

Friends of Starbank Park

Committee Meeting, 7.30pm, Tuesday, 3rd March, Starbank Inn

Minutes

Present: Alastair Robertson (Chair)
Janet McArthur (Secretary)
Graham Buckley (Treasurer)
Sandy Logan
Vikki Floyd
Liz Nicholson
Stan Dunlop

1. There were no apologies.
2. **Waste Action Grant:** The compost facilities have been completed. **Alastair** will draft a six-month report for the Waste Action grant, incorporating the information required, and circulate it by 10/3/2015 to Committee members for comment. The compost bins are full. At least one bin will be used to help level the ground behind the Morton planter. Others will, when ready, be used as soil improver in the fernery and herbaceous borders.
3. **Fernery:** A plan has been drawn up. It is felt that the ground in the SW corner of the park is appropriate. **Alastair** will send the acceptance form and the bank statement to Keep Scotland Beautiful on 4th March. Liz noted that the soil in that area is neutral and will need much compost.
4. **Trinity Community Council:** Alastair has written to Trinity Community Council asking for around £100 to help complete the construction of the cold frame. Janet will support the request at the next Trinity Community Council Meeting.
5. **Design for Star to mark 125 year anniversary:** It was agreed that suggestions from the Committee (**all**) for an outline design for the star would be sent to and collated by **Janet**. The Committee will agree what seems important at the next and arrange a meeting in Starbank Park with the gardener who is responsible for the floral clock in Princes St Gardens. We will discuss with him how a design might be successfully implemented, the practicalities of our suggestions, maintenance requirements and what might be done regarding dogs.
6. **Park History:** Following discussions, Moyra Forrest and Claire McWilliam are assembling a social history of the park. This will make use of materials held by individuals and, hopefully, Newhaven Heritage and the Citizen Curator (Duncan Bremner).
7. **Newhaven Heritage:** Janet and Alastair have met with Gordon Young of Newhaven Heritage (NH) to discuss a range of areas where the Friends of Starbank Park (FOSP) and NH may co-operate. Alastair supplied an article for the BowTow (the NH newsletter). An Easter egg hunt was also discussed and **Janet** will organise this, if possible, for Good Friday at 10.30. She will ensure that we follow good practices with respect to child protection and health and safety. **All** inform Janet whether they are able to help on the day and will assist with publicity, as required by Janet. Janet and Alastair also met with Duncan Bremner, the Citizen Curator. He is keen to use the park in the Newhaven Fest in the autumn. It is too late for the park to participate in this year's gala.
8. **Where we are now and plans:** The park is quite tidy at the moment and looking quite good. Progress was limited in January by poor weather.
 - **Alastair** will draft a spring activity plan for comment by the **Committee**

- We had a long discussion regarding the East Border. It was agreed that we should decide what we were aiming for in general terms (overall picture (e.g. cottage of formal herbaceous), colours etc). We agreed that proposals of a few lines of text would be made by 17th March (all) for a final decision at the next meeting. Detailed planting plans for all (or parts of the border) will be made thereafter. Future planting should be constituent with these planting plans. Any interim planting in the meantime will be subject to future replanting should it not fit the agreed plans.
 - Empty borders: it was agreed that all 8 need to be planted this year. Again planting plans will be necessary (**all**, co-ordinated by **Janet**). We agreed to discuss this with the Council and, if necessary offer some money for plants. *On the 4th March, Alastair discussed empty borders with Jen Johnstone. She agreed that planting these borders should be a priority. We agreed that all 8 borders could not be planted at once but it would be good for morale to have ongoing planting projects for the Friends. Alastair noted that the Friends may be able to put in up to around £200 for plants. He suggested that it would be a good idea for Janet and her to prepare planting plans jointly and this may be practicable.*
9. **Green Flag:** The application is now in. The inspection is likely to be at the end of May or in June. The management plan has been written. This was circulated previously and we can comment. The area to concentrate on is the detail of the plan, a table towards the end. We should look out for unachievable commitments and serious omissions. **Alastair** will collate comments from the committee (**all**).
10. **Risk Assessment:** This has been written and posted in the bothie. Alastair will go through the risk assessment with volunteers by 24th March.
11. **Dogs in the Park:** The Friends welcome dog owners and the dogs to the park but noted that there is good evidence that dogs have done substantial damage – probably around £1000. Environmental wardens are now patrolling the park more regularly.
12. **Minutes and Actions:** The minutes were agreed to be a reasonable reflection of the previous meeting. All actions had been undertaken except that Alastair had not written to Councillor Day regarding re-opening of the toilets. It was agreed that we should in the circumstances let sleeping dogs lie.
13. **Treasurer's report and membership:** The bank balance is close to £600. There are only a few 2014 members who have not renewed their subscription. Graham will list these by the next meeting and we shall decide whether or not to approach them.
14. **AOB:**
- Grasscutting: we were told by Lesley Hinds at a Friends of Parks Forum Meeting that new cutting heads were to be purchased for grass cutting in parks. Julie informed Alastair that this was not happening. The order for the Flymo to cut the grass round the star had apparently stalled. Alastair agreed to ask the Council. *(Jen told Alastair on 4th March that the order had now been placed.)*
 - Maple Tree. Gavin Gall will plant a paper bark maple in the park at a location to be agreed (probably a perimeter border).
 - Janet drew attention to Friends of Granton Castle Walled Garden. This is a late mediaeval walled garden which has miraculously survived in the Granton Gasworks area, close to Caroline House. The garden is under threat of redevelopment and the Friends first task is to fight this. FOSP support the activities of Friends of Granton Castle walled Garden and Janet will pass this on to the Friends of Granton Castle Walled Garden.
 - Visit to the Inch Nurseries. Stan suggested that this might be worthwhile as a source of plants and it was agreed to arrange a visit. *(Alastair mentioned this to Jen on 4th March and she will forewarn the manager, Jim Carlyle).*

- We agreed that a garden demonstration would be a good event for May. **Janet** will make preliminary arrangements.
- Tesco support the Keep Scotland Beautiful Community Grant Scheme. Alastair visited the Kirsty Hannigan, the Community Champion at Tesco Leith (the closest Tesco with a Community Champion). Starbank Park is within her catchment area. She would be willing to let us advertise in the Store. Tesco give seeds, plants and gift vouchers to support groups like FOSP. Kirsty is also happy to visit the park on a Wednesday morning. FOSP have worked with Asda. The Asda Community champion has been off sick for more than 2 months and it is not known by Asda staff when she will return. The store has suspended its community activities in the meantime. It was agreed that any “turf war” between Asda and Tesco should be addressed if it happens.
- Other equipment: Alastair will approach Ritchie about getting horizontal edging shears and a sack lifter for moving heavy weights around the park.

15. **Next meeting:** 7.30 pm, 14th April 2015, location to be decided

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4th March 2015