MEERSBROOK PARK USERS TRUST

### Business Plan

###  June 2017

###  meersbrookpark.co.uk

# Meersbrook Park is situated in the centre of Meersbrook, an inner suburb of Sheffield about 2 miles outside the city centre. Meersbrook Park Users Trust (MPUT) was established in 1998 in response to specific concerns about the park expressed by local people. The group consists of local residents and park users and its aims are;

* To regenerate and develop new facilities within the park.
* To involve and consult with the local community in planning activities and improvements in Meersbrook Park.
* To raise awareness of Meersbrook Park as a community facility.
* To promote community activities in Meersbrook Park.
* To promote the protection, conservation and improvement of the environment of Meersbrook Park.

MPUT has achieved many successes linked to these aims, working closely with local residents, councillors, Parks & Countryside Department, Heeley City Farm, Heeley development Trust, police and school representatives**.**

**Our specific achievements are**:

* Renovation of the park’s Walled Garden, creating a community space which regularly hosts community events attracting up to 800 people
* A Youth Shelter to provide a base for teenagers in the community to gather.
* Extensive replacement of playground equipment and surfaces to provide a safer environment for the children and to meet the needs of a wider age-range.
* The creation of a skate bowl to provide activities for older children/teenagers.
* The renovation of the old tennis courts area into a well used Multi Sports Games Area Aug 2011
* Set up a preschool outdoor play group in the walled garden June 2012
* The creation of a new Trim Trail for children and young adults to use – Nov 2012
* Renovation of the old class room (phase 1) in the Walled garden in partnership with Heeley City Farm as roof was broken – June 13

**Going forward, our plans include:**

* Continue our work as a group of volunteer gardeners to upkeep the walled garden.
* Ongoing work in the Walled Garden –encouraging a wider participation in the garden’s renovation.
* Phase 2 of the work on the buildings in the Walled Garden, which includes removal and replacement of asbestos roof above kitchen and toilets and the renovation of the facilities
* Continue delivering Art Projects in the Walled Garden.
* Carfield School (700 children) visits to the WG for their regular use for Y4 children as well as working with Friends of Meersbrook Hall and the school looking at heritage projects in the walled garden/hall and park.
* Continue weekly sports sessions with primary and preschool aged children in the MUGA
* Continue the weekly outdoor baby and toddler group in the walled garden.

###  Meersbrook Park - Background

The suburb of Meersbrook is situated on one of Sheffield’s seven hills about 2 miles south of the city centre. Meersbrook Park is located on the banks of a steep hillside with magnificent views across the City.

Meersbrook Park is perhaps most famous locally for two important buildings. These are Meersbrook House and the Bishop's House, the latter being one of the oldest buildings in Sheffield which is now a Museum. Bishop's House dates from around 1500 and is one of the best preserved example of a timber framed house in the country. Sheffield City Council purchased both of these important buildings in 1885 together with the land around them and this area is now what constitutes Meersbrook Park.

The park is located centrally to the community and used frequently as a meeting point by all age groups (parents and toddlers, school age children, dog walkers, runners, sports clubs, walkers, older people using the bowling green, people visiting the Walled Garden etc). The suburb of Meersbrook suffers from a lack of provisions for young people who are segregated from the rest of the community. This results in nuisance crime, anti-social behaviour and high teenage pregnancy rates (3 times the national average). \*The area was included in the Section 30 (Curfew) Order, which exacerbated the problem and led to ASBOs being issued at a rate that caught the attention of the national press. Following Section 30, the police and council consulted young people, which revealed that they wanted more activity provision. There is a need to provide young people with safe environments in which they can develop their social and physical skills, and to reach out to a diverse range of young people from hard-to-reach groups.

#### Our Organisation

Meersbrook Park Users Trust (MPUT) was established in 1998 in response to the above concerns about the park expressed by local people. The group consists of local Meersbrook residents and park users. Local councillors, youth workers, police, school representatives and Sheffield City Council (SCC) Parks & Countryside Department regularly attend meetings. MPUT’s meetings are open to the public and held bi-monthly.

We are approximately 25 volunteers who are involved in different ways.

The names of the current committee members are as follows:

Chairperson: Liz Martinez

Treasurer: Kaktus Leach

Secretary: Neil Parry

Vice Chairperson: Julia Haseldine

Volunteer gardener coordinator: Naomi Brent

IT lead : Pat Weston

IT lead: Pauline Heather

The aims of the group are:

* To regenerate and develop new facilities within the park.
* To involve and consult with the local community in planning activities and improvements in Meersbrook Park. We work with Friends of Meersbrook Hall, Bishops House, Heeley Development Ttrust, Heeley City Farm, SCC PWC, After school Club on a weekly basis as well as other stakeholders in the park.
* To raise awareness of Meersbrook Park as a community facility.
* To promote community activities in Meersbrook Park.
* To promote the protection, conservation and improvement of the environment of Meersbrook Park.

# Our Work

The activities of MPUT are closely aligned to our key aims. Working with SCC, various local community groups and Sheffield Parks and Countryside Services, we have a solid track record of success in these areas. Specific activities and achievements are detailed below:

**To regenerate and develop new facilities within the park**

* Regeneration of derelict walled garden in partnership with Heeley City Farm workers into an active community garden using funds secured from seed fund money and the learning and skills council. This facility is used on a regular basis by Heeley City Farm groups. There is well attended weekly volunteer gardening days organised by MPUT and during this time members of the public can enter and use the garden. We organise and host 10 ,themed events in the walled gardens that are open to the public. These special events including an art day, apple day, easter hunt day, mothers day event, the annual garden party, a herb day and a ceramics festival.. During the regeneration period we have constructed a South American green house, made a herb garden, Japanese garden and the rose garden.
* Setting up of bi-weekly volunteer days that maintain the garden. A weekly outdoor playgroups for preschool aged children. Previously a weekly school (Meersbrook bank (200 children) session where a class of children come and grow vegetables which has recently stopped. Regular larger visits from the second local school Carfield (700 children). Heeley city farm organise a weekly mental health group to use the garden for the day.
* The replacement of the playground equipment and installation of new safety surface using funds secured from Living Spaces, Section 106, Graves Charitable Trust, Sheffield Town Trust and Sheffield City Trust and local donations.
* The installation of a youth shelter using funds secured from Awards for All and Police ABC.
* The installation of a skate bowl using funds secured from Barclays Spaces for Sport, BTCV Awards for All, Section 106.
* Renovation of the derelict Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) initially built in 1959. This project was completed in September 2011. We secured money from Community Spaces, Sheffield Town Trust, Graves Charitable Trust, Section 106 and local fund-raising events including our annual Santa Dash.

**To involve and consult with the local community in planning activities and improvements in Meersbrook Park**

* When embarking on each new project, we have consistently consulted the public, local schools, residents, statutory bodies and other community groups through consultation days, open meetings, door-to-door questionnaires, school visits and detached youth work.
* After the completion of each project we have undertaken monitoring of its success through seeking feedback from park users. The playground has seen a significant increase in its use and also now serves a wider age group. As part of a development fund for the skate bowl we have contracted out the development fund money to Heeley Development Trust who having been putting on ‘the last Saturday’ bike club monthly for the last 4 years.
* At all MPUT events we distribute membership forms and leaflets with information about the group in order to gain new members.

**To raise awareness of Meersbrook Park as a community facility and promoting community activities**

* Quarterly newsletter listing all events to be held in the park
* MPUT has paid for and erected notice boards at entrances to the park to highlight activities. MPUT uses notice sites in local playgroups, schools, shops and community centres.
* MPUT organises regular events at the walled gardens and throughout the park. These events are a community focus drawing large numbers of people from the local area and beyond (800 people at our latest garden party).
* MPUT liases with local schools to involve them in bulb and tree planting events.
* Art in the park events have been held, specifically to encourage children to have a go, be creative and discover and use natural materials. Lantern making, and processions are occasional adhoc events.
* MPUT and local volunteers have put on Sports Days and publicised them widely in the City Press as well as locally to encourage public participation. Delivering 6 or 7 different sporting activities on the day amongst other activities

**To promote the protection, conservation and improvement of the environment of Meersbrook Park**

* The Walled Gardens - please see above.
* Working with the council to provide dog litter bins, anti dog gates and signs at key areas of the park. The park is well used by dog walkers.
* Working with SCC Parks & Countryside Service in woodland management and planting of a wild flower area and bulbs.
* Liaison with the SCC Parks & Countryside Service regarding upkeep of the park, reporting any maintenance and safety issues.

Once we had decided that this project should be our immediate focus, we did a **SWOT analysis** to help identify our strengths and weaknesses. The results of this are shown in the following table:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
| * **A number of dedicated volunteers, with varying experience from which the group can benefit.**
* **Good links with Sheffield City Council, from local councillors and both local primary schools who regularly use the garden.**
* **Strong links and partnerships with and support from various organisations eg Heeley city farm, Heeley development trust, Bishops House again with varying experience from which the group can benefit.**
* **A successful record of securing funding for developing projects.**
* **A successful record of staging events.**
* **The park is centrally located in the heart of Meersbrook community.**
* **Website and facebook page done by volunteers**
 | * Difficulty with publicity/promotion due to time pressures and resources restriction
* Difficulty recruiting greater numbers of volunteers and time for existing ones to volunteer.
* No paid workers.
* Lack of regular time from Sheffield Council for supporting MPUT especially true now and over next 3 years with cuts. They have no project worker time to allocate to any new ventures from MPUT.
* Insufficient access to statutory funding sources.
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| **Opportunities**  | **Threats** |
| * **The park provides the only green space for the local primary schools.**
* **There are a large number of local community and sporting groups who use the park**
* **Further development of the walled gardens**
 | * Losing core volunteers.
* Spiralling costs due to extremely poor state of repair of the facilities in question.
* Failure to secure funding.
* Vandalism and arson – putting off park users and volunteers.
* PWC wanting to adhere to strict health and safety and event procedures in the walled garden

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In order to address some of our weaknesses, we have taken the following actions:

* In 2016, we used funds to buy IT expertise to set up a new website. This will be maintained by two of the walled garden volunteers.
* Gained more experience in dealing with publicity and promotion as each project is completed.
* Continued to hold regular publicised meetings to keep members informed. We try to hold open meetings in response to current issues to attempt to recruit new volunteers.
* Maintained pressure on SCC with regard to time and financial support.
* Working as transparently as possible with HCF management.

**Our Finances**

1. **Bank account**

Co-operative Bank - PO Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester, M604EP

**account name** - Meersbrook Park Users Trust.

**account number** - 65087738 00

**sort code** – 089299

### 2. Funding Previously Allocated

**2.i Walled Gardens**

Full time gardener –until 2007, glass houses, gardening equipment, shrubs, plants and trees. Project ongoing. Heeley City Farm has funded the walled garden for joint projects with MPUT.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Fund | Amount |
| 2002 | Seed fund | £30 000 |

**2.ii Youth Shelter**

Installed in July 2004 by local company Lightmain Leisure: Youth Shelter, 2 litter bins and landscaping.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 11.03 | Police ABC Fund | £2,000 |
| 01.04 | Sheffield City Council S106 | £2,000 |
| 04.04 | Awards for All  | £5,000 |
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| 05.04 | SSP Community Chest Grant | £2,000 |

# 2.iii Playground

Opened on 8th April 2005. Equipment installed by Kompan.

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| 03.03 | SSP Community Chest Grant | £1,000 |
| 10.03 | Local Business | £1,500 |
| 01.04 | Sheffield City council | £24,000 |
| 02.04 | Sheffield City trust | £5,000 |
| 02.04 | Sheffield Town trust | £5,000 |
| 04.04 | Living Spaces | £25,000 |

# 2.iv Skatebowl

Opened on 19th August 2007. Constructed and landscaped by Bencrete.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 04.04 | BTCV | £8,521 |
| 08.05 | Awards for All | £5,000 |
| 04.06 | Section 106 | £15,000 |
| 10.06 | Barclays Spaces for Sport | £55,000 |

## 2.v Skatebowl Development Fund

MPUT is working with The House Indoor Skate Park, SCC and local youth workers to put on skate and bike tutoring events for local children over the next 3 years.

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| 12.07 | Barclays Spaces for Sport  | £20,000 |
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#### 2.vi Multi Use Games Area renovation– completed September 2011

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|  | Sheffield Town Trust | £5,000 |
|  | Graves Charitable Trust | £1,500.00 |
|  | Community Spaces | £50,000 |
|  | Section 106 | £18,000 |

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| Money for retaining wall | Sheffield City Council | £31,000 |
| Fund raising events | MPUT | £1,200 |
| ( 3x santa dash) |  |  |
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£2000 in development money was also awarded by CS and spent on 2 years worth of coaching activities and a storage facility and sports equipment for the MUGA

**2.vii - Trim Trail**

£13,000 – Section 106 money

3x colour notice boards/maps in park showing where all facilities are.

**2.viii - Walled Garden renovation – completed July 2013**

stage 1. The Old Classroom – Money applied for in partnership with Heeley city farm – project finished July 2013

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| Stage 1 | Total | £13,000- secured |
|  | Area Assembly money | £2,500 |
|  |  | £10,500 |
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CURRENT PROJECT

Stage 2. The toilets and new kitchen – present project – ongoing – planning stage

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| Area Assembly  |  | £1,300 |
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#### 2.ix – Art in the Walled Garden – delivered June-Aug 2013

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| January 2013 | Graves Charitable Trust | £1000 |
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2.x

Community spaces – celebrate your space - money to deliver community sports day £1100 – Sept 15 2013

Day of sport on new MUGA and hiring of activity Sheffield resources and staff.

2.xi –

Community spaces – celebrate your space – money to deliver community fun run £1270 – December 8th 2013

3. Current projects

3.i- Improving the facilities in the Walled Garden.

We are continuing to, in partnership with Heeley City Farm, raise funds to improve the toilet facilities and the kitchen in the Walled Gardens. With increasing numbers of people attending our garden events the facilities need to be able to support this use and be fit for purpose.

Stage 2. The toilets and new kitchen – present project – ongoing – planning stage

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| Area Assembly  | August 14 | £1,300 |
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3.ii – Primary Schools at the walled garden

Meersbrook Bank school have been visiting the WG for 5 years working with Nick Horne – grower from Heeley City Farm on a Monday afternoon.

Carfield School have come to the walled garden for adhoc visits over the past 2 years, supported by MPUT volunteers. More recently the head teacher Lorna Culloden has visited with MPUT and HCF staff to discuss a more regular slot at the WG to start Feb 2015 – Funding for this is to be discussed. This has run for 3 half terms successfully. 3 afternoons a week. For the children in y3 and y4

**3.iii– Repair and extend the Notts Turf area.**

Following on from the successful renovation of the old tennis courts into the Multi Use Games Area, this part of the park is seeing a big increase in its use and the pressure on the MUGA is meaning that more people are wanting to use the Notts turf area to play football on. When we have consulted with local children about this area they feel that the surface needs improving to be able to play football on it properly.

The area was a worn and damaged Notts turf artificial surface that covered the length and middle part of a football area that has two metal goals at either end. The artificial turf will be extended by 2m either side. This unlined football pitch is in the dog free zone of Meersbrook Park.

Work done:

Spray & grub off encroached grass and weeds

Re-sand existing 52m x 8m pitch

Supply and install new strips of Notts Turf in order to widen the pitch by an additional 2m either side to have a pitch of 52m x 12m

Total quoted: £13 500

Monies raised:

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| --- | --- |
| MPUT fund raising – 5 a side football tournament 14.6.14 and fun run 6.12.14Sponsor money, sheffiled half marathon sponsorship event and Easter Sunday 2015 walled garden event.  | £ 1890 |
| Community Spaces | £5,000.00 |
| Sheffield Town Trust (application being considered) | £3,000.00 |
| JG Graves Charitable Trust (application being considered | £1000.00 allocated July 14 |

Sheffield City Trust ; applied for £2, 610 April 2015 - awaiting decsion

We worked with Stuart Turner from PWC and 3 counsellors to ensure delivery of the football notts turf project summer of 2015.

3.iv

SPORT IN THE PARK

2 MPUT volunteers: Joy Harrison (volunteer ) and Liz Martinez (chair and Child protection lead) as well as local parents have delivered a weekly afterschool sports session for 1.25 hrs for the past 4 years during term time.

We employ a football/sports coach Jay Baker on a sessional basis to support the session.

We have a risk assessment and child protection policy as well as a qualified first aider.

We manage numbers on the tennis courts of up to 60 children with parents and also have after school club join us for 30 minutes of the session each week.

We are fortunate to be allowed access to the flood lights for the winter months when it is dark at 3.30-5.

Funding – to pay for the sessional worker and equipment:

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| Police - Dark nights funding | October 2014 | £364 | awarded |
| South yorkshire community foundation Yorkshire sport | Applied for September 2014June 2016 involving teenagers in sport | £1,500£630 | Awarded May 2015July 2016 |

**CERAMICS FESTIVAL AT THE WALLED GARDEN; September 2015&16& coming in 2017**

The walled garden volunteers have just held the second Sheffield ceramics festival teaming up with The Northern Potters Association over a 2 day period each year. We hope to continue hosting this event in the walled garden which attracts a lot of visitors from all over the city and brings in money for the upkeep of the garden.

In May 2016&17 we collaborated with Friends of Carfield to put on a summer fun run for the locality attracting aproximately 150 runners for each

In June 2017 in partnership with Sheffield Palestinian society, meersbrook Park after school club and Friends of Meersbrook Hall and Heeley Development trust we put on a 24hr charity run and football tournament in the park.