

FRIENDS OF WOODTHORPE GRANGE PARK

Notes of meeting held on 10 January 2024

Apologies

Matt Wilson
Anne Spalton

Attendees

FOWGP

Paul Swift – Chair
Derek Stafford
Ian Broomhall
Marian Staniforth
Janet Grimley
Kim Parnham
Helena Shipston
Bill Shipston
Robert Finch
Peter Wood
Linda Wood

NCC

Hilary Thrumpston
Jane Barton

Item 1

To discuss the Budget Proposals in light of the insolvency of Nottingham City Council and how to respond, noting that the closing date to respond to the consultation on the proposals is Tuesday 16 January 2024.

Paul stated that the meeting had been brought forward from the scheduled date of 31 January 2024 in order to specifically consider the above proposals. He highlighted that the relevant section of the proposals was to Stop Grass Cutting on all Major Parks (Woodthorpe Grange Park) except those parks that have received significant National Lottery Heritage Funding (Victoria Embankment, The Arboretum, Forest Recreation Ground and Highfields Park) plus those held in Trust (Highfields Park and Harvey Hadden) which are required to be maintained for recreational purposes. As Woodthorpe Grange Park was not on the list of exceptions to the proposals, there are concerns that stopping grass cutting would reduce the useable recreational space within the park, increase community safety concerns and make the area look unattractive, resulting in an increase in the responsibility of garden and also negative press/media.

It was recognised that any community projects within the park, such as the restoration of the train sculpture, would have to be funded/sponsored by FOWGP, albeit under the direction of NCC.

Paul also noted some of the other Budget Proposals that would affect Nottingham's green and open spaces, including:-

- Stop community cricket provision in parks.
- Stop all grounds maintenance of the Broadmarsh phase one area.
- Closure of bowling greens.
- Charge more for community football in parks.

It was therefore proposed that FOWGP responds to this proposal as a group and that members also consider individual responses. Ideas and suggestions from members would therefore be welcomed.

Jane advised the meeting that contrary to the proposals as drafted, Woodthorpe Grange Park would also be included on the list of exceptions and that maintenance of the park would therefore continue largely as per the current arrangements, although Jane also advised that it was intended to rewild the area of the former pitch and putt course. Jane asked that FOWGP still consider responding to the budget proposals in respect of their potential impact on other parks and open spaces across the city. Jane also highlighted proposals to reduce staffing levels, including within the Greenspace & Natural Environment service area which would impact on service provision, although she emphasised that front-line maintenance staff would not be affected.

Paul advised the meeting that some draft comments on the proposals put forward by Matt Wilson and proposed that, with suitable amendments, including to acknowledge that Woodthorpe Grange Park was now one of the exceptions to the proposals to stop grass cutting, that these comments form the basis of a response to the consultation on behalf of FOWGP. This approach was agreed by members. Derek agreed to prepare and submit the consultation response on this basis.

Action – Derek to prepare and submit a consultation response to the Budget Proposals on behalf of FOWGP by the deadline of 16 January 2024

Other Matters

(Paul – my notes cover various other matters which were discussed briefly at the meeting. I have tried to capture these accurately and succinctly below, but please suggest any amendment as appropriate)

In relation to the potential restoration of the train sculpture and surrounding area, Hilary advised that the likely costs involved (£1,400) would exceed the level of grant that FOWGP have received from the Co-op. However, Paul advised that FOWGP do have sufficient financial resources to cover such costs and would also be looking to cover the costs of restoring the headstone.

Bill asked NCC officers about the management of specific areas within the park, namely the sunken garden and the dell, with specific concerns about weeds. Jane advised that the plant shop staff would have an involvement in managing the sunken garden, whilst Hilary advised that any action to tackle weeds would not involve weed killer given the need to protect and enhance biodiversity.

Paul asked whether NCC would be able to help with publicity for the proposed tree walks to be led by FOWGP. Jane advised that such support can be provided.

Paul referenced increasing concerns regarding litter in the car park to the flats and the areas of trees above the car park and that FOWGP could undertake some litter picking to help clear this area. NCC advised that the flats and surrounding land is owned by Nottingham City Homes who would therefore need to be contacted about this matter. Paul suggested that this matter could be further discussed at the next meeting, along with ideas for how FOWGP could generate further income.

Next Meeting

6.30 pm on Wednesday 27 March 2024