

**Minutes of the Friends of Barnwell Country Park
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2016**

Visitor Centre, Barnwell Country Park on Wednesday 21st Sept. at 6:30 p.m.

Members present: Mary James (Chair), Edward James (Treasurer), Matt Harrell (Snr Ranger), Georgina Flowers (Park Ranger);

Also: Cllr Phillip Stearn, Barbara Ding, Heather Ward, Angie Holmes, Paul Piercy-Hughes, Cllr Jerry Hutton, Kim Grove, Sandy Miles.

Apologies: Mark Felton, Claire Faulkner, Nick Bould, Mollie Bickerstaff, Justin Jeffrey, Simon Mutsaars, Ernest Bird, Mary Jayne Prosser, Roger Sturman, Judith Roberts, Charlotte Barford, Hannah Clayton, Fiona Fraser.

1. Welcome.

Mary thanked all those present for coming, and the meeting opened at 6.30 p.m.

2. Minutes of the last AGM: points arising:

Previous Minutes approved.

3. Chair Report

Mary presented the Chair of the Friends' Report.
Presentation attached.

3. Financial Report

Edward presented the accounts.

See report by Chair.

Year Ended 31/07/17 loss recorded of £526.27. Cash balance at the same period:

NatWest Bank A/C: £9,523.61

PayPal A/C: £1,124.23

Total cash balance: £10,647.84

Current position at time of AGM:

NatWest Bank A/C: £6,467.83

PayPal A/C: £1,124.23

Total cash balance: £7,592.06

Major item of purchase during the period between YE 2017 and the AGM, flooring from Floortbl of £2,895.60.

Edward reported that both Arts Council of England (ACE) and Northants. Comm. Fund (NCF) paid their grants in full providing a total of £3000 ea. However, he paid £77 back to NCF as they had only advanced £2700 with £300 retention. Total attributable expenditure to NCF was £2,623. However, it transpired that NCF had paid full £3,000 upfront. No further claim has been made by NCF. He is therefore assuming that net amount received from NCF is £2,923. Majority of ACE funds applied to purchase of performance flooring.

5. Webmaster's Report

Not material change.

Those present at the meeting wish to acknowledge the help and work of Mollie Bickerstaff and Justin Jeffrey in this area.

6. Election of Committee.

The following elections were made:

Chair: Mary James

Treasurer: Edward James is very keen to relinquish this position, and we await a successor.

Mary thanked him for all his hard work over 4 years.

Secretary: Mark Felton – Edward James to replace MF on relinquishing of role as Tres.

Fundraising Officer: Kim Grove (conditional on work commitments)

Designs Officer: Vacant

Barnwell Parish Council: Nick Bould

Committee Members: Angie Holmes & Claire Faulkner

7. Grants

Edward explained that he is working on grant a project to convert a portion of the grassed area behind Visitor Centre into a performance permanent performance area. Funding for this initiative is LEADER based which is European funding and will expire on BREXIT.

Kim Grove said that there was a pot of cash worth up to £10,000 from Big Lottery specifically for event. Kim and Edward agreed to work together to explore the possibilities of this funding source both in terms of Music in the Park 2018 and also the performance area.

Reference in the Chair's report was made to the Community Matters appeal run by Waitrose specifically for refurbishment of the Tots' Play Area behind the Visitor Centre. This will go live in December. Meeting was encouraged to spread the word.

Edward reported that he had reapplied to Bruce Wake Trust with a request for £1000 funding for the existing mobility scooter and FoBCP's wish to acquire a similar scooter to double availability.

Edward said that it was important the healthy cash position was fostered and that, whenever possible, additional cash was raised for project on a matched fund basis in order to ensure that FoBCP's cash reserves benefit as large a number of projects as possible.

10. Membership

Edward said that at last count there were approximately 315 members /Friends registered and he hoped to see a continued growth in the number of Friends during the coming year to 500.

11. Current Projects

Matt Harrel was asked to summarise status of projects.

He reported that the Council was suffering from severe cash shortages and that the Park's funds for all admin. was limited to a balance of £500 which is supposed to last the Park until April 2018.

He said that the Water attraction and Play Area was the main focus of First For Wellbeing (1st4W). The total cost remains approx. £50,000 of which Augean will contribute £30,000 and the Park will contribute £20,000 from accumulated donations and seed sales.

He said that there will be an opportunity for volunteers both with this project as well as other autumn based projects related to Park maintenance. It was agreed that he would inform FoBCP Committee and that information would be sent out to members. He confirmed that other organisations such as Nene Valley Care Trust should consider the Park to be a resource. This will be developed.

12. Marina Development

Cllr Stearn said that it was difficult to say what impact the Marina would have on the Park but he acknowledged the concern expressed by FoBCP. He said there was no definitive timetable because there was a change of ownership.

Barbara Ding suggested that there had been too little consultation given the impact of the project on the community and that, if the planning process was not complete, perhaps wider consultation should be sought from the Community so that a full airing of the implications of the Marina could be evaluated including all interested parties. She acknowledged that the benefit of the redevelopment of the Marina to the wider community in this part of the Nene Valley couldn't be underestimated but that such a development had to take into consideration undermining the existing amenities available to the wider community.

Cllr Stearn said he fully understood the concerns expressed at the meeting. He suggested that a wider analysis of revenue generation at the Park should be considered. The existing revenue model was flawed at best and further sources of revenue should be worked on.

Georgina Flower suggested that a more meaningful sustainable revenue model outside of the existing parking fees and limited rental from the KAF was going to be a challenge.

Cllr Stearn suggested that it was expedient to analyse this issue as soon as possible.

A wider ranging discussion ensued concern alternative sources of revenue. It was agreed that most programmes such as orienteering, school visits had no real revenue potential. Edward said that some of these programmes could and would attract project funding but accepted that this was not the same as predictable income. Mention was made of Claire Faulkner's excellent Wild Sleep Out and how such initiatives could be developed. Discussion of how adult activities could be developed which were revenue positive.

It was agreed that the "Just Giving" web site should be explored as a possible constructive means of encouraging pedestrian visitors to contribute to the upkeep of the Park.

Edward mentioned that he introduced the Park to a rep from DeafBlind Org. The rep suggested that the Park should consider a more comprehensive use of Dedication Plaques on the hand rail of the KAF, the hut overlooking the North Lake Path, etc. The privilege of being named lasted for five years and then had to be renewed or reallocated. This is a genuine revenue stream. Kim said that WildLife Trust has a similar programme using a leaf.

Cllr Stearn suggested that a programme similar to that at Rutland Water where an enclosed area was made available at a cost. However, he also suggested that it may be an idea to investigate whether the Park could be treated as a saleable asset and sold off by the County to a community interest group including Barnwell PC, Oundle TC and other interested beneficiaries of the Park.

The possibility of making outdoor exercise machines income positive was mooted. Cllr Stearn is to introduce Northants Academy via their Outreach Programme to develop this possible prospect.

The possibility of model traction engines using the Park received wide enthusiasm.

It was agreed that the issue of the impact of the Marina and how the Park responds to its development required further work.

13. AOB

Oundle Rotary Club questions:

Jane Grant represented the ORC wrote to the Secretary of FoBCP raising two main issues:

1. the stone faced collection box had a broken lock and the ORC plaque had fallen off
2. ORC had not been informed of the progress of the trees which were donated by Rotary and wished to have an update.
3. given the support of the ORC to the Park over the years, it was felt that ORC should be recognised on the FoBCP as a Friend.

It was agreed that the following steps should be taken:

Edward agreed to write to Jane Grant and propose a new logo and updated plaque because the view of the Committee was that previous one had outlived its impact and should be replaced by a plaque with a more prominent Rotary logo and more direct and modern message.

Georgina agreed to write to Jane Grant with an update on the development of the trees

It was agreed that, subject to Rotary sending a workable /scalable logo, it would be placed on the Friends' site even though Rotary historically has not participated with or worked directly with the Friends.

Mountain balsam:

Angie asked whether any volunteer action could be taken to reduce the Himalayan Balsam which was invasive. Matt said that this was a summer activity. There were two options: injection which was both time consuming and labour intensive; and pulling. It was agreed that Angie would lead in helping to work with the Rangers to control this plant from more extensive encroachment.

Music in the Park:

Angie asked whether stewarding at the Park could involve Prince of Wales Trust students. She also said that she was keen to take more responsibility from Edward for the organisation of MitP. It was agreed that she would co-ordinate with Kim and Sandy and that a list of the jobs which needed to be covered would be produced. In addition, Barbara said that she could work with Angie in the distribution of posters to the villages.

The meeting was closed at 7.45pm.

Provisionally the next meeting Committee Meeting is set for week commencing Monday Jan. 8th at 6:30 p.m.

Secretary
19/11/2017