

## CHAIRS REPORT - 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024 – AGM

### MPUT CHANGES

We have welcomed new trustees; Terry and Kath this year and benefited greatly from their hard work for MPUT. As a group of trustees we have been revisiting our policies for the new charity. We have closed down our bank account and submitted final accounts for MPUT thanks to Terry our new treasurer. In September we closed down MPUT at companies' house. The new account and policies are under MPUT CIO. Sadly we have said goodbye to Cei and more recently Sarah who have been trustees. We appreciate all the work you have put in especially over this period of change.

Andy has tirelessly worked as our publicity trustee producing posters and spreading information widely. He has also been active in working with the council around the working towards MPUT having a lease for the garden which excludes the wall. This is moving ahead slowly.

We had our first large open meeting at St Pauls church and had 30 members of the public attending in September 2023. There were talks and round table ideas to work with moving forwards. We have updated the website regularly thanks to Mich and used Facebook and emails to members to keep them informed. We continue to have public online monthly meetings and also meet as trustees.

### WALLED GARDEN;

Sadly Kaktus and Naomi announced their retirement from MPUT in January this year after over 25 years of volunteering. Since retirement their roles as organisers of the garden has been taken over by the trustees and some of the key walled gardeners. Trustees have had many useful well attended meetings with the gardeners and improved on our communication, agreed new policies and future work. Kath has been instrumental in helping with communication as a garden liaison trustee and gardener she is able to feed things back and liaise with the council. Terry has been working with another gardener Joyce on health and safety.

We continue to have a fantastic group of around 25 hard-working gardeners who come to the garden 3-4 days a week. The garden looks wonderful, and volunteer numbers continue to grow. We have a number of key holders such as Liz W, Joyce E, Margaret, Maggie, Richard who take on responsibility of opening up and other duties. Julia and others have continued to do a brilliant job to continue the Sunday opening to the public. Meersbrook Bank Nursery have come in throughout the year on a Friday morning thanks to Kath opening up for them.

Ron continues to open the gardener's museum, Richard continues to work miracles with his cacti, Pete and Terry have been helping with DIY and Gill the queen of potting up and growing. At events the cake and tea ladies led by Joyce, Jenny, Pat, Doreen, and team have produced a fabulous kitchen. Pauline and Kath led the garden café during Small Park Big Run which was another great success. We had another great easter event, Maddy ran a tomato day in September, and we have just had a very successful apple day where 25 volunteers helped out. We had three juice pressers, chocolate apples for the children and a cake stall raising £600 for the garden. Our partnership with the farm through Aly and the team is going really well.

## PARK VOLUNTEER TEAM

In the wider park this year we have set up a small group of monthly volunteers under the instruction of the park managers, thanks to Neil our secretary and Jim who attend regularly. This has been great to establish deeper links with the department and support them during times of cuts.

## SPORT IN THE PARK

We have continued to provide outdoor playgroup on a Friday morning and also Wednesday tennis. We have a small but growing number of parent volunteers for these activities.

## RAVINE WORK

We have had success in our aim to improve nature and water management in the park, in March 24 we held a volunteer day where 20 people helped construct a dead hedge to improve the ravine. In July we worked with ecology and rangers from SCC to hold our first Bioblitz where we invited the public to a series of events to monitor nature over 24 hrs. We monitored bats, birds, moths, butterflies, insects and botany. We studied the reduced mown areas for species. This also has helped as a base line for our future work and funding. Survey data was captured by 4 ecologists and local experts and has been archived by SCC for reference. We have also worked with biology and landscape design students from Sheffield University and Manchester Metropolitan university in this project.

We raised £3k from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in September it partly went towards a digger for a few days to open up the ravine and create areas where water can be held, avoiding flooding lower down, and promoting biodiversity.

In November we hope to continue with phase 3 of the project and working with the River Stewardship Company to pay them the final part of the grant; removing the laurel and holly that is making the area very dark.

## STAKE HOLDERS

We continue to work with local stakeholders such as Meersbrook Hall, the bowling club, Friends of Bishops house, Afterschool club, Meersbrook pavilion play group, Heeley development Trust and Sheffield City Council. Thanks to the park managers to the ecologists especially Gus who has gone above and beyond to improve nature in the park and finally the 3 local councillors especially Marieanne who has been attending meetings and helped secure the funding.

## FUTURE PLANS

Our plans for the year to come involve progressing the lease and raising money for new toilets and kitchen in the walled garden, continuing building the new park volunteer team and improving nature in the park amongst other projects. We also hope to attract more volunteers especially for helping with fundraising for the garden as well as getting more volunteers for the wider park.