

Friends of Starbank Park

Committee Meeting

7.30pm, Monday 7th July 2014, Starbank Inn

Draft Minutes

Present: Alastair Robertson, Chair
Janet McArthur, Secretary
Liz Nicholson
Sandy Logan
Stan Dunlop
Stuart Gardiner

1. Apologies were received from Graham Buckley.
2. Agenda item 7 (logo) was included in error and the agenda changed accordingly.
3. *Wine and Cheese evening:*
 - Insurance
The Council requires a risk assessment for this event and evidence of public liability insurance. **Alastair, Graham** and **Janet** will find out more about the cost and availability of this. The event may be cancelled if this insurance is not available at reasonable cost.
 - Drink
We expect that up to about 50 would attend. Committee members agreed to donate wine (24 bottles, 12 white and 12 red). A maximum price of £5 per bottle was agreed. **(All)** Purchases will be co-ordinated at the Committee Meeting prior to the event to ensure equal numbers of red and white bottles. Soft drinks (e.g. lemonade, Schloer etc.) will also be purchased.
 - Food
It was agreed that food would include a range of cheeses, grapes, savoury biscuits, oatcakes and nibbles. Dips and French stick loaves may also be purchased. Stan will donate 4 bags of nibbles. The rest will be shared amongst the committee members. **Janet** will organise the food purchase. No nuts will be served.
 - Tables etc.
It is understood that table will not be a problem. **Alastair** will check with **Graham** whether Graham has tables are readily available. **Stuart** may be able to supply additional tables. Suitable table cloths can be purchased cheaply in Poundstretcher. Plastic (polycarbonate) glasses, plastic knives and disposable plates will be purchased as required. Committee members may have some spares available. The banner will be displayed.

- Publicity
 - The following was agreed:
 - **Alastair** will e-mail members. Notes may be delivered to members for whom we have no e-mail address.
 - **Liz** will prepare a notice for distributing in local businesses, on lampposts, the park gates and the park noticeboard. The notice will aim celebrate the huge improvements in the park and to attract members and bring in new members, with a “come and join us” message
 - **Janet** will invite neighbours.
 - Notices will be posted on the website (**Alastair**) and the Facebook page (**Janet**).
 - The poster will be displayed during the event, together with some before and after photos.

4. *Waste Action Grant*

Alastair had met Anita Sharkey of Waste Action and she had given us the go-ahead to proceed with the application. The deadline is 31 July. According to a compost calculator, at the present rate of collection, it looks as if we may need to accommodate over 3 tons of compost at any time. This requires a considerable volume of storage space. Alastair noted that 4 double units supplied by Wiggly Wiggles may suffice. The cost of these units would be over £800. **Janet** will assist **Alastair** find other composters that may be suitable and obtain two quotes. Alastair has been in touch with SEPA regarding exemption from the Waste Management Regulations and will complete the form. Alastair has written to Ritchie Fraser about getting in touch with the North Partnership Manager, Scott Dunkin) and is awaiting a response. **Alastair** will complete the application form by the deadline

5. *Where we are now and Activity Log:*

The park is much improved. Grass has been cut up to the edges and under the railings on the slope. Summer bedding has been planted by the Council (thanks to Julie for an excellent job). Stan has replanted much of the winter bedding and the weeding efforts are showing. The work done and the improvements made are recorded in the website, Facebook and the activity log (attached).

6. *Plans*

- Short term

Ongoing weeding and tidying remains a major task. It was noted that weeds are growing in the path. **Alastair** will write to the Council describing our concerns and the potential for future damage. There was a long discussion over the use of herbicides. Alastair noted that their use in a public space by the Friends would be illegal in a public place under the Control of Pesticides Regulations. Although these chemicals are now fairly safe, Friends’ illegal use of herbicides could also be a source of complaints from parents, dog owners and hypersensitive individuals. There was substantial opposition to this stance but it was eventually agreed that the Friends of Starbank Park would not use herbicides.

The boat will be moved to beside the NW gate. Alastair expressed reservations about assorted suggestions for carrying it or lowering down the hill. He believes that the risk of accident is too high. His concerns were over-ruled. Janet will decide what should be purchased and planted. Seeds and plug plants will be considered. The boat will be filled with earth and turf from the area excavated from under the boat and from the sack of soil and compost beside the Planter. The transport of soil and compost down the hill was the subject of more discussion. Alastair was concerned about the safety aspects. Others were not.

The areas round the two trees surrounded by bare earth will be planted with grass seed after further hoeing and raking in the next few weeks. Some slow release

fertiliser will be used. It was agreed that this does not need to be a permanent solution for these areas.

- Long term
Alastair had not yet circulated the plans drawn up by the Council in the spring and will do so by 10th July. After completion of the replanting of the rose borders, the priority should be for the borders beside the walls on the slope and lower reaches of the park. Firethorn and mahonia should be considered as possible plants for these areas.
Alastair will write to Ritchie Fraser about the state of the railings and the need for them to be painted and repaired. He will also write about the state of the steps at the NE gate.

7. *Saturdays*

There is a lot being done but turn-out is low. Alastair has written to University dirty weekenders who do voluntary work and Janet has written to Green Volunteers to seek extra help. We are awaiting responses. Alastair will also write to Volunteer Scotland.

8. *Minutes and Actions*

- Poppies in the boat have been thinned but more is necessary.
- Compost bags will be cleared in the next few weeks. Planters will be considered then (**Alastair, Janet**).
- **Alastair** had not circulated the Council Plans, to be done by 10th July.
- A rotary mower has been used to get into tight corners.
- **Alastair** will write about the laurel and cypress trees on the east side of the park.
- Alastair met Anita Sharkey and reported to the committee – see item 4.
- Janet has suggested to the Council building a willow structure for toddlers to play in. There seems to be resistance somewhere in the Council to building any form of play area in the park.
- Alastair wrote to Dirty Weekenders – see item 7.
- Janet summarised the comments from Martin Currie.
- Cultivators can be purchased for around £7. One has been donated by Alastair's brother.
- **Alastair** will write to Ritchie Fraser regarding signage.
- A 100m hose has been assembled by Stan for use in the park.

9. *AOB*

- A risk assessment has been prepared by Alastair. Graham has suggested a “dealing with the public” section. Other comments are requested before the assessment's finalisation and implementation (**Janet, Stuart, Sandy, Liz, Stan**).
- Someone has asked, via the Facebook Page when the Devlin fountain was dismantled and why it has been restored as it is at present. It was dismantled some years ago but it is not known exactly when. The Council had made the decision to restore prior to formation of the Friends of Starbank Park, following local consultation through local community groups. Alastair checked on the decision making process late last year and will forward an e-mail he sent at the time to Janet, who will reply formally to the request.
- Janet will suggest to Newhaven Heritage that is a joint calendar prepared by the Friends and Newhaven Heritage.

10. *Next meetings:*

- Summer event only: 28th July, 7.30, Starbank
- Full meeting: 1st September, Starbank

AR
8/07/2014