

Held in the men's bowling pavilion

Minutes

Apologies

Caron Methol

Committee members present: Tony Benton, Sue Shepherd, Clive Shepherd, John Padmore, Tim Lunnon.

Easter event

A description of the Easter Egg Hunt was given: a free event for children up to and including 12, on Sunday, April 24 from 11am until the eggs run out. The hunt is designed to generate awareness and appreciation of the park in the next generation. Questions about many different aspects of the park will be given to children who then hunt for the answers on specially prepared information points. All correctly completed questionnaires will be rewarded with a cream egg. A drawing competition can be entered with aspects of the park as the subject. There will be a prize of a mega-egg for the best picture in each of two age groups.

It was clarified that there will be no 'losers'. We will point the child in the right direction with heavy hints if a question is found difficult!

The committee will need to buy some coloured pens for the competition.

An advert will be placed in the 'events' section of the Argus.

Dawn Chorus

This was described as an event led by Park Rangers at 6am on Saturday May 1. It will be an opportunity to hear – and identify - the wonderful spring birdsong without so much traffic noise. There will also be a chance to learn more about wildlife in the park. Meet in the Rock Garden by the chalet. Leaflets will be available at the Easter event.

A Walk in the Park

This event was announced as taking place on May 10, 18 and 26 from 6pm to 7.30pm and will be led by a Park Ranger. The walks will start at the rose garden and include the walled garden and rock garden. It is hoped people will enjoy the opportunity to learn about the park's trees, plants and wildlife.

Hedgecock grant

As Treasurer, Clive was glad to announce that a fund of £950 had been granted to the Friends group by the City Council via their Hedgecock grant.

PrestFest

To be held in the park on Saturday August 27 between 12 and 5pm.

An overview of the festival was given which described the event as having 5 different zones: a fun zone which will include fairground-style stalls, a sheep pen, a fire engine etc; a commercial zone for local businesses as well as a BBQ; a sports zone where local sports organisations (football, croquet, tennis etc) will promote their sport by giving people a chance to try it; a music zone where we are hoping to attract some local bands to provide entertainment and a zone for charities and local organisations such as Preston Manor/St Peter's church, RSPB, NHS Health Walks and so on.

It was mentioned that a booking form should be designed for stall holders which specifies a non-refundable deposit. A contact was given for more information about an appropriate amount to charge profit-making stall holders.

The fun zone in particular will be dependent on volunteers to help man the stalls. Volunteers will also be needed to marshal arrivals to set up points and to ensure stalls end at 5pm. Park-users who specified on the questionnaire of 2010 that they would be willing to help will be contacted. A contact was given for the Men's Network group who may be willing to help.

It was noted that the South Downs Authority may want to have a stall to promote the work they do in the area. (The authority has since been contacted and may get in touch.)

It was agreed that, if a local pub was approached to provide a bar, that they would be responsible for acquiring the appropriate licence from the council.

A representative from the Croquet Club agreed to arrange Croquet demonstrations on the bowling green near the Rotunda on the day.

It was hoped that the excellent band which played at the Bluebell event will perform.

More suggestions were: a bird demonstration from the South Downs Raptor Centre; a steel band who were seen to be very popular; a stall for the Preston Manor gardeners; a presence by local scout/cubs/brownies/guides; a performance by the dance school which practises at Knowle Hall and a pig-roast.

It was hoped that Park Rangers will be available to help with litter-picking after the event.

The theme of the event was clarified to be: Your Park – Your Community. The festival will be geared to promote and celebrate local talents and businesses. It was noted that there will be a need to publicise so that local businesses can come forward to apply to be part of the event. This will start next month.

Visitor numbers will be clearer when the number of stalls/participants have been firmed. (It will also be weather-dependent.) Advice will then be sought from the Events Manager about siting the event within the park and on loos.

Expanding the committee

Tony outlined the roles which are available on the committee: a fund-raiser, a marketing person and someone who could help with events co-ordination. This will be publicised on the website and possibly on the notice boards.

Future open meetings

The next open meeting will be July 5 at 7pm. The AGM will be held on September 13 at 7pm. Both meetings will be in the men's bowling pavilion.

Other business

Councillor Juliet McCaffery mentioned that 197 signatures have been collected in support of a paddling pool in the park. The council are aware of the petition and are considering it. The redevelopment of the derelict building overlooking the park may generate some funds to the local community which could help. Juliet also mentioned the 'parking-in-the-park' issue; apparently 4 options have been put forward to the council who will be conducting local consultations later in the year. Juliet will keep us posted.

There was some discussion about the forthcoming Pride event. Local residents are urged to contact Pride via their website www.brightonpride.org to make any requests for extra security if they feel it's needed in their area.

Alan Griffiths clarified that, after receiving an expensive estimate, a more detailed breakdown of costs was being sought for a petanque terrain on the disused bowling-green.

A question was raised about whether there should be a dog-free area in the park. This was agreed to be a subject worthy of longer discussion and was put aside for a future meeting.