



# Friends of Ashby Bath Grounds

NEWSLETTER February 2022

## New Committee Members

Following the decision by some of our longstanding committee members to retire in recent months we have been actively recruiting new committee members. At our last committee meeting, held on 15 February, the following were elected to the new committee line up.

- Geoff Bibby – Treasurer
- Dave Bigby
- Dan Cooper- Secretary
- Tim Jones – Chair
- Chris Smith
- Matt Woodford

The new committee has a number of immediate goals, these include increasing our membership, working with the Town Council and the Bath Grounds Advisory Group to retain the Green Flag award, achieved last year, and continuing work to improve the much-loved Ashby Bath Grounds.

The Committee also agreed to hold an informal General Meeting later this year with an open Questions and Answers session so we can all share updates and ideas. We will announce the date and location in our next newsletter.

## Community Ownership of the Bath Grounds

The Friends warmly welcome the decision made by Ashby Town Council on Monday 24th January 2022 to press ahead with purchasing the freehold of the Bath Grounds.

Legal arrangements were agreed which effectively separate the Bath Grounds purchase from the planning application for development around the Royal Hotel. The money paid (£620k) will have to be used by the Royal owners to undertake major repairs to the fabric of the site, particularly the roof, whether or not their planning application for apartments and an old people's home is approved.

Community ownership of the Bath Grounds was one of the Friends' four prime objectives when we were established back in 2014. It's fantastic to see that we are reaching the end of the long journey towards achieving this, without compromising any of our other objectives, including the prevention of building on any part of the Bath Grounds.

We hope the completion of the purchase will happen soon and we will of course let you know about this in our next newsletter.

In the meantime, we will not be resting on our laurels. At the Town Council meeting, councillors from across the political spectrum requested that the Town Clerk explores means of ensuring that the Bath Grounds now remain in community ownership in perpetuity, so a successor council could not decide to sell them off. We support this move and we recommend changing the Friends' community ownership aim to ensuring continuous community ownership. We will ask our members to endorse this change at our next General Meeting.



## Bath Grounds Advisory Group

After the successful achievement of the Green Flag award for the Bath Grounds, the Town Council has established a Bath Grounds Advisory Group, consisting of representatives from the Friends, Cricket Club, Bowls Club, Litter Picking Group, Police, District Council and Town Council, chaired by Town Councillor Mike Ball. The purpose of the Group is to advise the Town Council on areas for improvement and innovation on the Bath Grounds.

This is a welcome initiative as it gives those who use the Bath Grounds a formal route into the Town Council decisions. So far it has met three times. The next meeting will discuss a comprehensive management system for grounds

maintenance and in the Spring it will be launching an opinion survey to gather the views of the users of the Bath Grounds on what they enjoy about the Bath Grounds and their views on the state of maintenance. We will be encouraging all members to complete the survey.



## Grounds Maintenance

Part of our role is to help the Town Council with maintenance of the Bath Grounds, by informing them of issues and repairs that may be needed. We believe it's important to continue with this role and will be urging the new Advisory Group to prioritise improving maintenance standards. [But we need your help.](#) If you see anything on the Bath Grounds that needs improvement or maintenance, whether that's an untidy border, vandalism, or benches that need maintenance, please let us know. You can also contact the Town Council directly on [info@ashbytowncouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@ashbytowncouncil.org.uk)

## Royal Hotel - Planning Application update

The lengthy saga of the redevelopment of the Royal Hotel has taken another step forward with the publication of revised proposed plans for the enabling development associated with the hotel - a care home behind the cricket pavilion, and apartments and an office block on the Royal Hotel car park. The Masterplan can be seen on the right, and you can find our response to this application on the dedicated page at our website [www.bathgroundsfriends.com](http://www.bathgroundsfriends.com).

The plans will impact on the view from the Bath

rounds as well as some of the access points to the Bath Grounds. Full details of the proposals can be viewed at the District Council planning portal.

The application number is 19/01792/FULM.



## Membership Renewals

We are calling on all past members to renew for 2022, and many thanks to all those who have done so already. If you would like to be a member, simply visit the website and hit the Join page link. It only takes a few minutes to fill out the renewal form and please do not forget to then pay your £8 subscription by any of the available methods.

## Volunteering

We are looking for any members who would be able to volunteer for maintenance and repair work around the Bath Grounds. Before doing any voluntary work we would check with the relevant authority if this was something our volunteers were allowed to do and ensure all the correct permissions were in place. If you have landscaping or gardening skills that you think could help, please let us know.

## Sponsorship

We are looking for local companies to sponsor the Friends group. Sponsorship funds would allow us to do even more for the improvement of the Bath Grounds. If you are, or know of, a local company that would like to raise its profile amongst the local community and make a real impact with your Corporate Social Responsibility programme we'd love to talk to you.

In return we can offer to promote your name and services to our membership by placing your name and logo on our website, newsletter and social media assets. We have a range of sponsorship options and would be happy to discuss tailoring this to your needs.

## Contact us with your comments and suggestions

If you'd like to talk to us about any topics raised in this newsletter or you just have suggestions for us, we can be reached at:

Email: [bathgroundsfriends@gmail.com](mailto:bathgroundsfriends@gmail.com)

Webpage: [www.bathgroundsfriends.com](http://www.bathgroundsfriends.com)