

Friends of Starbank Park

Second Annual General Meeting

7.30pm, 1st December 2015

Trinity Academy

Minutes

1. The meeting opened at 7.30pm. 16 people were in attendance, including 7 from the committee:
 - Alastair Robertson (*chair*)
 - Janet McArthur (*secretary*)
 - Graham Buckley (*treasurer*)
 - Stan Dunlop
 - Vikki Floyd
 - Sandy Logan
 - Liz Nicholson.
2. **Welcome & Apologies:** The chair welcomed all who had come to meeting on a winter evening. There were apologies from Moira Brown, Moyra Forrest, Claire McWilliam, George Neill, Tim Parker, Bessie Barron and Neil Woodcock.
3. **2014-2015 Report:** The Chair reported that it had been a very good year for Starbank Park. As well as the routine of weeding, trimming and tidying, several improvements had been made to the park. These include the completion of the compost bins, the fernery, new herbaceous and mixed borders, many more bulbs in the winter bedding borders, 2 boat planters, new borders down the slope beside the walls, the cold frame and the railings have been painted. Grants were received from Trinity Community Council, Keep Scotland Beautiful/Tesco and Action Earth. The Council grass cutting and general maintenance in the park had improved further despite the ongoing pressure on Council staff and operations (special thanks are due to Julie Milne and her team). The Park was awarded a Green Flag in the summer. This is a nationally run park quality award and its attainment is one of the stated aims in the Friends of Starbank Park (FOSP) Constitution. It is a notable achievement by the Council and FOSP. In the Council's park quality assurance scheme, Starbank Park was classified as excellent and the 5th equal best park in Edinburgh, with the second greatest year on year increase in score. Starbank Park was also 3rd in Scotland in the Green Flag People's Choice Awards. FOSP ran four successful events and, in addition, many people attended the presentation of the Green Flag. Asda's community life champion, Sue Garbett, has been particularly helpful with our events with donations of food, decorations and cash. FOSP have tried to maintain a high community profile throughout the year with the events, attendance at the Trinity Gala, Facebook pages, website, articles in the BowTow, notices in businesses, newsletters and regular e-mails to members informing them of events and volunteer sessions. The benefits of the high profile have included new volunteers and a doubling of membership since the 2014 AGM. The Chair thanked all involved, including members, volunteers, Janet McArthur and Graham Buckley, Stan

Dunlop (who does as much garden work as the rest of the volunteers combined), Sue Garbett and Asda, Ritchie Fraser and Jen Johnstone form the Council, Julie Milne and her team, Victoria Primary School and the all local businesses who give us support.

4. **Initiatives for 2016:**

The initiatives were described by the secretary.

Nature Trail

Our main initiative for 2016 is a joint venture with Victoria Primary School to build a nature trail. The trail will wind through the border beside the west wall between the Laverockbank Road Gate and the fernery. It will be themed around 6 Hans Christian Andersen fairy tales, each tale will have its own area beside the path. Flowers will be planted in each story area and will be relevant to each tale. It is hoped that we can prepare a small marshy area for the "Ugly Duckling". Features will include bird boxes, bat boxes, insect hotels, notice boards and a small library area with rustic seating for children. We will use funds raised by FOSP events in the park (including the 2015 Halloween Party), donations in kind, an Action Earth Grant and MyParkScotland (who raise cash by crowd-funding). Approaches for further grant-giving bodies will be made as appropriate.

Bothies

One of our long-term aims is to renovate the bothies and open them to wider use. It is intended that plans will be prepared for this by FOSP and possible sources of funding investigated.

Events

The following events will be arranged in 2016

- Easter Egg Hunt
- Cherry Tree Blossom afternoon tea
- 125 Anniversary Gala
- Wine and Cheese Evening
- Halloween Party

We will also arrange story telling events. The secretary will contact the Edinburgh Story Telling Group.

Planting Plans

There will be an addition burst of colour in the spring from extensive bulb planting. Sections of the east border will be replanted within an overall planting plan for the border. There will be a "125" in the star to mark the 125th Anniversary of Starbank Park.

Summary

All initiatives and events are part of our strategy of continual development of the park so it becomes one of the main "places to visit" in North Edinburgh.

5. **Treasurer's Report:** The treasurer outlined FOSP finances during 2015. The general financial position in 2015 has been healthy. This is due to an increase in membership from 62 to 135, the continuing generosity of individuals making donations, and the new income stream of plant sales. All three of these sources of income have been boosted by the success of the events that have taken place this year in the Park and by our participation in the Trinity Community Gala in Lomond Park. Fundraising is not the aim of our events but the generosity of participants has resulted in all making a profit. These events also raised awareness of the Park in the local area, leading to more members joining the Friends.

Plants, bulbs, shrubs, and compost continue to be our biggest items of expenditure. Plants for the new fernery made up the largest element of these costs at £250. This development was fully funded through a grant from Keep Scotland Beautiful. A grant

of £150 from Trinity Community Council has enabled us to create a large cold-frame which is being to bring on bedding plants next Spring.

Once membership fees are taken out of the equation, income and expenditure have been similar in 2015. As a general principle we would like to maintain this approach whereby events are self-funding and provide a little extra for purchasing plants, creating seed money for future projects. The membership subscriptions give a stable base and cushion for an inevitable rainy day.

A summary of the accounts is given below.

Income	
Membership fees 135 at £5	£675
Donations	£1930
Plant Sales	£335
Grants	£400
Total	£3,340
Expenditure	
Plants	£1,300
Food, drink, insurance and equipment for events	£798
Tools and equipment	£574
Total	£2,672

The Committee proposed to keep the annual subscription at £5. This was agreed unanimously by the meeting.

6. **2014 AGM**

- Minutes: These were accepted as a fair representation of the 2014 AGM.
- Actions:
 - There is a new sign outside the Laverockbank Road gate.
 - Herbs have been picked informally but no formal arrangement has been made as it would be difficult to police. Bags of lavender were given to Brownies to demonstrate plant scents during a planting exercise with the Brownies.
 - There was no action regarding the viewpoint plaque. It was agreed that this was a good idea and the viewpoint idea will be taken forward in 2016.
 - The chair had informed the membership by e-mail of the offer of membership and BowTow subscription from Newhaven Heritage.
 - Refurbishment of the bothies has been considered by the committee. A retired architect estimated that repair will cost around £10K to £15K for each bothy. At this price, the Bothies would need to have multiple future uses for any refurbishment to attract funding. The future uses of the bothies will be considered and possible funding sources investigated in 2016.

7. **Election of Office Bearers:** All management committee positions are elected annually.

Position	Name	Proposer	Seconder
Chair	Alastair Robertson	Janet McArthur	Stan Dunlop
Secretary	Janet McArthur	Alastair Robertson	Rod Else
Treasurer	Graham Buckley	Liz Nicholson	Sandy Logan

All the above were elected unopposed

It was agreed that the management committee would be expanded for 2016 to preserve continuity and inject new blood. The following were nominated and elected to the committee unanimously:

Anna Dobie
Stan Dunlop
Rhona Else
Vikki Floyd
Sandy Logan
Liz Nicholson
Christine Shepherd

8. **AOB:**

- The volunteers' Christmas lunch is on 16 December at the Old Chain Pier. Ian Roberts wished his name to be added to the list of those attending.
- The Chair noted that a setting-up meeting for a Friends of Victoria Park was to take place on 8 December. He noted that there were many benefits from Friends Groups for parks and their surrounding communities. He hoped that the meeting on the 8th would result in a Friends of Victoria Park.
- It was evident during the Halloween Party that toilets would have been an asset. The possibility of re-opening the old park toilets specifically for events was discussed. The exact state of the toilets is unknown and cost is an issue. It was agreed that the Committee should investigate this option with the Council. If costs were prohibitive, the committee would investigate the use of portable toilets at similar park functions.
- It was proposed from the floor that a brown sign to Starbank Park should be erected on East Trinity Road. The committee will consult with the Council regarding a brown sign.
- Vandalism is not a problem in the park at the moment although it is recognised that there were serious problems in the past.
- It was suggested that FOSP might approach the Long House Surgery for a donation towards the Hans Christian Andersen themed nature trail. The committee will consider this.
- On Saturday 5th December, there will be carol singing by Newhaven Choir and Christmas lights will be switched on.

9. **Thanks and Acknowledgements:** The chair thanked all for attending and all members and volunteers.

10. The meeting closed at 8.50.

AR, 4/12/2015