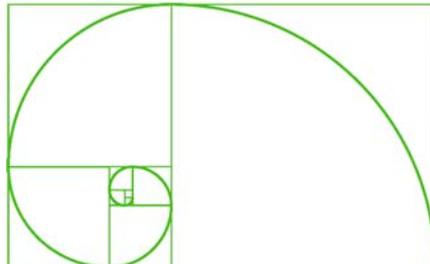


FRIENDS OF SUMMERHILL LTD
CHAIR'S REPORT: OCTOBER 2011



the friends of summerhill



The Friends of Summerhill Ltd. 6 Winchester Terrace, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE4 6EH
Company limited by Guarantee: number 7476951, Registered Charity number: 1140081

It's amazing what can be achieved in a year with determination, energy and a shared vision.

On 13th September 2010, a large group of Summerhill residents met in the Bowling clubhouse to consider the shockingly unexpected, imminent closure and sale of Summerhill Bowling Club. This historic site – a fine pavilion, two championship-scale bowling greens and additional open land, together with the friendly bowlers who would arrive without fail each spring – had been at the heart of our community for the best part of a century. And this was not just any community – we were guardians of something special: one of Newcastle upon Tyne's most cherished conservation areas, an inner city square boasting some of the most beautiful town houses in the region on the doorstep of one of the city's most deprived areas.

So here we are, it's October 2011, and I am undeniably proud to be able to say the Friends have achieved extraordinary things since that first meeting just thirteen months ago. Our financial year runs from April to March and therefore this report, to coincide with our first AGM, is intended principally to emphasise our progress and achievements. However it's important to highlight our interim financial position before moving on, which can be summarized as follows (see appendix A for details).

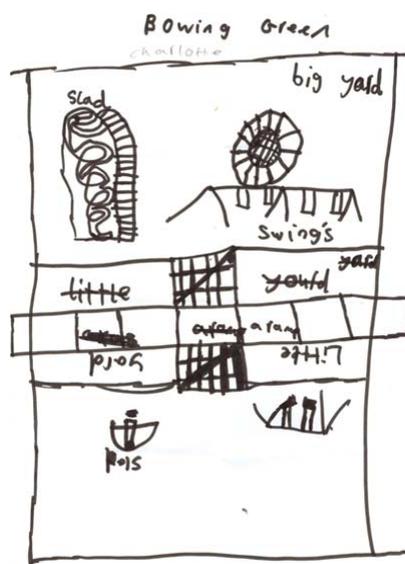
<i>Income</i>	
Unrestricted Income (donations and membership fees)	£3,017.50
Asset transfer from Summerhill Bowling Club Ltd	3,511.47
Restricted Income (grants)	63,258.25
Earned Income	871.00
Bank Interest	33.39
Total Income	£70,691.61
<i>Expenditure</i>	
Running Costs	£2,779.32
Consultation	7,800.00
Capital Works (to be confirmed)	50,250.00
Property Purchase/Legal Fees	5,180.80
Total Expenditure	£66,010.12
Net Position	£4,681.49

To reach this point has taken effort, team-work and the belief we were doing the right thing. At the outset, all we had was an informal residents' group and some e-mail addresses. Serendipitously, in the way these things happen, a Steering Group emerged from that first meeting, self-selecting and supported by the majority. Tasks were shared out according to skills and experience and within weeks a

draft Constitution was written, we'd opened negotiations with the Bowling Club and their agents for transfer of the site, and begun talks with Newcastle City Council. A lively social event was organized for 13th November to sign up Members – we now have around 150 – and by then we were well and truly on our way.

As 2010 progressed 'Friends of Summerhill' was formally established as a Company Limited by Guarantee. Charitable status followed (essential for the acquisition of the Bowling Club and its accompanying, strict protective covenants) and, finally, the transfer of the site to our ownership in March 2011. To maintain momentum, Steering Group Members, with approval of the wider Membership, transmuted into Trustees/Board Members with the accompanying responsibilities (on the understanding they would all resign at the first AGM).

In parallel with this, other work was underway. We now owned 1.5 acres of prime city centre land and a pavilion, all of which were in urgent need of repair and attention. Money (in our new bank account) to deal with our new responsibilities was essential, also strategies for development of the site and its future management and use. Priority was given to consultation with local residents; our two primary schools; and groups/organisations with particular needs such as Cyrenians and young families. A door-to-door consultation with independent consultants was supported by a Ward grant whilst other research was led by Northern Architecture, funded by Awards for All (National Lottery). Northern Architecture's work with primary schoolchildren from Our Lady & St. Anne's, and St. Paul's was particularly inspiring and a few samples of the children's work are appended. From the wide-ranging participants there were calls for community allotments, an orchard, green playing areas for schools, and a wildlife garden. There was also a wish to retain one green for future bowling and other community sports/leisure activity. Many of the children expressed enthusiasm to see the clubhouse post-renovation, and for them we are planning a Christmas party in December.



Some of the schoolchildren's ideas and models for the bowling club

During the spring it became clear a formal management structure and strategy was needed – otherwise there was a risk of drifting along. This was never going to be easy. We knew there would be mixed opinions about the future running of the site and wanted to enable, as far as possible, the widest range of voices and views to be heard. To get moving in 2010, a Steering Group had seemed the obvious option. But for the future, a less ‘hands-on’ Board would be required, with volunteer groups taking on more of the action and creative thinking. Chaired by Ann Schofield, a Board Awayday was held at Newcastle University (courtesy of The School of Architecture) which resulted in a new Management structure, including a ‘co-ordinator’ or ‘manager’ post which would connect Volunteer Groups to a governance-focused Board.

Meanwhile, a capital grant, also from Westgate Ward, enabled us to make plans for the former clubhouse which would bring it up to a good standard for community use and start to generate much-needed income from external rentals. With generous help from local architects, Ainsworth Spark Associates, Phase 1 of renovation works is now complete and we are owners of a community centre of which we can be proud.



Before and after renovation

On a lighter - but no less important - note, during the uncompromisingly wet summer and ignoring alarming weather forecasts, a great family day was organized in June with street-theatre, entertainment, music and barbecues. On several occasions the site has proved now to be a magnet for the best kinds of family entertainment; as a safe, green site with excellent wet-weather provision I cannot think of anywhere better. One of my greatest pleasures this year has been watching families enjoying the wide open space and safety of the greens, knowing that these are now theirs in perpetuity.



Summer Barbecue

Also on the 'leisure' front, Tyne & Wear Museums mounted a special exhibition in Newcastle's Central Library devoted to the history of Summerhill Bowling Club, from its foundation in 1916 to its closure in 2011. Many former bowlers attended the opening which proved a fitting and dignified celebration of its rich history and an acknowledgement of their own contribution to its story. Many of the Bowling Club's archive objects, and all its written material, are now in the safe keeping of Tyne & Wear Museums.

So where do we go from here? As I write, we have just heard that the Council has once again shown its support by providing start-up funds for a salary for a part-time Manager. This is thrilling news, as it means we can now look forward to dedicated managerial support and expertise – most especially with fundraising and volunteer support. The position will be advertised later this month, with an appointment expected early in November. This will be a challenging role, and he/she will need full encouragement and support from all our Members to maximize the opportunities it will bring.

Separate but not unconnected, Summerhill Park has also been on our minds. The Friends exist not just to protect and develop the former Club site, but we're also determined to support improvements to the adjacent Summerhill Park; together the two open spaces form a wonderful green lung in the centre of this city-centre conservation area. Again we've received great support from the City Council, who have connected us with advice of many kinds - from our community police to social support officers. Stylish new litter bins, as part of a campaign to address dog fouling, are imminent, and a Council-led public consultation about the Park's future is earmarked for later this year.

For the future, fundraising is continuing for Phase 2 of the clubhouse and site – there is a huge amount of work to be done and we have to be realistic that it will take time to deliver our dreams. More immediately, our website is ready to be launched, and we are in the process of applying for a permanent premises licence to ensure regular hiring of the clubhouse for parties and events.

It's difficult to highlight individuals who have helped us to reach this point; there have been so many. However I must give special thanks to Councillor Joanne Kingsland and her indefatigable colleagues at Newcastle City Council, including past and present Ward Liaison Officers, Elizabeth Grace and Chris Mason. Together they have encouraged us with imagination, sound practical advice, and, critically, essential financial support. We've also had invaluable help from local businesses: architects Ainsworth Spark Associates (the clubhouse), awp Partnership (site survey), and Dickinson Dees (legal advice), all of which is hugely appreciated. From within our Membership, the skills-base and willingness to help has delivered expertise in grounds management, buildings development, photography, IT/website design, specialist outdoor theatre entertainment, fundraising, finance and company management and much, much more. Those of you involved know who you are. I give you my warmest thanks, and I'm confident this appreciation of your time and hard work will be echoed by your fellow Members on 11th October.

Finally, I was talking last year to a Trustee of a similar (very successful) organization and asked where it would be now without working volunteers and individual donations. He said it would not have survived. If we are to be sustainable, our vision for the future of the Bowling Club site will only be achieved through the willingness and commitment of the Membership to be involved in some way, appropriate to personal circumstances. I am trusting that with your support and the appointment of a new 'Manager', we can take Friends of Summerhill to new heights in 2012 to the benefit of us all, our extended community and our city, and I welcome you to the next stage of our exciting journey.

Thank you.

Caroline Gant
9 October 2011



Appendix A – Interim Financial Report

Income	2010-11	2011-12	Total
Membership Fees	£129.00	£26.00	£155.00
Donations	£1,447.50	£1,415.00	£2,862.50
Asset Transfer	£0.00	£3,511.47	£3,511.47
Earned Income	£611.00	£260.00	£871.00
Grant Funding	£13,258.25	£50,000.00	£63,258.25
Interest	£0.32	£33.07	£33.39
Total Income	£15,446.07	£55,245.54	£70,691.61

Predicted future income to year end
£20.00
£760.00
£0.00
£750.00
£10,500.00
£20.00
£12,050.00

Expenditure	2010-11	2011-12	Total
Professional Fees	£5,180.80	£0.00	£5,180.80
Capital Works	£0.00	£50,250.00	£50,250.00
Training	£0.00	£120.00	£120.00
Consultation	£1,100.00	£6,700.00	£7,800.00
Management post	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Maintenance	£0.00	£199.42	£199.42
IT & Phone	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Audit	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Insurance	£940.49	£0.00	£940.49
Utilities	£0.00	£945.70	£945.70
Rent	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Rates	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Stationery	£168.00	£39.00	£207.00
T&S	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Event Costs	£75.00	£149.97	£224.97
Misc	£0.00	£141.74	£141.74
Total Expenditure	£7,464.29	£58,545.83	£66,010.12

Predicted future expenditure to yr end
£600.00
£0.00
£0.00
£0.00
£3,500.00
£250.00
£0.00
£1,000.00
£1,000.00
£1,600.00
£0.00
£200.00
£100.00
£0.00
£500.00
£250.00
£9,000.00

Position at 11/10/11 **£4,681.49**

Predicted yr end cash
Of which, restricted
Unrestricted funds/ yr end

£7,731.49
£7,000.00
£731.49