

# Friends of Starbank Park

## First Annual General Meeting 7.30pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2014 Trinity Academy

1. The meeting opened at 7.35pm, after coffee and cakes had been served.
2. *Welcome:* The Chair, Alastair Robertson, welcomed the 20 members and Ritchie Fraser, City of Edinburgh Council, who attended on the first cold evening of the winter.
3. *2013-2014 Report:* The Chair gave a short presentation. The Friends have had a successful first year. Volunteers have spent over 1000 hours working in the park, with 10 to 12 helping on Wednesdays and a few coming on Saturdays. Huge strides have been made in the condition of the park through these efforts and those of the Council. The improvements were illustrated with photographs. Pesticides are no longer used in the park for routine grounds maintenance. The park has raised funds through subscriptions, donations and grants (Waste Action and CSV action Earth). Substantial effort goes into raising and maintaining interest with a website, Facebook page, posters in local businesses and e-mail reminders to members. Several events were held in the park in the past year, namely, a wine and cheese evening, an open day associated with the CSV Action Earth Grant, planting by Rainbows and Brownies and poppy seed planting, jointly with Newhaven and Wardie Churches as a memorial for the First World War. The chair also gave presentations at a Friends of Parks Forum Meeting and at the Annual Council-run Friends of Parks Event. The Friends intend to build on the progress in 2014. We hope that all borders will be cultivated, we will earn a Green Flag, prepare and use our own compost and lobby for the railings to be painted. Other areas discussed included celebration of the 125 year anniversary in 2016, completion of a fernery, development of a fairy garden, possibly putting bug hotels, bird boxes and bat boxes in the park and exploring whether a small children's education trail could be developed next year. In the longer term, we will work with the Council to continually improve the park, aiming for excellence in appearance and planting.

The Chair finished by thanking all members and volunteers for making things happen, Janet McArthur (Secretary) and Graham Buckley (Treasurer), Stan Dunlop for his enormous efforts, Ritchie Fraser and Jennifer Johnstone (North Edinburgh Community Parks) for all their help, Julie for her huge efforts in a difficult year, Asda, News Express, The Starbank Inn, The Old Chain Pier, Johnstone's and Porto and Fi for their help with publicity and CSV Action Earth and Waste Action for grants.

At the end of the presentation, the meeting was opened to questions from the floor:

- i. There is no well-defined agreement on who does what but both Ritchie Fraser and chair agreed that Council and the Friends are working together with a will to succeed and that any minor obstacles can be overcome as a result.
- ii. Dogs in the park were discussed. There is not a major problem with dog excrement in the park although we do come across it from time to time. The Friends welcome dogs and dog owners into the park. The park is there to be used and the more people using it, the better. However, a minority of dog owners allow their pets to run wild

in the park and a significant amount of damage to the flower borders has resulted. The Friends and the Council are disappointed that this still happens, despite notices, and the Council has now asked Environmental Wardens to patrol the park regularly.

- iii. The Green Flag award is an external quality badge run by Keep Scotland beautiful.
  - iv. We discussed the quality assessments and, while the quality score for the park improved significantly, the Chair expressed disappointment that the score did assessment did not always recognise the improvements that had been made.
4. *Membership:* There are 63 members, mainly from Trinity but some from as far afield as Turin and Shetland. Efforts continue to raise and maintain membership and interest.
5. *Treasurer's report:* Barclays Bank are the Friend's bankers. Barclays provide special accounts for community groups and, as long as we are in credit, there are no banking charges. Income until 6/11/14 was £2374, made up of subscriptions (£315), donations (£950) and grants (£1109). Expenditure to date has been £1728, comprising entertainment, planters, plants, compost, compost bins, garden tools and shrubs. Entertainment expenditure was £88 for the Wine and Cheese evening and the AGM. The balance in the bank was £647, although approximately a further £400 will be spent on the screening of the compost bins.
6. *2013 Public Meeting:* The Minutes were agreed as a fair representation of the meeting. The main action arising was on the Constitution. The Constitution was adopted conditional on some tidying. This was undertaken and the Constitution was used through the year. It has proven to be fit for purpose and the Committee proposed that the Constitution should not be changed at this stage. This was agreed without a vote.

7. *Election of office bearers and committee:*

<b>Position</b>	<b>Elected</b>	<b>Proposer</b>	<b>Seconder</b>
Chair	Alastair Robertson	Janet McArthur	Sandy Logan
Secretary	Janet McArthur	Alastair Robertson	Rhona Else
Treasurer	Graham Buckley	Liz Nicholson	Rhona Else
Committee members	Vikki Floyd	Janet McArthur	Graham Buckley
	Liz Nicholson	Graham Buckley	Alastair Robertson
	Sandy Logan	Alastair Robertson	Andrew Morton
	Stan Dunlop	Liz Nicholson	Claire Williamson

The office bearers were the sole nominees for the positions. There were four nominations for the committee.

8. *AOB:*
- i. Tim Parker suggested that placard should be put up on the terrace defining the locations that can be seen from there. It was widely agreed that this was a good idea. The likely cost would be in the order of £1500 as this would need to be as vandal-proof and accurate as practicable. Sponsorship would be acceptable. The Committee will investigate a way forward with the Council.
  - ii. Tim Parker suggested that a Quiz Night would be a good fund raiser and he offered to be quizmaster. The Committee will decide on this in December and get in touch with Tim thereafter.

- iii. It was agreed that the Friends would not ask for the toilets to be re-opened. Other uses of the out-buildings should be considered.
  - iv. Signage for the park, particularly at the top entrance on Laverockbank Road is not clear. The Committee will ask the Council to provide a new sign, if possible.
  - v. Ian Roberts noted that one of the donors had asked whether herbs could be picked by members of the public using the park. It was agreed that this was a good idea but there may be some practical difficulties. Possible solutions would be to harvest the herbs and make bags available at a reasonable price at events. The Committee will consider this further.
  - vi. Newhaven Heritage seeks to re-establish the once popular museum within a Newhaven Heritage Centre. Newhaven Heritage is delighted to offer Friends of Starbank Park free membership of Newhaven Heritage. This includes a quarterly newsletter, the Bow-Tow. It was agreed that Alastair Robertson will e-mail members of Friends of Starbank Park to inform them of how to take advantage of this offer.
9. The Chair thanked Trinity Academy for the facilities, Janet McArthur for the coffees and cakes and everyone for turning out on such a cold evening.
10. The meeting was closed at 8.35pm.

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December 2014