Dianne and Dave replied to say the Page is for information like pictures to be posted on which is open to the public. The Group is a private group where people request access to the group and they are decided to be approved or not. The group is open for discussion with the approved group of people. Jonathan suggested changing the 'About' information on both the FB Group and Page to distinguish the two. 	

<p>ACTION: Lesley Hall to offer help on the trees information to go on the website, including providing a map with the trees marked. Dianne to contact Lesley.</p> <p>ACTION: Dianne to get in contact with both Johnathan and Richard to progress suggestions for the website.</p>	<p>Lesley / Dianne</p> <p>Dianne</p>
<p><u>Ideas and Projects for 2021/22</u></p> <p>Jerry outlined his thoughts for applying for a grant from the Green Shoots fund for getting a tree screen between the new medical centre and the park. This could be a mix of trees suitable for the park up to about one metre high. It would be good to involve local groups, businesses, individuals and schools in deciding what could be done for the screen, in particular young people. Jerry is prepared to go forward with talking with WDC about the idea.</p> <p>Lesley noted the Tree Wardens have had some issues in the past getting new trees planted.</p> <p>Jonathan gave some suggestions for other places to apply for grants and help such as the Woodland Trust and Trees for our future. He also commented about the WDC tree planting initiative from the Climate Emergency Action Plan which may be able to support the new trees.</p> <p>Richard Phillips suggested getting the Priory Medical Centre to support and sponsor the planting of the trees.</p> <p>Andy noted that the website should have more historical information on it, including about the Amikaro scout camps and the trees planted there to commemorate them.</p> <p>Christine offered to write some information about the history of the park.</p> <p>ACTION: Dianne to contact Christine to outline how much could be included onto the website (i.e. how many paragraphs).</p> <p>Maria Denney asked if anyone would be up for a litter pick on Easter Monday at 12:00 midday. Maria will contact WDC to inform them of it and that there will be extra bags by one of the bins. FOPP to look to organise a further litter pick, working with Maria when Covid guidance allows more people.</p> <p>Dave provided a brief summary of an idea from a Packmores Centre worker of a mural on the wall by the railway tunnel entrance on the park side of the railway. This has been followed up with Network Rail who own the wall and already have their agreement to proceed. They will be looking for ideas as to what could go on the mural and also looking for local businesses to help with paint etc. Jonathan offered his help with the mural as involved in the Leamington Station 'tunnel' mural there. He also mentioned about potential contemporary arts around Warwick that may be able to do work in the park too.</p> <p>Dave provided an update regarding the naming of the path between Wathen Road and Cape Road. The name 'Priory Pools Path' has now been registered with WDC and now pursuing getting signage resolved with WCC.</p> <p>Jerry commented about the path along the bottom of the park from the railway tunnel to the Warwick Nursery school. FOPP have been pursuing getting a proper path there, not</p>	<p>Christine / Dianne</p>

<p>necessarily tarmaced, but with materials that will make it more accessible for all, particularly in the winter months when it is very boggy there. This will allow better overall access around the park itself. Jerry has been discussing the potential financing of it with WDC.</p> <p>Jerry also noted about possible Information Boards that could be placed in the park to give more information about the park, its wildlife and its history. This has also been raised with the WDC Chief Executive.</p>	
<p><u>Q and A session</u></p> <p>Sue Roy asked a question about the trees that were cutdown and why they are laid down and not cleared away. Dave gave a brief summary as to what happened with the trees and FOPP's objections to their felling.</p> <p>Christine Hodgetts commented that WDC know the park is a heritage site and should maintain it accordingly, including removing brash away lying on the floor. They should be reminded of their responsibilities.</p> <p>Linda Bromley noted that it is the same problem down by the Avon near to St Nicholas park where trees cut down are just left lying on the floor.</p> <p>ACTION: FOPP to write to WDC Green Spaces team regarding felled trees / brash, asking when (or if) they are to be cleared up.</p>	<p>Jerry</p>