

Minutes of Meanwood Valley Partnership Open Meeting Wednesday 13th September 2017, 7.30pm, Holy Trinity Church

Present : Chris Sheard (CS - Chair), Karen Waddington (KW), Annie Skelton (AS), Rachel Ramsden (RR), Sue Sheard (SS), Carolyn Hull (CH), Gordon Charlesworth (GC), Chris Swales (CSw), Rachel Fletcher (RF- minutes), Janet Matthews (JM) - part, Julian Oxley (JO - Highbury Group) and 24 local residents.

1 Apologies : Cllr Hamilton, Cllr Charlwood, Sylvia Jay, Norman Ramsden (NR), Vicky Coleman, Hannah Beckley.

2 Minutes of previous meeting - agreed. Proposed Harvey Hinchcliffe, Seconded Paul Almond.

3 Ladbrookes Site and Other Green Spaces.

CS introduced Rodney Lester the owner of the Ladbrookes site. CS said the site had been much admired and it is intended to plant some bulbs this year and plant again next year, so MVP would be looking for sponsors for this and other similar green spaces. Thus ideas for future spaces to be greened welcome as well as more sponsors. Rodney said what a fantastic effort and how beautiful the site looked and that they (owners) had put in extra fencing to stop people falling in the beds. He had also spoken to Alan Cooke (Estate Agents) and they had jointly agreed to sponsor the Ladbrookes site as part of the community.

4 Community Theatre Project

Simon Brewis of Common Chorus told us about 'A Wind of Change' a new community theatre show by and for residents, workers and regular visitors to Meanwood to be presented by Common Chorus Theatre and InterACT Church and Community Partnership based at Stainbeck Church (<https://commonchorus.co.uk/2017/07/12/awindowofchange/>). They are still looking for participants (no experience needed) and you can sign up on the website.

5 Festival & Funday 2018 (Gordon Charlesworth & Sue Sheard)

Gordon Charlesworth will be the lead for the 2018 festival. It was asked if the festival (or part of it) could be timed to coincide with the half term holiday and GC agreed to look into this. The 2018 Funday will be lead by Sue Sheard and the first meeting will be on 28th September. Volunteers involved last year for both have come back, but more volunteers are welcome.

6 Treasurer's Report (Gordon Charlesworth)

Currently well funded with £10,787.77 in the bank. Recently got the £2,000 LCC Well Being grant (for 2017 Funday); £210 from Waitrose green coins (for Christmas lights) and £1700 from postcode lottery for Friends of Meanwood Park. It is intended to spend more on Christmas lights soon.

7 Christmas Lights Turn On

The Christmas lights switch on will be on Monday 13th November and again co-ordinated with the Weetwood one. SS is looking at potential late night opening, window lights and hopefully at least getting shop shutters open until 7pm.

Waitrose have been contacted re. additional lighting.

8 Tetley Field site, Weetwood Lane

CH gave background for those not at previous meetings (<http://www.sogtetleyfield.com>). The campaign to oppose the allocation of the site for housing and removal of its current greenbelt status, proposed in the Leeds Draft Site Allocation Plan (SAP), continues. The SAP is going to Examination by an inspector (appointed by the Secretary of State) in October, no more objections can be submitted at this stage, but the Save Tetley Field Campaign group are still looking for more donations of money to help pay for their planning expert to be at the Examination where legal/technical arguments are likely to be important, all donations welcome (info@sogtetleyfield.com).

9 Highbury Cricket Pitch (Julian Oxley)

JO apologised for not having a public meeting recently or presenting to a MVP open meeting. The site was bought by a private owner in 2016, but current situation unknown. JO has requested a meeting with the ward Cllrs. and after that he will have another public meeting.

10 Bins in Meanwood Centre

RF reported that Sarah King (local LCC Cleaner Neighbourhoods Team Leader) has said that there are a few bins which they have had to remove recently due to their poor condition, and they no longer fit post mounted litter bins as these can cause health and safety concerns to operatives who are emptying them. They intend to replace two of the bins, adjacent to crossing between Waitrose and Asda (on Asda side) & outside the former Methodist Church. The bins in the centre are emptied regularly every one or two days so they shouldn't be overflowing on a regular basis.

NR had also reported that litter situation was a lot better (less visible litter) recently.

11 Bins in the Park

Some concerns were expressed about litter in the park especially at bank holiday times. CH suggested a Take your litter Home campaign. CH and JM were going to do a walk around the park with the new Parks Manager and would suggest that the waste management team might come and hand out leaflets, they will also look at suggesting recycling bins; rubber lids on some bins (to stop squirrels/crows etc. from emptying them); extra bins (possibly temporarily ones attached to existing ones) for bank holidays and possibly signs in Waitrose/Aldi to deter littering. One local resident commented that Meanwood Park is one of the cleanest they have been in.

12 Holy Trinity Community Hall

Kingsley Dowling briefed us on the renovations, all is on schedule to reopen in February. There will be 3 meeting rooms, there will be insulation and disabled access and toilets. 6 parking spaces will be lost.

13 Friends of Meanwood Park FOMPMV (Carolyn Hull)

There have been 2 successful meetings to date with approx. 17 people on each occasion. Steve Joul (LCC Parks Ranger) leads and says what can and can't be done and what he wants doing, and he works with Clive who works in the park. Recent work included unblocking the pond and removal of elderflower from around the West Fenton Yew (planted by the Oates family) to help the yew flourish and stop rubbish accumulating in the foliage. CH & JM are applying for a Green Leeds grant (max. £2000) which they have 2 ideas for, replacing the hazel (original known locally as champion tree) and improvements in the areas from the park entrance (near the bowling green) up to the toilet block (e.g. planting empty beds, raised beds, possible edible beds etc.). Other ideas for the money are also welcome.

CH & JM were going to meet the new Parks Manager, Lee Dacre, the following day for a 2 hour walk around the park. They also want to work with schools.

Jackie Prescott expressed concern re. the decaying trees and asked if LCC do any arboricultural reporting as there does not seem to be any monitoring.

CH said that Parks & Countryside are aware of trees of a certain age in the oak and beech plantations that were planted for the mills on the Meanwood side (Hollies side quite a different nature). Some trees are dangerous and quite a few fall when heavy winds.

JM also said it is known that Leeds needs to plant more trees as on a recent OS national survey Leeds was low on trees.

The use of weedkiller in the park was questioned and it was suggested to talk to schools about litter.

CH said that of the £1,700 grant £100 has been spent on high vis vests and it is intended to get first aid kit/training, but may rely on LCC tools for now. It is hoped to get access to the hut for storage and other uses. In the future education packs and park ambassadors are envisaged.

Next meet up (task) this Saturday 15 September 10am-12pm meeting in the Green Road car park

14 Meanwood Valley Heritage Project (Janet Mathews)

Wilderness on Your Doorstep, bid for £64,000 for a Ranger for 3 days a week for 2 years.

Following meeting with Katherine Boardman at the Heritage Lottery office the Council have now agreed to lead the bid (as they can reclaim VAT) in partnership with MVP.

JM met Dan Malster- Senior Ranger on 5 September and agreed the revised bid.

Dan is to get letters of support and prepare a revised partnership agreement between LCC and MVP.

The intention is to get the bid in by the end of September.

15 Enchanted Forest Project (Sue Sheard & Chris Swales)

CS said that CH had suggested more consultation, so e-mail, Facebook and posters have been used to ask for feedback.

CS reported that of e-mails received there were 6 against and 13 in favour with one undecided. He summarised the e-mail/Facebook comments against - disrupt environment and habitats; likely to attract vandalism; natural area and wildlife habitat; prefer woods left as natural environment; woods enchanting enough; upkeep?; wild spaces sacrosanct; protection of trees; largely undisturbed area; leave space for

imagination; special needs & quiet spaces; Woodland Trust/Wildlife Trust etc. give ideas no need for artificial features; no details. He stated that there was not expected to be a deluge of crowds. CS/CSw also reported that there were 1800 Facebook post reaches (CSw said highest ever for a MVP post) 34 shares and 249 Likes, 129 messages for and 15 against with responses far more in favour than against. The consultation has also brought some great ideas of other things that can be done. The proposal is for 6 small carved pieces of animals or birds, not intrusive or invasive.

CH said good idea, but people do not realise the implications and ecological objectives, and other things can be done in the park to support parents.

JO said not enough information had been provided and 1/3 of responses on Facebook were only 2 words.

AS said siting is the main thing.

Others questioned as a random idea, and pointed out that not everyone uses Facebook.

Also stated positives that people are interested and want to get involved, but concerns at anything that may appear commercial. Also concern about the use of money when other pressing needs e.g. the condition of trees in the woods.

It was stated that CH and JM are engaged with people with FOMPMV and CH stated the ecology belongs to future generations and we are losing greenspace all over the place, so need to make sure there are ways of engaging and supporting.

GC stated that the passion shown was great, but we need to know where the decision is. Need to be clear who can and can't make a decision on the park? Are we allowed to do anything in the park?

GC also stated that the park and woods are not natural features - they are entirely manmade and they are changing all the time, new things have to come in, some will work and some won't.

CS said he had contacted Cllr Charlwood this afternoon to check remit and that there was no subtext and no railroading and he also stated good to see people interested and a lot of people wanting to steer community assets and control how spaces used, education all important.

CH stated that people do not know enough about what proposed, any ideas developed.

It was asked who had put up the owls that have appeared in the park recently? No one knew.

CH said we need to look at compromise and there are lots of ideas to implement.

AS said that we could ask Penny Field School if they have any ideas and suggested the path round the Woodleas as an option. CSw said that the idea was to encourage children into the woods rather than round the Woodleas. CSw also stated that it is fantastic we've had so many responses and there is so much interest and passion for the woods, but pointed out the responses in favour are by far in the majority. Also to remember that the park and woods are public spaces, created to be used by everyone. We should therefore be encouraging use of the spaces and not keeping them for a few who don't want them to change. CSw said ideas just put out to engage people. Just ideas.

JO said that there are no gates on the woods and suggested a treasure map could achieve a similar outcome and attract people into the woods.

CS stated that everything is manmade.

Vandalism was expressed as a potential problem. JO suggested possibly a temporary scheme could be considered, less risk, maintenance etc.

Nothing decided.

Chris Sheard said offers to help with project/MVP welcome and Jackie Prescott and Julian Oxley offered to volunteer.

Meeting ended 9.15pm