

Minutes of Friends of the Triangle Meeting on Monday 4 March 2013

Present: Dave Brookes, Geoff Easton, Martin Lake, Gillian Allen, Mike Swan, Jane Swan, Wendy Longworth, Mick Short, Oliver Fulton, Sara Haynes.

1. Apologies: Kathy Barton, Sheila Bliss, Peter Callingham, Matt Homewood, Will Maden.

2&3: The minutes of the last meeting held on 4 February 2013 were approved and there were no matters arising not dealt with below.

4. Recent developments: Two black tents were seen on Sunday morning 3 March in the corner of the Triangle beyond the disused toilet but today (Monday 4 March) only one remained, with no campers visible. Mick Short reported that tents had also appeared in the Fairfield Orchard, and the usual procedure of informing the Community Police had been followed. Dave undertook to contact the City Council and the Police about the Triangle situation.

5. Design: Sara Haynes, a Garden Design student at Myerscough College joined us to report on her proposals for the Triangle. On Friday 15 February she had met Dave, Peter, Mike and Jane on site to make preliminary notes and discuss the formulation of a design scheme that would incorporate raised beds, climbing plants on the pergola, a wildflower meadow, a community-friendly space, etc. At Monday's meeting Sara explained that owing to pressure of college work she had not yet managed to produce any layout design sketches, and also that the College would not allow her to test soil samples until the contamination survey had been completed, but she had brought with her several pages of suggestions for features and planting, among them a small Victorian walled kitchen garden, a wildflower meadow, a structured play area for children, with percussion instruments, incorporating the back wall with its ledge, and a screen of fruit trees to divide the grassed area from the cultivated plots. After some discussion, Dave thanked Sara for her work and enthusiasm for the project, and we hoped that in the future she might have time to make some sketches of her design plans. It was stressed by the two visiting Fairfield Association members that planting must be affordable and sustainable, and any furniture must be robust and indestructible. Mick Short reminded the group that attractive designs were useful for the fundraising process, and he suggested putting Sara in touch with the landscape architect who had drawn up plans for Fairfield.

6. Landowner issues:

- a. **Lancaster City Council Lease:** a Solicitor has apparently been instructed in connection with the Lease but no contact has yet been made.
- b. **Lancaster City Council Licence:** Dave read out points from the Licence, among which were permission for a contamination survey, our requirements to secure the site from the public while work is being done on site, and our responsibility to keep the land clean and tidy.
- c. **Canals & Rivers Trust Permissions:** a letter has arrived from the C&RT granting us permission to lease the site, and Dave will be writing to ask specific permission for the workshop building repairs, and at a later stage demolition of the other buildings and work on reducing the towpath wall.

7. Site investigation:

- a. **Bat survey:** the bat lady joined us at our volunteer session on Sunday 24 February when we unlocked the workshop building; she was able to find no visible evidence of bats inside but could not give a categorical assurance of their absence given that they might be hibernating in the ceiling rafters. With the help of a ladder and a torch she was able to examine the other two buildings from the outside, and again was fairly hopeful that they were bat-free. She told Martin that the only way to be sure would be to remove slates one at a time, but that if only half a dozen bats were in residence, it may not be of great consequence; however, they must not be disturbed during their hibernation or breeding times. Dave hoped to receive a mini report from her subsequent to her visit.
- b. **Arboricultural survey:** Dave has received the report from Andy Lee which is much as per the notes on the website. It will be needed for the planning application.

c. Contamination survey: Dave reported that he had obtained four very different quotes for the work and had narrowed it down to two: one for around £2,000 from a firm in Manchester/Newcastle who would complete their two necessary phases (a walkover survey and a window sample) in one day, and the other from a local firm who quoted £700 for their phase 1 but an unrealistic figure for phase 2. Time and locality were factors as well as price in considering the quotes. Dave hopes to finalise matters this week, aiming for a figure of £2,000 + VAT, which would leave around £500 over for other expenses.

8. Workshop repair:

a. Scoping: work on the building to be retained needs to be started as soon as possible, with a timescale of maybe 4 months. Tasks need to be prioritised.

b. Permissions and quotes: the roofing contractor currently working for the Fairfield Association will come and quote. Also, Paul Speight, a joiner known to Dave, has expressed an interest in doing the work as a community project, i.e, project managing a team of volunteer trainee labourers, but Dave was unsure whether Take Pride would be happy with those terms and might insist on a regular contractor.

9. Planning application: this document, relating to an application for change of use from category B1 (light industrial use) to public amenity space with ancillary buildings, comprises a quantity of small print which needs close perusal. In the absence of any members present with the necessary experience of legal terminology, Mike and Jane offered to read it through to the best of their ability. Before submitting the application we would need basic drawings and the above surveys in place.

10. Fundraising:

a. Take Pride: these funds will be claimed in arrears.

b. County Community Projects: the sum of £3,000 is already in the Fairfield Association bank balance.

c. Local Member Grant: Dave is now less hopeful of obtaining the £150 grant from Chris Coates to pay for Andy Lees' tree survey.

d. Other funding: no members came forward to propose other avenues of funding.

11. Website hosting: James MacDowell, the Fairfield Association webmaster, has been able to offer free space on the FA server for the Triangle website, which will save £30 a year. Mike Swan was given a cheque for £35.98 to reimburse him for current hosting expenses and domain name purchase.

12. Future events: a spring event (barbecue or cake sale?) has been suggested, to take place in mid-May, subject to Duncan and Will's availability and the progress of building work on site. Mick and Oliver confirmed that no FA Fun Day will be held this year, thus leaving the way open for a similar, smaller, event to take place on the Triangle, and offered the loan of waterproof sheeting for the pergola and children's attractions.

13. Volunteer sessions: no date was set in the absence of appropriate jobs to be done.

14. Any other business: no matters were raised.

15. Date of next meeting: Dave suggested 1 April 2013 (Easter Monday) at 7.30 in the Robert Gillow and this was agreed by the meeting.