

Minutes of Friends of Blaise

Tuesday 17th Sept 2019 7pm

Present: Alastair Blackwell, Hugh Snodgrass, Fran Greenfield, Jenny Phelps, Kay Ridgwell

Apologies: Patrick Clarke; Mark Maggs

Action from AGM

1. Alastair reported that a new bench had been installed in the Royals (He was unable to say exactly where in the Royals)
The bench at the top of Echo Gate needs replacing.
2. Hugh made a plea that in future we should use the microphone, which we have purchased, at the AGM. He commented that several members were unable to hear the proceedings at this year's AGM.

Secondary Paths

Alastair agreed to speak to Joe McKenna about helping to identify the secondary paths in the estate and to decide which paths should be worked on first. The Friends would pay for Joe's work force.

Kay described one secondary path which needed repair. She was to find out its name and precise location.

Dog walkers

Fran suggested that someone could speak to the dog walkers who meet for coffee in the village hall on the first Friday of each month between 10-12am to suggest that they might like to join the Friends. Kay agreed to do this.

Parks funding

Sarah has returned from maternity leave working a 3 day part time week. A new member of staff (part time) has been appointed to lead the garden time and to help Ben Skuse, who has also returned to Blaise, with the rangers.

Bridge repairs

The bridge just passed Waters Meet has been checked by an asset team and it will decide if the repair work can be undertaken by the Rangers.

Orangery

A price of £5,000 had been received for repairs needed to the wooden frames of the Orangery doors. Although the Friends committee would have been happy to joint fund this work Sarah said that as the work is mainly for health and safety the authority should foot the bill. Alastair was asked to keep watch on the progress of this work as the wooden frames are in a very fragile condition and should be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

Sign posting

Sarah reported that they had trailed wooden posts with markers in the Estate to mark the paths to the castle. They have made a template stencil of the castle image to paint onto the posts to direct the way.

It was also suggested that copies of a very basic map of 'how to get to the castle' could be produced and kept in the café for distribution

Café

There are to be improvements around the café with extra seating and a protective fence around the large oak tree.

Parking

Payment for parking in the estate is to begin in Oct 2019. We believe it will be £1.50 for parking between 9am and 4pm. Hugh commented that the Coombe Dingle car park was nearly always full up and that this will only increase when visitors have to pay in the other car parks/

Castle

The castle had been opened on 17 days during 2019 and to date had raised over £1,000. The new direction plaques, and especially the echo point plate had proved very successful.

Membership Report

Kay reported that we have 139 members, one new member since our last meeting. She also has an e-mail contact list of 48 non-members.

Community Garden

Alastair reported that the lease with the local authority has still to be signed. He believes the garden has to sign the 'schedule of condition' before the lease is complete.

Hugh asked that the garden could send him confirmation of receipt of the £2,000 grant which the Friends had made towards the greenhouse roof repairs.

Archaeology Day

Was very successful.

Concert Saturday 1st Feb 2020

Fran reported that she had booked the picture room in Blaise mansion (£180 invoice for 2 members of staff to work for the evening) Invoice passed to Hugh for payment. She had booked the group Cantanti and they will start the concert at 7.00pm followed by a light supper. It was agreed to charge £8 per ticket with a discount ticket of £5 for members.

Fran agreed to arrange a drinks license and organise tickets, programme etc.

She will need some help with organising the light supper.

Finance Report (paper copies distributed at meeting)

The committee agreed that Hugh should change the CAF account to a 12 month fixed term interest (1.4%) and to include an extra £6,000 from the current account leaving £5,000 as working capital in the current account.

A.O.B

Outside gyms

Hugh suggested investigating outside gyms again. Alastair agreed to speak to Sarah about this to see whether the authority would let us do this.

Future events in Estate

'Legions' a music concert will, subject to licenses, come to Blaise in August 2020. Sarah has passed the Friends details to the group and they will be in touch in due course. It is a friendly family music event, finishing at 10-10.30pm with one stage, music will be directed towards Kings Weston Down, parking on site will only be for disabled parking and they will be using off site areas for car parking with shuttle buses to the site. This will bring income to the Estate.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.45.