

FRIENDS OF PRIORY PARK

**Annual General Meeting
Held at Priory Primary School
On 11 May 2006 at 7 pm**

Approximately 35 members of the public were present for the meeting, including the three local Ward Councillors and Councillor Ian Austin.

Minutes of Meeting

- 1 *Minutes of AGM held on 27 April 2005* - Minutes agreed as an accurate record. Proposed by Pat Griffiths, seconded by Chris Rich.

- 2 *Matters arising*
JA-R provided an update with regard to the park-keeping. It was noted that there had been two park keepers during the last year but the situation is vacant at present. Interviews are taking place to fill the vacancy on a permanent basis.

- 3 *Chair's Report*
JA-R presented her annual report which made mention of the following:

Busy year with group membership rising to 750. Wide variety of activities for all age ranges and backgrounds, which have been well attended/supported.

Fairshare Lottery Project. Outlined the success of the multi-use games area, well used. However, mention made of incidents of vandalism and the circumstances regarding the damage to the climbing rig.

Four new benches and a dozen litter bins have been installed and another two benches have been provided by Greencare. New information sign and bollards at entrances have also been installed. Special mention made of the completion of the scheme which was celebrated in February 2006 with a grand opening attended by Sir Bobby Charlton and Ann Jones., a great success. Refurbishment of tennis courts completed and there are plans for sporting activities on the park during the summer. The 5-a-side pitch will be upgraded to resolve drainage problems. All wooden benches will be replaced and a teen shelter provided.

Future Skills - The success of the Future Skills initiative was noted together with statistics relating to qualifications and employment opportunities for those taking part in the scheme.

Park Security - Noted that the installation of the railings round Priory Hall will be completed at the end of May. The benefits of this were acknowledged by those present. The Park Watch Scheme is working well but the success of the scheme will be

enhanced by the appointment of a permanent park keeper. Members of the public were encouraged to continue to report incidents of criminal/anti-social behaviour.

Heritage Lottery Bid - Noted the allocation of £50,000 to commission a conservation architect and project team to deliver a series of reports on the preservation of the park and buildings together with recommendations for developments in the park. Howard Price, Landscape Architect in attendance and will report later to the meeting. Committee are concerned that a letter sent Duncan Loundes, Dudley MBC, some 6 weeks ago has not yet been responded to.

Events - The Chairman gave a verbal update/overview of events which have taken place since the last AGM.

Books/DVD - Update provided on the book by John Hemmingway and the DVD which has been prepared, copies of which were available to purchase.

Medieval Event - To take place on 17 June. Noted that there will be an international joust company performing, a medieval encampment, archery and falconry demonstrations, puppet shows, etc.

JA-R ended her report by thanking Committee Members, litter pickers; Mike Hessey, Future Skills, Greencare, JH and PM of Dudley MBC and funding sources Dosti and Dudley Play Association.

4 *Treasurer's Report*

The Treasurer reported as follows:

General Account - Financial

Report for 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006

The bank balance at the start of the financial year was £3008.41

Receipts throughout the year were £3605.27

Expenditure was £3816.12

The bank balance at the end of the financial year was £2797.56

The main receipts and expenditure are summarised below

RECEIPTS

Events	£430.01
Awards & Donations	£1590.00
Xmas Cards/Prints/DVD & Book Sales	£1582.00
Interest	£3.26
Total	£3605.27

EXPENDITURE

Events	£1029.88
Consumables	£408.05
Park Expenditure/Equipment	£100.89
Donations	£200.00
Newsletters	£643.07
Insurance	£250.00
Xmas Cards/DVD's/Prints/Book Production	£1020.48
Subscriptions	£25.00
IT Equipment	£138.75
	£3816.12

Heritage Lottery Fund Account -Financial Report for 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006

The opening balance on the 13th April was £21250.00

Receipts throughout the year were £21288.39

Expenditure was £19238.69

The balance at the end of the financial year was £2049.70

The main receipts and expenditure are summarised below

RECEIPTS

HLF Grant	£21250.00
Interest	£38.39
Total	£21288.39

EXPENDITURE

Consultancy Fees	£18802.35
Newsletters	£258.84
Book Production Costs	£177.50
Total	£19238.69

5 *Editor's Report*

The editor's report made reference to the following:

Membership - Seems to have reached a plateau (48 deleted from the list for various reasons). Current membership around 620, together with 120 junior members and 43 associate members.

Newsletter - Junior section discontinued as educational establishments have not shown a great deal of interest. PG thanked MH for his excellent work in connection with the FOPP website, which is updated on a daily basis. Publication of the next newsletter will be dependent on the availability of articles, contributions, etc. Noted that approx. 140 copies of the Chronicle have been sold and that the DVD is selling well too. There will be a companion book published shortly, similar in format, about Dudley Castle. That is being funded outside of FOPP. At this point Doug Davies, Membership Secretary of the Friends of Dudley Castle spoke about the launch of the Dudley Castle Book, which will be 16 August at 7.30 pm in the grounds of Dudley Castle. John Hemmingway will be producing a third book about the Township of Dudley.

6 *Election of Honorary Officers*

Noted that the Secretary and Treasurer posts are honorary officer posts. No nominations had been received for these two posts.

Secretary - Proposed by JA-R and seconded by MH and TC that **Chris Rich** be appointed Secretary for the forthcoming year

Treasurer - Proposed by PG and seconded by TC that **Mark Knowles** be appointed Treasurer for the forthcoming year.

7 *Election of General Committee*

Noted that JA-R and AW would not be standing for the committee for the forthcoming year, due to personal commitments.

Other Committee Members were prepared to continue (however, as CG had not attended a meeting or made contact has been deleted from the list). The Committee for the year 2006/07 will be as follows:

Julie Banner
Phil Blatchford
Sharon Blatchford
Christine Broom
Tony Callear (new member)
Harry Fleetwood
Phil Griffiths
Tremaine Herbert (new member)
Cynthia Simpson
Annette Spears (new member)

8 *Appointment of Auditors*

Agreed that Fred Rich and Roger Bruton be appointed auditors for the financial year 2006/07.

9 *Open Session*

RB - Congratulations to the FOPP committee on the achievements so far.

Ian Austin, MP. Re-iterated the above. Impressed by the dedication shown by all members of the friends' group. It is seen as a model organisation and a testament to the hard work of those involved.

Boxing Club - A member of the Club spoke about their plans for growth and expansion of the Club and drew members' attention to future publicity and the need for things to happen as a matter of urgency. FOPP confirmed its support for the plans of the Boxing Club, which are seen as a very important aspect of the park.

Sergeant Mason - outlined policing plans for the area. Noted that at present there are fewer pc's in the area; plans for future policing noted. From the beginning of July, PC Harris will be joining PC Omar. Police are aware of incidents of vandalism, drinking and anti-social behaviour in the park. RB's comments regarding incidents of anti-social behaviour on the park were noted. Also noted that there will be a different focus from 5 June 2006, there will be Panel Meetings on a monthly basis to highlight/identify current problems. FOPP members and local councillors encouraged to attend.

Members were encouraged to use incident reporting forms and they were advised how to progress such reports.

Councillor Finch expressed concern that we were only receiving policing five days a week but Sergeant Mason explained the reason for his decision. He said there would always be a beat team and on the days that officers were off duty, other teams would be covering the work.

FOPP thanked Sergeant Mason for his contribution and for the work of the local pc's.

Chris Rich - Noted that Chris Rich has been awarded £1,000 for the Friends Group from the Respect Committee for her work in connection with crime reduction. Some of the money will be used for posting literature in the park to the effect that it is an alcohol-free zone.

10 *Heritage Lottery Team - Howard Price - Landscape Architect*

HP outlined the membership of the project team, the work undertaken so far and plans for the future. He stressed that he felt that FOPP was the most impressive Friends' Group he had come across.

HP made a short presentation outlining proposals, the history of the park area, character zones and future plans.

Essentially, the proposals related to repair, renewal and upgrading of surfaces, ie repairing the infrastructure and addressing drainage problems, which would result in a vast improvement for park users.

Csb
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