

**DRAFT**

# **Friends of Starbank Park**

## **Committee Meeting**

**7.30pm, Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> November, Old Chain Pier**

### **Draft Minutes**

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

1. Apologies: None received
2. The compost bins were delivered on 4<sup>th</sup> November and the action plan drafted by Alastair will be used as a basis for scheduling the assembly.
3. The Activity Log has been in abeyance since Alastair went on holiday in September. **Alastair** will restart the log from the 5<sup>th</sup> November.
4. Planning
  - a. *Short term tasks*: these will largely be assembling the compost bins, winter bedding planting (helping Julie and her team), edging at the paths, collecting leaves, pruning phygelium and general weeding and tidying.
  - b. *Autumn/Winter plans*: It was agreed that the plans will be drafted for the following:
    - Fernery: **Liz** and **Janet**
    - Woodland Trail: **Janet** + Committee
    - Herbaceous area: **Graham** and **Janet**
    - Crescents and Star: **Sandy**

The locations of the fernery, woodland trail and herbaceous area are in the attached sketch plan. Drafts will be available for the next committee meeting, except for the woodland trail which will be prepared for the first meeting in the new year. It was anticipated that much of the planting would be in groups of the same plant type rather than scattered planting.
  - c. CSV Action Earth: **Alastair** will prepare and submit an application for £250 for the purchase and assembly of a cold frame. This will be located to the west of the compost bins (see the attached sketch plan).
  - d. RHS Grants: The large scale grant looks too onerous. **Alastair** will ascertain whether we are eligible for a start-up grant.
  - e. This winter, Julie (City of Edinburgh Council) plans:
    - i. Trim cherry, laurel and cypress trees
    - ii. Move back phygelia
    - iii. Plant winter bedding and spring bulbs – planting is now complete.

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5. Further cuts are planned for the parks and open spaces budget. Most disconcerting are the proposed cutbacks on grass cutting (see attached extract from the Council 2015-6 budget). It was agreed that the Friends of Starbank Park will continue to lobby against this (**All**). Alastair has written already to Councillor Jackson, the Friends of Parks Forum, Ritchie Fraser, Tim Parker regarding Victoria Park, and Richard Scott of Trinity Community Council.
6. The annual subscription will be payable from now for 2015. The financial year for Friends of Starbank Park (FOSP) will start on 1<sup>st</sup> January. Payments will be by cash or check.  
**Alastair** will send out a subscription reminder to members with the AGM notice, see item 7. **Graham** will furnish Alastair with an up to date membership list.
7. The AGM will be on 2<sup>nd</sup> December at Trinity Academy at 7.30pm. A draft agenda was discussed and approved, conditional on the removal of the subheadings under introductory remarks.
8. Minutes and Actions: The date of the next meeting had been omitted. Subject to the addition of that the minutes of the meeting in 15<sup>th</sup> September were approved. All actions apart from the Asda nomination had been completed.
9. Alastair discussed the gardening risk assessment with Robert Hunter, Health and Safety Advisor City of Edinburgh Council, on 30<sup>th</sup> November. He thought it fine for use. **Alastair** will introduce it by end November.
10. AOB:
  - a. David Jamieson, Head of Parks and Greenspaces, participated in a volunteer day on Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> October. He was very positive and supportive, Janet supplied elevenses and the morning was a success. The only clouds were some oblique references to next year's budget cuts.
  - b. Asda "nominate a cause": **Alastair** will draft an application for support for **Janet** to comment on. The application will be submitted by 14<sup>th</sup> November.
  - c. Benches: The Council has stated that all benches in the park belong in the park. Some benches have been removed for repair and it is understood that benches will be repaired on an on-going basis.
  - d. Alastair is giving a short presentation about Starbank Park at the "Friends of Parks" annual event on 26<sup>th</sup> November.
  - e. Dogs: There is considerable concern about dogs out of control in the park. There has been significant damage to plants in the park, some owners do not collect their pet's excrement, there have been serious dog fights and there have been a number of minor incidents, some of which involved members of FOSP Committee. The situation is not currently satisfactory. We agreed:
    - i. FOSP welcome dogs and dog owners to the park.
    - ii. We are unhappy about the level of damage to plants, the amount of excrement left in the park and poor control of many dogs in the park
    - iii. FOSP wishes to avoid any minor ongoing feuds with any individual or group of park users
    - iv. It is the duty of dog owners to keep their dogs under control.
    - v. **Alastair** will contact Ritchie Fraser to ascertain whether Dog Wardens can have a greater and more obvious presence in the park.

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- vi. In the meantime, the agreed advice to members was to intervene only in extreme cases when dogs were out of control. If repeat offenders were observed, we should report them to the dog warden.
  - f. Poly tunnel: it was agreed that it would be excellent if we had a place to work in the winter, such as a greenhouse or a poly tunnel. Alastair and Janet will ask Ritchie Fraser at their next meeting (November 19<sup>th</sup>) whether such a structure would be possible.
  - g. Fund raising: Janet suggested an Easter Egg hunt in the week before Easter. **Janet** will organise this. (Note that it will need to have the approval of the Council and follow child protection rules.) We discussed the possibility of a quiz night. It was agreed this would not be possible before Christmas and the decision was deferred until the first meeting of the New Year.
11. Next Meeting: Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> December, 7.30 pm, location to be confirmed.

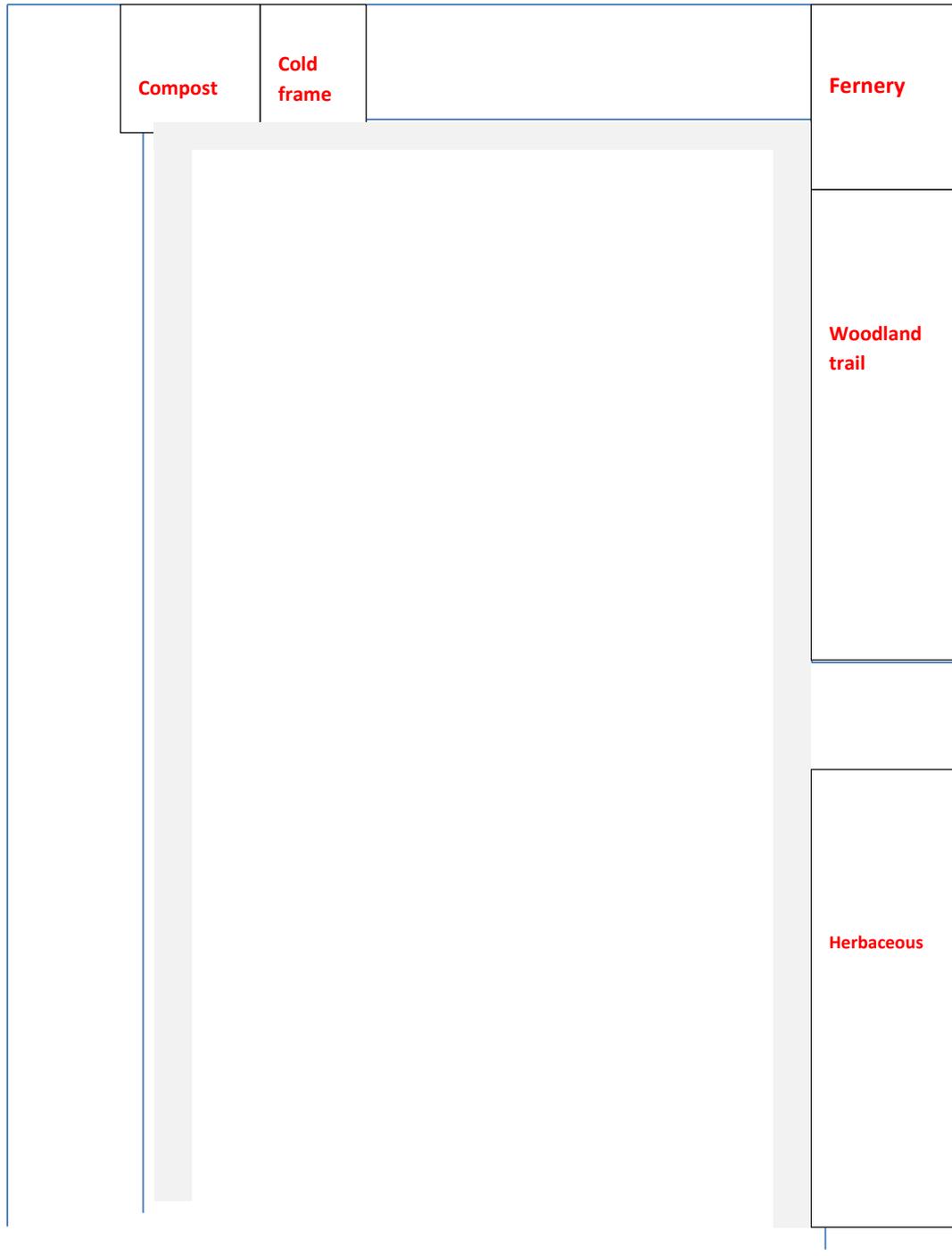
Alastair Robertson  
10<sup>th</sup> December 2014

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Sketch Plan of perimeter borders



South



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## Extract from Council Budget Plan

<b>Change grass-cutting maintenance practice citywide</b>	
<b>Option number</b>	SfC15
<b>Savings proposal</b>	Change grass-cutting maintenance practice Citywide
<b>Division</b>	Services for Communities
<b>Service area</b>	Environment

<b>Forecast savings</b>	<b>2015-16 £m</b>	<b>2016-17 £m</b>	<b>2017-18 £m</b>	<b>Total £m</b>
Incremental savings	0.200	0.000	0.000	0.200
Cumulative savings	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200

### **Description of savings proposal**

Implement a significant change to grass-cutting practice for standard amenity grass across the grounds maintenance estate – parks, green space, verges, etc.

In line with the move to more ecologically-sound practice to restore, recreate and reconnect wildlife-rich spaces it is proposed to accelerate and extend the development of the 'Living Landscapes' approach.

### **Potential impact on service outcomes and any mitigating actions proposed. This should take into account, where applicable, relevant strategic, service plan or community planning outcomes.**

A general principle could be applied to most sites (e.g. stop mowing amongst trees, steep banks, areas with no sports or formal recreation use, etc.).

Larger sites where a more 'relaxed' approach can be implemented should be developed first. Mitigations are as follows:

1. Good communications with Neighbourhood Partnerships (Environment Sub Groups), Community Councils, Friends of Parks groups, etc. are essential to explain a major change in practice. Initial focus on locations best situated to show proof of concept to widen acceptance.
2. Capital investment in tractor-cutting and ride-on machinery is required to properly resource this change.
3. Cross-neighbourhood/service working also essential to maximise efficiencies.