

Henbury Millennium Green AGM Report 2023

Chairman's Overview

This year we are trying a new format for our AGM, with the aim of getting wider engagement from the Green's users. Instead of holding our traditional evening meeting in the Church Hall (alongside the, no longer operating, Henbury Society), we will be running a 'Meet the Trustees' event on the Millennium Green on the morning of Saturday 17th June at 10 am, supplemented by this 'AGM Report' that can be accessed via the Henbury online website at least a week prior to the event.

For HMGT, the purpose of the AGM is to feedback to the community information on how the Green has been managed over the previous year (finance, legal, changes to the Green, potential future enhancements). We also like to use it as an opportunity to share how the Trust functions, to gather feedback on future plans and explain how the community can support the Trustees in maintaining the Green for all to enjoy.

We hope you find this report useful, and look forward to meeting you at on the morning of the 17th.

Susan Pegg (Chairman)

Finance

You may perhaps think that Henbury Millennium Green is owned by "The Council".

But it isn't. It is owned maintained and operated by Registered Charity No 1072953, called Henbury Millennium Green Trust. The Green was established in 1999 with funding from the Millennium Commission, Macclesfield Borough Council and covenants from local residents and **the Trust is legally obliged to maintain it in perpetuity as green area in the village for local inhabitants to enjoy informal outdoor recreation and community events.**

Funding the maintenance and improvement of the Green is in the hands of seven unpaid volunteer Trustees (<https://www.henbury.org/p/henbury-organisations/millennium-green/trustees.html>) and its sources of income in Y/E 31 March 2023 were a £1500 Grant from Henbury Parish Council, gifts from local donors, approx. £1000, and the profit from the Annual Bonfire & Firework Display, approx. £3000, the latter being vulnerable to bad weather and Regulation changes.

Annual maintenance costs, which include Public Liability Insurance, RoSPA inspection and replacement of wood chippings in the play area, fortnightly summer grass mowing, a single cutting/clearing of the wildflower meadow and hedge cutting are now running at approx. £3100.

Following standard advice from the Charity Commission the Trust also holds some funds available at short notice to cover emergencies such as unauthorized occupation of the Green or the income sources mentioned above failing for any reason. It also holds Endowment Funds accumulated over the years in long term investment to provide income for the future.

In conclusion the Trust is in a stable financial situation but foresees the need for sources of additional funds as reported in the Play Area section of this report.

Ownership of the Green

When the Millennium Greens across the country were set up, it was a requirement for them to be owned by the Government body, the Official Custodian. Due to a legal clause on the Henbury Millennium Green land, it was not possible to do this when the Green was set up in 1999. However, this legal clause has now lapsed and after what has been a very long process, the ownership of the

Henbury Millennium Green has been transferred to the Official Custodian for Charities on behalf of the Trust, and the land registry documents updated accordingly.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-official-custodian-for-charities-land-holding-service-cc13/the-official-custodian-for-charities-land-holding-service>

Improvements on the Green

Since the last AGM, in addition to all the routine maintenance, there have been several improvements made to the Green:

- Orchard – approx. 15 new fruit trees have been planted on the Green by local families. These include, apple, pear and plum. Most are sited in an area next to the Church Lane boundary, with a few being sited close to the sun dial. Most seem to have survived their first year with blossom forming this spring. Hopefully there will be much fruit in future years.
- The sundial area has been renovated with the area having a good tidy and a plaque added to the Gnomon to celebrate the 100th birthday of Sir Francis Graham Smith, a former chairman of HMGT who used his astronomical skills to site the sundial in the right direction and provide the information plaque detailing how to read the sundial at different times of the year. As a former Astronomer Royal, it was felt that he was suitably qualified to do this.
- The Church Lane hedge has been thickened in places with additional blackthorn planting.
- In conjunction with our neighbours in the Henbury Vicarage, the boundary with the Vicarage is being improved. Our neighbours have cleared the top part of the existing boundary and planted mature holly along its length. The trustees and local volunteers have planted a hedgerow of native whips on the Green side of the boundary. The majority of these were supplied by the Woodland Trust and include blackthorn, elder, crab apple and rowan, and one of the trustees supplied some dog rose. Whilst it will take a few years to reach maturity, long term this will create a sturdier, more easily maintained boundary (with less rhododendron). Thank you to our neighbours for working with us on this and to the volunteers who helped to plant the new hedge.

Play Area

The Play Area was opened in 2014, following suggestions made during the survey of Henbury households for the 201 Parish Plan.

A bench was installed in 2022 so that parents can keep an eye on their children whilst they are using the equipment, and a plaque honours the contribution of Roy Thornton to the original project.

To ensure the safety of users, regular Inspections are undertaken on behalf of the Trustees, including a comprehensive risk assessment, once a year, by RoSPA.

It has been necessary to top up the bark chippings every year, and these are becoming increasingly expensive. The Trustees are considering replacing the surface under vulnerable 'fall areas' with a more permanent rubber matting and are therefore setting funds aside for this. The matting should be more durable, but is considerably more expensive and so are investigating the possibility of additional sources of financing.

Occasional maintenance of the play equipment is necessary and the Trustees will be replacing some parts of the Basket Swing this summer.

Trustees

As stated above in the finance section, the Millennium Green is run as a charity managed by a group of Trustees. The trustees manage all aspects of the Green and are both hands on with maintenance of the Green and proactive in outsourcing specialized work. We are currently looking for new trustees to join the group. Maybe you have specific skills (finance, legal, land management) or you just want to be involved with an environmental charity or wish to give back to you community, if this sounds like you and you wish to find out more, contain Susan Pegg on susan.hmgt@outlook.com or visit us on our Meet a Trustee morning on 17th June.



Henbury Millennium Green – Spring 2023