

Victoria Park Action Group - August 2023 meeting

Monday, 7th August 2023, 7.30pm - Victoria Park Bowling Club

Present: Kerry Chester (Chair for this meeting), Hester Miller (Minutes), John Berman, Viv Dring, Shaun Hennessy, Christine Higgott, Harry Lock, Cllr Ed Plowden, Gillian Smith, Victoria Stanford, Cllr Lisa Stone

Item	Discussion	Actions
1	<p><u>Welcome and apologies</u></p> <p>VPAG members and local residents were welcomed to the meeting and introductions were made. Apologies were received from Anne-Marie Birchall and Steve Clampin.</p>	
2	<p><u>Acceptance of minutes of previous meeting</u></p> <p>Kerry proposed, and was seconded by Christine, that the minutes from our meeting of 3rd July 2023 be accepted. As no corrections or objections were raised, these minutes now stand as accepted.</p>	
3	<p><u>Treasurer's update</u></p> <p>Shaun reported that the only account activity during the month of July was income of £26.00 in donations from the Friends of Victoria Park, therefore increasing the opening balance of £33,462.16 to a closing balance of £33,488.16. Most of this amount is allocated between the Skyline Walk, Friends of Victoria Park and the Skate Park development, and given that the £26 income has been added to the Friends, the amount in our general funds remains at £8,751.49. £125.00 of room hire fees will soon be paid to the Bowls Club for our last 5 committee meetings, and a further £30.00 to Lisa who has paid VPAG's application fee for the Britain in Bloom Pride in Parks competition.</p>	
4	<p><u>Completing CIC registration, including "Objects of VPAG"</u></p> <p>Since the objects in our current constitution are probably too long and detailed for the purposes of CIC registration, it was agreed to simply focus on objects such as enhancing the environment and accessibility of the park for users and for wildlife; engaging the local community in making good use of the park; and liaising with BCC and other organisations regarding matters concerning the park.</p> <p>Kerry, Christine, Hester, Shaun, and Anne-Marie will meet again (as they had in April) to try to finalise all the details necessary for completing the registration process. Emma Blackburn, who has experience of Community Interest Companies, has offered to assist and will also be invited to the meeting, as will Steve Sayers if he is available to help us again. Kerry, Hester and Shaun will liaise shortly to organise a suitable date and time.</p>	KC/HM SH

5	<p><u>Preparations for Festival on 16th September</u></p> <p>Shaun reported that everything was now booked. Food stalls will include the barbecue, pizza van, crepe van, cake stall, salads provided by the church - some of which will have vegan options this year. There will be the dog show, a bouncy castle and rides for children, crafts to enjoy, eight different traders selling goods, areas for entertainers to perform, a bar and the usual portable toilet facilities.</p> <p>Christine has contacted all the regulars who usually donate items for the raffle but has not yet had responses. Two new volunteers are contacting a further ten possible donors.</p> <p>Posters will be displayed in the park shortly and local schools will be informed.</p>	<p>CH</p> <p>SH</p>
6	<p><u>Publicity update</u></p> <p>In her role as the committee's print media lead, Viv submitted photographs and articles to South Bristol Voice and The Pigeon promoting the Festival and these have now appeared in the August editions.</p> <p>Kerry presented the new green poster created by Robin which invites people to support VPAG and help improve the park. Shaun will print out one poster for each notice board. Concern was expressed about the state of the "community notice board" at the side of the Lodge (facing the Somerset Terrace and Nutgrove Avenue entrances). It was suggested volunteers be encouraged to keep it tidy and remove out-of-date information.</p> <p>Viv reported that appropriate permissions were being sought in relation to social media activity. In Anne-Marie's absence, Hester relayed her request for someone to pursue what is happening with the Instagram account. Apparently Anne-Marie has sent the log in details to Shaun and Christine so they can be passed to Amber but, as nothing appears to have happened yet, Anne-Marie is happy for Amber to liaise with her directly by email. Shaun offered to contact Amber to check the current situation.</p>	<p>SH</p> <p>TBC</p> <p>SH</p>
7	<p><u>Skatepark update</u></p> <p>The final design for the Skatepark has now been publicised. Christine reported that several people in her street's WhatsApp group had reacted negatively to this, expressing disappointment and saying that it was insufficiently challenging. Also residents of Fraser Street expressed concern about noise levels. Whilst there might not have been enough general consultation beforehand by those responsible, the likelihood is that the design was created simply on the basis of the specific funds available. The new Skatepark will be about 30 metres nearer housing than the current one, but noise might not be an issue as the concrete being used will be quieter than the existing tarmac, and there are no plans to illuminate the area for night time use or to provide any seating. It is too late now for anyone to suggest alterations anyway.</p>	

8	<p><u>Refreshments in the park update</u></p> <p>Kerry reported that Eliza and Becky from Bristol Greens, who sell green groceries etc from the garage at the top of Nutgrove Avenue on Fridays, have now also started selling refreshments given that the Stuffed van is no longer outside the Lodge. At the moment their opening hours are dependent on staff availability but they are hoping to open regularly from Tuesdays to Saturdays with effect from 15th August. However, BCC advised today that they have given a short term lease to the coffee van which currently operates at Perretts Park and this may come into effect over the next couple of weeks. Kerry will advise Eliza of this latest news in case it affects Bristol Greens' own plans.</p>	KC
9	<p><u>Wildlife in the park</u></p> <p>The committee were pleased to welcome VPAG's new wildlife lead, Harry Lock, who reported he'd recently met with Ben Barker to discuss the Greater Bedminster Urban Nature Reserve (to which VPAG has recently registered the park), and with Steve Clampin today for an exploratory walk around the park.</p> <p>Shaun explained how there was a Wildlife Group in the 1990s, before VPAG was formed, and that group created the new woodland at the top of the hill and the wetland area near Hill Avenue. The latter was filled in about 15 years ago when the wetland dried out and became a problem area. Our recent park users' survey revealed that there was a lot of support for preserving areas of the park for wildlife, and BCC's new patterns of less frequent grass cutting in the park and less aggressive pruning have helped with this and the area along by the railway line is now providing a wildlife corridor.</p> <p>Harry anticipates liaising with various local groups focused on facilitating wildlife generally and understands that Avon Wildlife can provide an ecologist to do a survey of the park at some point. He will also speak with Finbar about posting information on Facebook.</p>	HL
10	<p><u>Volunteer Group Leaders' Health+Safety training course - 8th September</u></p> <p>BCC are running this course from 10.00am until 2.45pm at the Greenway Centre, Southmead. Kerry has already registered to take part, and Christine is thinking of doing the same if possible.</p>	KC/CH
11	<p><u>Matters arising from minutes of previous meeting</u></p> <p>Defibrillators in the park: Kerry reported that Laura is in the process of establishing how much these are likely to cost and will come back to us as soon as she has ascertained this.</p> <p>UWE MA Architecture programme: Ed and Kerry advised that whilst there had been some correspondence regarding this project, they are still trying to arrange a meeting with Sally Daniels to discuss its potential scope.</p>	EP/KC

	<p>Opening of barrier near Bedminster station: This barrier is now open completely, but it is not yet apparent what the effect of this is on the number and behaviour of those riding two-wheeled vehicles into that side of the park.</p> <p>Notice for boards about reporting anti-social bike behaviour: As there have been no further reports of such behaviour recently, it was agreed to delay posting such notices until such time as it might become an issue again.</p> <p>Update on accessibility to the park for those with visual impairment: Kerry reported that she has not, as yet, heard from a Guide Dogs representative about training volunteers to walk visually impaired people around the park.</p> <p>Making a financial contribution to Bristol Parks Forum (BPF): At the last meeting Christine reported that BPF welcomes contributions to cover the cost of hiring rooms for their meetings. Those present today agreed that VPAG should make a contribution of £50 annually, and Shaun will therefore contact Len Wyatt to obtain the necessary details for making such payments.</p> <p>Park accessibility - photographs and text for our website: Following Christine's attendance at the last BPF meeting, we'd agreed that photographs and text describing the different entrances to the park be posted on our website to aid accessibility. Christine has now sent photographs of 13 entrances to John and will draft descriptions to be uploaded to the website.</p> <p>All-abilities recreational space: Lisa has arranged to meet with the Disability Forum, and also hopes to meet with teenage girls to discuss their thoughts on using the park. She might raise this via the local councillors' newsletter, liaise with the local Girl Guides and perhaps with parents of autistic youngsters as well. Ideas for this recreational space will be on display at the forthcoming Festival. We plan to put the new Skatepark design on display as well.</p>	<p>SH</p> <p>CH</p> <p>LS</p> <p>SH</p>
12	<p><u>Any other business:</u></p> <p>Additional VPAG Secretary: Given that we now have 2 Co-Chairs and 2 Membership Secretaries on the committee, Hester wondered about having 2 Secretaries so that the duties could be alternated from month to month. Kerry suggested maybe certain tasks could be delegated to a deputy secretary instead.</p> <p>Panorama and plaque in memory of Alf Havvock: The firm who are working on this have been in touch with Christine, but she is waiting to hear from them about a date for the on-site work.</p> <p>Public fruit gathering: Kerry advised that BS3 Jammin are encouraging people to collect and donate fruit and vegetables for their event at St Pauls on 30th September and 1st October. We will advertise this via a poster displayed at our Festival. Apparently Bristol Greens also accept such donations on Fridays.</p> <p>Social events: Vicky asked if VPAG held regular social events in the park. Shaun explained that these have happened occasionally over the years (e.g. film nights, community picnics etc) and that ideas would be very welcome.</p>	<p>KC</p>

13	<u>Date of next meeting:</u> Monday, 4th September 2023 at 7.30pm in the Victoria Park Bowling Club	
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