

# Friends of Starbank Park

## Committee Meeting

### 7.30 pm, Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> May, Starbank Inn

## Minutes

Present: Alastair Robertson, Chair  
Janet McArthur, Secretary  
Graham Buckley, Treasurer  
Stan Dunlop  
Vikki Floyd  
Sandy Logan  
Christine Shepherd

1. Apologies were received from Anna Dobie and Rhona Else.
2. Liz Nicholson has resigned from the committee. It was agreed not to fill her position in the meantime.
3. *Nature Trail*  
We have been successful raising funds. The Friends have raised over £4000 in cash and in kind through events, donations grants and MyParkScotland Crowdfunding. The MyParkScotland Crowdfunding finishes in a few days. **Graham** and **Alastair** will review the income expenditure account to make allowance for gifts in kind, proceeds from the recent events and other donations. **Alastair** will get MyParkScotland to update the Nature Trail Page accordingly. **Janet** and **Alastair** will publicise the impending end of the crowdfunding and ask for more cash on Facebook and Twitter. Alastair noted that the MyParkScotland crowdfunding had contributed less than £250.  
The next stages will be to cut back plants close to the trail, complete the laying of wood chippings and plant the themes in stages. Whenever possible, planting will not involve removal of existing plants. **Janet** will mark out the specific areas for each theme. **Graham** and **Alastair** will estimate what can still be spent and **Janet** will purchase plants, statuary and notice boards accordingly. Pallets will be used to make insect hotels with in some of the displays (Princess and Pea, Steadfast Tin Soldier). **Alastair** will work with Tom Stewart.  
**Graham** has asked James Pentony to make the Little Library cabinet.
4. *Cherry Blossom Picnic*  
The Picnic was highly successful. People seem to like child friendly events. Around 300 attended, about half children. Vast quantities of home baking were consumed. Over £700 was taken at the gate, facepainting, plant and food stalls. There was a profit of £400 which will be added to the funds for the Nature Trail. Alastair thanked all the committee members for their huge help in the event. **Janet** will thank other, non-committee, helpers including Rit, Christine, Neil, Heather Yang, Liz and Gwen.
5. *June 18 event and Park History*  
This will mark the 125 anniversary of the park. It will have a brass band, face painting, plant stall, refreshments, history display, seed planting and a talk on bees. It will also be a part of the Power of Food Festival. It is also intended to invite a number of guests including the 1953 Gala Queen who was crowned in the park.
  - **Alastair** will seek a copy of the video of that ceremony for display in the park, probably in a bothy.
  - We will **all** consider how best to “make a fuss of” the guests. **Alastair** will circulate preliminary ideas.
  - **Alastair** will check the cost of pull up display boards and we will prepare some if affordable. Alastair will co-ordinate the preparation of the display.
  - **Graham** will act as MC.
  - **Alastair** will invite our new MSP and Allan Jackson now.
  - **Alastair** will circulate a list other potential invitees.

- **Alastair** will investigate the cost of portaloos as many of the participants may quite old.
  - **Janet** will arrange help for the face painting and will make arrangements for the Bee talk
  - **Christine** will organise the home baking and find out about PA systems.
  - We will assign volunteers to all stalls at the next meeting (**all**).
6. *September 4<sup>th</sup> "opening the nature trail"*. It was agreed that child-friendly events were more successful than evening, adult events. The wine and cheese evening will be replaced by an Official Opening of the Nature Trail on September 4. Details will be defined in due course.
  7. *Meeting with Ritchie and Louise, 4<sup>th</sup> March*. It was generally a positive meeting. Most of the park is in good order with the weeds broadly under control. However, the grass, particularly at the lower, north end of the park, is a mess. The slope and below have not yet been cut. Julie reckons there is not enough grass. This does not seem right and Alastair noted that there are patches where grass is a foot long. The grass at the top was acceptable but not tidy. The other main item discussed were Council cuts. The ranger service is being slashed. There will be two rangers for the whole of NW Edinburgh – 45 parks – compared with 3 for North Edinburgh – 15 parks. This will mean that we have virtually no contact with the council and it could affect our activities and even require our own insurance. Ritchie has sent **Alastair** some information which he will summarise in due course. (We are not clear about cuts to the gardening service although Julie has said previously that the grass will only be cut every three weeks and the blades will be set higher, a strange combination. Julie has since told Stan that the grass will be cut every fortnight. We have not achieved even once in 2016 so far.) The poor condition of the grass seriously undermines the work of the Friends and is demoralising.  
The conversation drifted on to cutting the grass ourselves. This requires consideration. We know that the Council staff are adamantly opposed to this. There will be insurance implications too.
  8. *Viewpoint*. Alastair handed round a short note on possible ways of funding a viewpoint on the terrace in the park (Attached). Alastair will seek some help from Ritchie with the proposal which would probably best be sent to the Tesco Bag fund. The Heritage Lottery Fund may be worth a try but the Council would need to be willing to pay some of the costs for us to be successful. Alastair and others will look at alternative sources.
  9. *Plans*: Alastair felt that the routine maintenance of the park should follow an outline plan covering weeding and edging to try to avoid spending lots of time on some areas but very little on other areas. Janet felt that imposing plan on volunteers was impossible. Alastair noted that the plan would best be a guide on "where work is needed" rather than "where individuals must work". There have been mild complaints when it wasn't clear about what work needed to be done. It was agreed that a simplified plan would be useful (**Alastair**).
  10. *The Minutes* from the previous two meetings were approved.
  11. *The Treasurer's business* was covered in item 3.
  12. *AOB*
    - There are two gardening visits which will need assistance:
      - 12<sup>th</sup> May, Edinburgh Academy P3 are visiting at 3pm to do some gardening in the nature trail.
      - 18<sup>th</sup> May, Rainbows, 5.15-6.30.
    - Alastair will write to Ritchie about the possibility of seeing whether the toilets could be re-instated for events only, with the Friends holding the keys. It is an excellent idea. The start would be an initial inspection. Re-opened toilets would require the Friends to undertake cleaning duties before and after events. There were 3 volunteers for that at the meeting.
  13. *Next meeting*: Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June, location to be decided.

AR  
15/5/2016