

FRIENDS OF PARK GROUPS START UP PACK



CONTENTS

Page 2	Contents
Page 3	Introduction
Page 3	Starting a group
Page 5	Setting up your first AGM
Page 6	Applying for funding
Page 7	Sample agenda
Page 8	Sample minutes
Page 9	Sample constitution

Introduction

This pack has been put together as a set of guidelines for members of the community to work with Preston City Council and set up their own “friends of” groups, assisting to enhance and promote the use of parks and open spaces within the City of Preston.

‘Friends of’ Start up pack

For many years some local communities have felt as though their local park or open space has been neglected and they have been unable to do anything about it. Setting up a group gives all members of the community the chance to develop their local park or open space in line with the needs of the community. Therefore, the ownership of these facilities is being placed within the community. Being a “friend” is an excellent way of providing facilities, events and activities for your local community, although this is sometimes hard work the rewards are more than worth the effort.

This pack explains the basic stages of starting up a group, organising your first AGM, sources of funding which may be of use in reaching your groups aims and objectives, and finally a list of useful contacts. If you do feel you need any help or would like to ask any questions please contact the parks Development team. They will also be able to put you in contact with other “friends of” groups to swap information, and invite you to Friends group gatherings. Your Park Development Team is:

Sash Essuah-Mensah - Park Development Manager

s.essuahmensah@preston.gov.uk

Catherine Creeton - Park Development Officer – c.creeton@preston.gov.uk

Steven Smith – Senior Park Ranger – s.w.smith@preston.gov.uk

Based at; Parks & Streetscene Services, Argyll Road, Preston, PR1 6JY01772 906471

Starting a group

Setting up a “friends of” group usually takes four stages. Perhaps the most difficult stage is the first which consists of finding like-minded individuals who want to become involved in a voluntary group. Stages 2 and 3 that follow should be carried out at the first AGM (Annual General Meeting) of the group. Finally stage 4 should be completed after the first AGM.

Stage 1 - As mentioned above this can seem like the most difficult and daunting stage to tackle, but don’t panic! The parks Development Team, or your local Councillors may be able to help. Most groups tend to advertise an informal gathering where interested parties can get a feel for what the group aims to do. The main aim of this stage is to gather as much interest in your potential group as possible, speak to your local councillors, or community leaders, because they may have contacts in the community who would like to become involved with such a group. Your group will generally find that there are many people in the local community who have an opinion about the park or open space in question. Part of the work of a “friends of” group is to take on these views and opinions and relay them back into the development and management plans for the park.

**'Friends of'
Start up pack**

*** To be carried out at the first AGM ***

Stage 2 - The second stage consists of choosing a constitution. A constitution basically explains how your group will be managed, from the aims and objectives of the group through to how meetings are to be run. The constitution of your group does not have to be complicated but it should reflect how you wish your group to be managed. Your group does not have to start from scratch when deciding on a constitution, parts of other groups constitutions can be used. (Copies of other groups constitutions have been included in this pack) Your group may have a copy of a constitution they wish to adopt, however the group need to formally adopt it at the AGM, to adopt the constitution the group have to agree upon it and the committee have to sign it.

Stage 3 - The third stage consists of electing a committee, depending on the constitution you have adopted will depend on the criteria included for your committee. A committee should consist of a chairperson, treasurer, secretary and at least 5 other members. The 5 other members do not have to take up a specific role, however other groups have chosen to elect vice positions, such as vice chairperson, vice treasurer and vice secretary. Anyone can elect another member to a position, however it must be decided by vote who is take a position. It is possible for individuals to act as chairperson and secretary whilst organising the first AGM, but they must give up their position when the committee are to be elected.

*** To be carried out after the first AGM ***

Stage 4 - The fourth stage is to set up a bank account, any account set up for the group should be set up in the name of the group with at least 2 signatories for the account. The signatories must be members of the committee, usually the chairperson and the treasurer. Other groups have chosen to have 3 signatories on the account, therefore if one member of the committee is unavailable, another can sign in their place. An account with a cheque book is essential for easy access to the groups funds.

After these stages are complete you will be a fully a constituted group with a committee and a bank account, the next stage is to start working towards yours groups aims and objectives.

If you would like any further information on any of the above, please contact The parks Development Team, or your local Councillors who will either be able to help, or will be able to put you in contact with someone who can help.

Setting up your first AGM

'Friends of' Start up pack

Setting up your first AGM can seem quite complicated if you have never done anything similar before. Below are some guidelines that should remind you of the small things that it is so easy to forget.

Where should we hold the meeting? - The meeting should be organised in a facility that is local to your park or open space, and as open and accessible to as many community members as possible. Remember that there will be a range of people attending your meeting including older age people, parents of young children and possibly wheel chair users. Facilities such as schools, churches and community rooms are commonly used as meeting places as they usually offer toilets, tea making equipment, parking and easy access to the building. If your local park or open space has a building speak to The Parks Development Team about using this facility.

When should we hold the meeting? - Give yourself at least 3 weeks to organise your first AGM, this will give interested parties the chance to make arrangements so that they can attend your meeting. Your meeting should be organised at a time when most people in the community are able to attend, late afternoon/evening meetings are good because they allow community members who work to attend the meetings. Following meetings can be held at whatever times suit the majority of your group best.

Who should we invite? - As a community group you need to involve as many people as possible, therefore your meeting should be advertised as much as possible. Word of mouth is the best form of advertising, however posters and leaflets are also beneficial if they are put in the right place. Schools, shops, clubs and the park itself are great places to put advertising for your meeting. Some groups also choose to invite their local councillors, if you do not have a contact for them The parks Development Team, will be able to provide the link. A representative of the Parks Development Team may also be able to attend, subject to notice and availability.

What do we need to do? - All meetings held by your group should have an agenda (what is to be included in the meeting) and all meetings should be minuted. Minutes do not have to be a complete copy of everything that is said in the meeting, they should reflect the major themes that are discussed in the meetings with any action points marked against a name. Minutes should also record the names of the people who have attended and any apologies sent for the meeting.

Sample agendas and minutes are included within this pack.

Applying for funding

When applying for funding it is really important that the funder you apply to is willing to give funds for projects similar to yours. For example, it would not be advisable to apply for an environment grant if you wanted to set up a sports project. By reading through

**'Friends of'
Start up pack**

the information provided with the application you will be able to work out what the funder is willing to give money for.

To help fill in your application please bear the following points in mind:

1. Photocopy the application first, you can fill the photocopy in without worrying about any mistakes.
2. Don't be too extravagant with your first bid, it is better to apply for smaller amounts of money when you first begin. Funders like to see experience of dealing with money and projects before they offer you a large sum of money.
3. Make a list of the funders aims and objectives and make statements about how your project will reach these aims and objectives.
4. Funders like projects which meet the needs of local people, if you have completed a piece of consultation that shows that your project will meet these needs try to refer to it in the application.
5. Funders also like to fund projects which include more than one group or organisation, refer to the fact that you work in partnership with Preston Parks Services and any other groups or organisations such as the local police, local school, parish council, or registered social landlords (housing associations).
6. Before filling out the application make sure that you have a full project proposal that covers how the project will be managed. Funders like to give money to groups who are well organised and would be ready to start the project as soon as the money is available.
7. Try not to ramble, include everything that you feel you need to write but write it in the shortest way possible.
8. Make sure you include any match funding you have received. Equipment, facilities or staff time given in kind can be classed as match funding, speak to The parks Development Team, or your local Councillors to get a cost for these items.
9. Make a check list of any extra information other than the application form which needs to be returned to the funder, such as a constitution or financial records. Tick each item as you put it in the envelope.
10. If you are not successful with your first bid, don't give up, try and try again! Some funders will give you an explanation of why you were not successful if you request it in writing.

**'Friends of'
Start up pack**

11. Try to get a copy of a successful application for that funder, this will show you what kind of things the funders are looking for. Many friends groups apply to the same funders so another "friends of" group may be able to offer you some help.
12. Finally, remember that the Parks Development Team, may be able to offer help and support to your group.

Sample agenda

An agenda does not have to be complicated. It should simply reflect what the group wish to cover in the meeting. The agenda below is an example of how an agenda could be set out and what it could contain.

**Agenda
Friends f Park
20th October 2020, 6.30pm held at the
Church Hall**

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies.
2. Minutes of last meeting
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. Aims/projects/Ongoing business
5. Update / Progress since last meeting
6. Consultation / promotion
7. Funding applied for / finances
8. Events / Activities / dates for the diary
9. A.O.B. (any other business)
10. Date and time of next meeting

An agenda for an AGM would be slightly different because it would have to include a financial report for the year and election of the committee, it could also include guest speakers and a progress report from the committee.

Sample minutes

**Minutes of Meeting
Friends of Haslam Group Meeting
20th October 2020, 2pm
Held at the Church Hall**

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies.

Bob Fisher	Friends of Haslam
Emma Week	Friends of Haslam
Sam Till	Friends of Haslam
Charlotte Gibson	Friends of Haslam
Andy Buckley	Friends of Haslam
Cath Jones	Preston City Council
Pat Wilson	Police
John Harper	Police

Apologies received Mark Button, Ian Murray and Alice Lawrence

2. Progress since last meeting

Charlotte reported that youth workers will now be approaching youths in the area and speaking to them about the "Dream Scheme".

Action - Charlotte to give feedback at next two meetings.

A team of youths has been registered with the MAD scheme. They are working together at the moment to identify a project that they are interested in. **Action** - Cath to work with the team to give support and ideas.

3. Consultation

The last draft of the questionnaire has been completed, consultation has been planned to take place at the forthcoming fun day.

'Friends of' Start up pack

Action - Sam Till to collect names of volunteers for consultation at the forthcoming fun day.

It was also suggested by Charlotte that the Youth Workers may be able to help carry out questionnaires.

Action - Charlotte to liaise with youth workers

4. Funding applied for

Bob has received the applications for Awards for All. The group discussed that funding for the Easter celebrations or Easter half term sports coaching could be applied for. It was decided that the Awards for All money should be used for the Easter half term sports coaching.

Action - Bob to fill in the Awards for All application, Cath to give support where needed.

5. A.O.B. (any other business)

Sam enquired about the park closing times over the next few weeks. Cath explained that the park closes at dusk every night.

Action - Cath to put poster on main gates with the approximate closing time for the park.

6. Date and time of next meeting

Next meeting will be 22nd November 2008, 5.30pm at Haslam Park Bowling Pavilion.

7. Close

Sample constitution

Below is an example of a constitution, feel free to use any ideas you may gain from it. Again the constitution can be as simple or as complicated as you like. If you would like more sample constitutions contact your ranger who will be more than happy to help.

Aims

The Friends of Haslam Park aim to:

<p style="text-align: center;">'Friends of' Start up pack</p>
--

1. Create a secure environment in which everyone can enjoy the benefits of the park facilities. This is to be achieved through liaison with the residents, police, council and any other relevant bodies.
2. Enable and encourage informal and formal activities for those of all ages who live and work in the neighbourhood.
3. Work in partnership with Preston City Council Parks Department and (whilst recognising that the ultimate responsibility for funding lies with the Council) identifying other funding sources to secure an adequate level of resources to meet local needs; ensure that all developments, activities and uses of the park are carried out in such a way as to encourage and promote environmental sensitivity.
4. Encourage and promote good environmental practice.
5. Establish an acceptable balance between the needs of dog owners and the needs of other park users.

Membership

Membership shall be open to all that are interested in actively furthering the aims of the Association.

Corporate members shall be such societies, associations, educational institutions or businesses as are interested in actively furthering the needs of the Association. A corporate member shall appoint one representative to vote on its behalf at all meetings but before such representative exercises his/her right the corporate member shall give written details of the representative to the Secretary.

Meetings

The inaugural General Meeting will be held in September 2002 followed by an Annual General Meeting in or about September of subsequent years.

There will be a minimum of four ordinary meetings of the Association each year, the timing of which will be decided by the Executive Committee.

Special General meetings of the Association shall be held at the written request of 25 per cent or more members or by the Officers of the Association.

The Executive Committee shall give at least 21 days notice to members of the Annual General Meeting each year and at least 7 days notice of other meetings.

In the event of equality in the votes cast at an Annual General Meeting or Special General meeting the motion will fall.

**'Friends of'
Start up pack**

The AGM will from time to time consider and approve standing orders for the conduction of meetings and financial regulations. There is a policy on conduct at all meetings.

Officers

Nomination for the election of officer shall be made in writing to the Secretary at least 7 days before the Annual General Meeting. To be valid a nomination must be of a member of the Association who is resident of the local neighbourhood, their nomination must be proposed and seconded by other paid up members and the consent of the nominee must be obtained. Nomination forms will be available on request from the Secretary.

If there is no nomination for a particular post received 7 days before the Annual General Meeting nominations shall be accepted from the floor of that meeting.

Nominees for election as officers of Executive Committee members shall declare at the meeting of which their election is to be considered any financial or professional interest known or likely to be of concern to the Association.

The Officers of the Association shall consist of:

Chair
Secretary
Treasurer

All of who shall relinquish their office every year and shall be eligible for reelection at the Annual General Meeting, but no individual may serve more than 3 consecutive years in one post, unless no other member is eligible or nominated. The Executive Committee shall have the power to fill casual vacancies occurring among the Officers from the membership of the Association.

The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the management and administration of the Association.

The Executive Committee shall consist of the Officer and not less than 5 and not more than 8 individual members, plus up to 3 Corporate members.

**'Friends of'
Start up pack**

The Executive Committee shall have the power to co-opt further members who shall attend in an advisory and no-voting capacity.

In the event of equality in the votes cast at a meeting of the Executive Committee the motion will fall.

Nomination for election to the Executive Committee shall be made in writing to the Secretary at least 7 days before the Annual General Meeting. To be valid nominations must be of fully paid up members who are local residents (with the exception of Corporate members), proposed and seconded by two other paid up members and the consent of the nominee must be obtained. Nomination papers will be available from the Secretary on request.

If fewer nominations are received by the deadline than there are vacancies, nominations may be taken from the floor of the meeting up to the number of vacancies available.

Members of the Executive Committee shall be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting of the Association; outgoing members may be re-elected up to a maximum of 6 consecutive years, unless no other member is eligible or nominated.

The Executive Committee shall meet not less than 4 times a year. The Secretary shall give all members not less than 7 days notice of all the meetings.

The quorum shall be 5 Members of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee shall have the power to fill casual vacancies occurring between General Meetings from amongst the paid up members of the Association.

Elections

If more than one valid nomination for an officer post is received within the time specified, or if the number of valid nominations for members of the Executive Committee received within the specified time exceeds the numbers of places available, election shall be by secret ballot at the Annual General Meeting.

Only those members of the Association present in person at the meeting may vote.

The votes will be counted during the meeting, scrutineers appointed by the meeting and the results announced before the end of the meeting.

Sub Committee

<p style="text-align: center;">'Friends of' Start up pack</p>
--

The Executive Committee may constitute such subcommittees from time to time as shall be considered necessary for such purposes as shall be thought fit in pursuit of the aims of the Association.

The members of each sub- committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee from amongst the members of the Association. Subcommittees may, with the approval of the Executive Committee, co-opt members who are not members of the Association but they shall advise in an advisory and nonvoting capacity only.

In the event of an equality of votes cast at any meeting of any subcommittee the motion will fall.

Members of the Executive Committee may be members of any subcommittee.

Subcommittees shall be subordinate to and may be regulated or dissolved By the Executive Committee.

Declaration of Interest

It shall be the duty of every member who is in any way, directly or indirectly, interested financially in any item discussed at any meeting of the Association (including any meeting of any committee or subcommittee) at which s/he is present to declare such interest and s/he shall not discuss such item (except by invitation of the Chair) or vote there on.

Expenses

The Executive Committee shall, out of the funds of the Association, pay all proper expenses of administration and management of the Association.

After the payment of the administration and management expenses and the setting aside to reserve of such sums as may be deemed expedient, the remaining funds of the Association shall be applied by the Executive Committee in furtherance of the purposes of the Association.

Investment

All monies at any time belonging to the Association and required for immediate application for its purposes shall be invested by the Executive Committee in or upon such investment, securities or property as it may think fit, subject nevertheless to such authority, approval or consent by the Charity Commissioners as may for the time being be required by law or by the special trusts affecting any property in the hands of the Executive Committee.

Amendments

This constitution may be amended by a 2/3rds majority of the members voting at an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting of the Association confirmed by a simple majority of the members voting at a further Special General Meeting held not less than 28 days after the previous meeting, providing that at both meetings the majority of those present and voting are residents of the local neighbourhood.

If a motion for dissolution of the Association is to be proposed at an Annual General Meeting or a Special General meeting this motion shall be referred to specifically when notice of the meeting is given.

In the event of dissolution of the Association the available funds of the Association shall be transferred to another body with similar objectives.

On dissolution the minutes and other records of the Association shall be deposited with the Local Studies Section of the Central Reference Library.

Adopted by:

Name:

Committee Role:

Signature:

Date: