

Minutes of the Friends of Burrs meeting held on Thursday 15th of March, 6.30pm, Meeting Room A, Bury Town Hall, BL9 0SW (Rearranged from 1st March)

Present

Hilary Marshall	Chair Friends of Burrs/Bradlesholme Residents Association
Mike Kelly	Chair Burrs Strategic Development Group/Chair East Lancs Railway
Raff Tuccillo	Bury Voluntary Ranger Service/Burrs Strategic Development Group/Vice Chair (Volunteering) Friends of Burrs
Angela Honeyford	Friend of Burrs
Martin Proffitt	Proffitts Investing in Communities/Burrs Strategic Development Group
Tim Heib	Bury Canoe and Kayak Club
Joseph Parkin	British Canoeing/ Bury Canoe and Kayak Club
Stuart Igoe	Alternative Adventure
Hilary Fleckney	Friend of Burrs
Graham Smith	Bury and District Agricultural Society
Michael Whitehead	Bury Council (Planning Policy)
Jean Gill	Friend of Burrs
Carol Mititimila	Resident
Mark Fletcher	Friend of Burrs
Michael Hankey Cllr.	Bury Council
Laura Ettrick	Friend of Burrs
Debbie Cliff	Burrs Running Group
Carly Heselwood	Bury Council (Sports Development)

Apologies

Lesley Atherton, Cllr. Susan Southworth, James Frith MP, Allan Dye (Ramsbottom Angling Association), Cllr. Sarah Kerrison, Annette Bullock, Andy Bullock, Kelly Macadam (Woodbank Primary School), Jean Foster.

Matters Arising

A Flag for Burrs

Laura E asked about progress on the Flag for Burrs. Graham explained that Paul Robinson would be working with Woodbank Primary School to design the flag with the children. This will probably involve a visit to Burrs in the summer term by the children with Paul to get some ideas.

Structure of the group

Martin P reiterated the point that the group still needed a constitution, proper structure and gain in strength if it was to be sustainable in the long term.

Non Native Invasive Species (NNIS)

Graham explained that the spraying programme for Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed would be continued during the 2018 season and that he was hoping to run some trial spraying of Himalayan Balsam.

James Frith M P

James Frith was not available to attend the meeting but had asked if he could be involved with the Friends group and would like to come and talk with the group at a future meeting. Graham S will try and arrange this for the next meeting.

Burrs Strategic Development Group (BSDG)

Mike K explained about the role of the BSDG in delivering the Burrs Strategy and attracting significant external investment into Burrs to raise the quality and status of the park.

Burrs is a "sleeping giant" with great potential but needs a dynamic Friends group to awaken it.

Burrs Activity Centre

The activity centre closed in January and although this was a setback it also provided an opportunity to re think how we can make the best use of the building.

The building has a future as the hub of the park but we do need to develop a long term vision for it. This needs to include provision of public toilets, a vibrant café, good quality signage, as well as supporting new and existing activities.

Townley Hall

Mike updated the group following his visit to the friends group at Townley Hall to see how their friends group operates.

The important points were:

- The relationship with the Council could be better
- The group had more limited aspirations than our group
- The group kept their turnover below £25,000p.a.
- The group felt that the Council used them to get work done for free
- Bury had a good track record on self-management of individual facilities but self-managing a whole park was a far bigger ask
- Money raised in Burrs needs to stay in Burrs

Maureen from the Townley Friends is happy to come and talk to us about her experiences. **Mike is going to arrange this.**

Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)

Martin P explained that the BSDG had decided to concentrate on the heritage aspects of Burrs first as this is the largest asset. Over the last year the BSDG has been working up a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund's Resilient Heritage Fund.

At meetings with representatives from the HLF they had been excited by and supportive of the Burrs Strategy and suggested that we submit a bid for an initial grant of £100,000 to assess the potential of the site.

However, the HLF have expressed concern about the sustainability of both the park and the Friends group and have said that this will need to be addressed if further funding is to be made available. Part of the initial funding bid will provide help with strengthening the Friends group.

Martin P has now completed and submitted the first HLF bid for £100,000 towards a total project cost of £131,600.

This will include:

- Condition survey of all 26 historically important structures including a statement of significance. This work is necessary to support subsequent HLF applications for conserving and interpreting the features and telling the story of Burrs.
- Remodelling options for the activity centre building including provision of a quality café public toilets, a visitor centre, holiday accommodation and provision of outdoor activities.
- Developing a new business model for delivering sustainable canoeing and outdoor activities following the closure of Burrs Activity Centre Ltd.
- Review of the buildings including the activity centre, 15 Stock Street, and Stock Street depot.
- Business mentor to assist stakeholders in increasing their capacity and resilience in the future. This will include an overall site business plan to move Burrs towards self-management by the Friends of
- Updating existing management information including the Green Flag Management Plan
- Fact finding and learning from case studies on other sites.
- Skills audit and training for the Friends of Burrs group and other stakeholders in order to increase capacity in preparation for self-management.
- Getting the site and the community investment ready.

We will probably know the outcome of the application in June or July.

Volunteering

Bury Voluntary Ranger Service (BVRS)

Raff explained that the Bury Voluntary Ranger Service is active in Burrs and on numerous other sites across the borough as well as on the public right of way network. In the last three and a half years they have carried out projects to the value of £120,000

There was some discussion around the role of BVRS at Burrs and how this might evolve including developing a range of lighter tasks for some of the friends.

Raff said he would consider this and produce a short briefing note for the group explaining:

- Membership
- Training
- Types of projects
- Opportunities to get involved

Paddling

Joe P said there was an opportunity for the paddling community to take on the management of the river etc. as happened at other locations and that this in turn would encourage paddlers back in to the park and on to the river. Joe is happy to facilitate visits to such facilities.

Friends of Burrs

Future structure and constitution

There was a general discussion around the form of managing the park including third party organisations such as the RSPB.

The consensus was that Burrs should be managed by the local community for the local community and that we should look to develop and strengthen the Friends of Burrs as our first option and become a community business with a mixture of paid staff and volunteers.

Mike K said that this was the model that the East Lancashire Railway used with a small number of paid staff and supporting over 800 volunteers carrying out all the tasks needed to run a railway from engine cleaners to lawyers.

It is now essential that we get the Friends of Burrs properly set up with a constitution, committee and bank account. The danger is that if we do not do this it is unlikely that we will be eligible to receive any significant external funding and that the park will continue to decline as Council budgets are cut still further.

Graham agreed to circulate a copy of the draft constitution and the visioning day notes with the minutes.

If you are interested in helping get the Friends constituted please contact either Mike, Hilary or Graham.

Social Media

Laura E had previously expressed an interest in setting up and running a "Friends of Burrs" Facebook page and expressed her frustration that at how long this was taking.

Graham explained the difficulties in running an official page however if the Friends wanted to set up a page on their own rather like the Friends of Nuttall Park they could do this if they wished without needing any permissions from the Council. Laura agreed to do this.

The page can now be found at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/179913332805201/>

Continued appointment of Proffitts to assist BSDG in preparing HLF, Sport England and other external funding bids

Martin Proffitt left the meeting at this point so that we could discuss this item.

Graham S briefed the group on the work that Proffitts had carried out on behalf of other community groups including Bradlesholme Residents Association (Purbeck Drive play area) and Greenmount Community Association (Greenmount Village Green) as well as preparing the Burrs HLF bid.

Graham asked the group if they were happy to retain the services of Proffitts for the work at Burrs including the HLF bid and the Sport England bid.

A vote was taken and it was agreed unanimously to retain Proffitts.

AOB

Running Group

Debbie Cliff volunteered to set up a runners action day with the running group/Great Run Local.

Forthcoming Events

Urban Revolution Obstacle Race Saturday 12 May 2018

Other events can be found by searching at
www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=11182

Date of next meeting

Thursday 17 May, Committee Room A, Bury Town Hall, Knowsley Street,
Bury, BL9 0SW

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