

Friends of Bridge of Allan
Minutes

Date	27th September, 2021
Time	7pm
Location	Via zoom
Attendees	Graham Russell (Chair), Douglas Neilson (Secretary), Alex Galloway (Treasurer), Sheila Gebbie, Mike Watson, Murray Airth, Sheila Hutton, Tony Bradshaw.
Apologies	Elizabeth Rankin.

Agenda Ref

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1.	Welcome. GR welcomed everyone to the meeting and hoped that it would not be long until we held the meetings face to face.
2.	Apologies. As above.
3.	Minutes of the last meeting. The action for GR to purchase a pull trolley was omitted from the minutes. This was rectified and the minutes were proposed by AG and seconded by SG.
4.	Matters arising not on the agenda. It was agreed that the subject of lighting at the tennis courts should be removed as an action. Gravel had been obtained and spread at the Cosy Cott. The baskets from the Allan Centre had been moved to the south wall of the toilets at the Provost's Park. The Merchants Association had been contacted and the shop local banner at the Provost's Park had been removed.
5	General report by the Chair. We assisted Stirling Council in removing the old wooden picnic benches at Cameron's Haugh which had become dangerous and unusable. It was decided not to replace them as we had already placed three new recycled plastic picnic benches in the area. One of these has since been damaged by irresponsible individuals placing a bbq on the table. The damage is relatively slight, and the table is still usable. GR stated that Blairforkie Drive was still looking good. SG informed the meeting that the new planting had come on better than expected and added plenty of colour to the beds. Angus Robertson continues to do very good work in all the areas in Blairforkie Drive and he is to be congratulated. A group of the Friends carried out some pruning in the beds at the start of the summer and this would require to be done again shortly. Garth's rockery at the foot of Coneyhill Road is looking well and the recent heavy rain had caused very little damage. It would appear that the deflector plate which we fitted earlier in the year was working well. A video of the flooding at the steps was taken by Fiona Scott and this had been forwarded to Douglas Dodds. Work is still required to be carried out to tidy up the Millennium Garden and the monobloc area requires to be sprayed to kill off the weeds. GR also informed the meeting that the Friends have been put forward for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. A decision will be made in June 2022.

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6.	<p>Treasurer's report</p> <p>Our insurance this year has increased to £308.</p> <p>Donations from a number of groups and individuals have done very well this summer. A submission has been made to the Cooperative Community fund for a grant to enhance the Village. The outcome is awaited.</p> <p>We still retain £5000 in our account on behalf of the local Merchants group and a further £1700 is ringfenced for trees and shrubs for the Memorial Park.</p>
7.	<p>Hanging baskets and tubs.</p> <p>The baskets and tubs have provided a very good display once again this year and are greatly appreciated by the public. Thanks go to all the waterers involved. The baskets are due to come down shortly, once they dry out. Assistance will be required in this regard.</p> <p>Both watering buggies gave some problems this year particularly the motorised one. DN suggested that a small working group be formed to look at what replacements are on the market. This group will be made up of GR, DN, TB and Gavin Drummond.</p> <p>Stirling Council placed additional cycle racks throughout the Village including one at Lloyds which prevented access to water one of the baskets. They were contacted and agreed to remove this particular rack.</p> <p>We will again take up the offer from Homesteads to store our baskets there. A winter job will be to replace the wicks and mats.</p> <p>SH asked if we would be planting tulip bulbs in the planters again this November. GR stated that the problem last year was that the tulips were still in bloom when they had to be removed due to the planting of the bedding plants. A decision on this is required.</p>
8.	<p>Memorial Park.</p> <p>There have been problems with the grass cutting in the Park throughout the summer. Four of the memorial plaques had been damaged by the grass cutting machine. This may have been due to the circles around the trees being overgrown. Stirling Council paid to have the plaques repaired and the Friends have started to widen the circles around the trees. Half have been completed to date. Douglas Dodds raised the issue of grass cutting with the Council and a meeting was held online with senior managers which GR joined. The Council accepted that the grass cutting was poor. They are unable to increase the frequency but hoped to improve the quality of the cuts.</p> <p>GR and DN met with a land management supervisor from the Council this resulted in two squads working in the Park over 4 days to prune, edge and generally tidy up the Park. They also sprayed the shrub beds and tree circles to keep the weeds down.</p> <p>On a much happier note, Stirling Council have been in touch regarding bedding plants for next year. This would hopefully provide a good display for the Park's centenary.</p> <p>A local resident complained about compost bin at the Park as he felt it was unsightly and wanted it removed. A brief discussion took place and it was agreed that the compost bin was a necessary requirement for the Park and should remain.</p>

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	GR stated that the final memorial plaque had been installed. There are no memorial trees left.
9	<p>Cawder Gardens.</p> <p>DN informed the meeting that over the past 9 months there had been issues between the FOBOA email address and the Housing Department at Stirling Council hence the reason we had not received any communication from them. This matter has now been resolved and we have received a letter of authorisation from them to allow us to work in the area. We have received two quotes for the work of digging out and slabbing the area and have submitted an application form to Stirling Council for a community grant of £1500. If we receive this grant we can proceed with the purchase of the benches. It is hoped the work will be completed in December.</p>
10.	<p>AOCB.</p> <p>It is not yet known if the Armistice service will take place at the Memorial this year nevertheless approval was given for the purchase of a memorial wreath.</p> <p>It was agreed that we would, once again, purchase a Christmas tree for the Provost's Park. It was also agreed that the lights on the gazebo in the park were old and should be replaced at a cost of approx. £150. Also, this year the artificial trees would be placed in the bed parallel to the ramp so they could be viewed better. We will need to investigate the sourcing of Christmas wreaths for the merchants again.</p> <p>It was decided to hold the plant sale and coffee morning at the Parish Church on 14th May 2022. The church hall has been booked and Homesteads informed.</p> <p>DN suggested replacing the old metal benches on Cornton Road with recycled plastic ones as the old ones require constant maintenance. This was agreed.</p> <p>MW raised the issue of the Village Christmas lights which require to be renewed/repaired and requested a donation from the Friends. A discussion took place and MW stated that a member of the CC had viewed the lights and reported on them. He stated that he would forward a copy of the report to the Friends. It was felt that there was no clear plan in place from the Community Council regarding the lights and that any decision on contributing should be delayed until a plan was forthcoming.</p> <p>MW raised the issue of the poor state of the ground around the railway station and asked if Friends would reconsider withdrawing from working there. He stated that things may change once the Abellio contract terminated. It was pointed out that the grass had only been cut twice last year and not at all this year. We had also been misled on a number of occasions and it is likely that the current Abellio staff would be transferred over under TUPE, therefore we would be dealing with the same individuals. Unless the budget of any new organisation taking over was greatly increased for ground maintenance then we could not see things improving. SH and SG who worked tirelessly at the station were the ones who were most disappointed with the current state of affairs. All their good efforts were to no avail given the state of the grass.</p>

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11	DONM. Monday 18 th October 2021 at 7pm via Zoom.
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5.	Spray the monobloc at the Millennium Garden.	GR
7.	Remove and empty hanging baskets.	All
7.	Establish working group re watering buggy.	GR/DN
7.	Contact Homesteads regarding storage of the baskets.	DN
7.	Decision to be reached regarding tulip bulbs.	GR/ER
10.	Purchase memorial wreath.	GR
10.	Purchase new lights for the gazebo.	GR
10.	Source Christmas wreaths for merchants.	DN
10.	Purchase recycled plastic benches for Cornton Road.	DN