

Friends of Starbank Park

AGM

7.00 pm, Tuesday, 29th November 2016, Trinity Academy

Minutes

Present: Alastair Robertson, Chair
Janet McArthur, Secretary
Graham Buckley, Treasurer
and 21 members

1. Apologies were received from Moyra Forrest and Sandy Logan

2. **2015-16 Report**

Alastair reported a very successful year, with a park that is getting better and better, more people in the park, and wide recognition of the ongoing improvements in the park
Volunteers: more than last year and several new volunteers; over 1400 hours of gardening had been done on Wednesdays and Saturdays, plus extra hours done by Stan and Jenny. Shrubs, flowers and bushes had been planted, and weeds and leaves tidied. Over 6 tonnes had been composted and over 6 tonnes compost had been used in the park.

Nature Trail: this was the big project for 2016, carried out jointly with Victoria Primary School and based on Hans Christian Andersen fairy tales. A path had been laid; there had been lots of new planting; a little library had been installed which was being well used; and bug hotels, bird and bat boxes were in position.

Events: 4 great events: Easter egg hunt; Cherry Blossom Tea Party; 125th anniversary gala; Hallowe'en

Awards and Recognition: Green Flag; "It's Your Neighbourhood": Outstanding (94%); "Volunteering Matters" Certificate; CEC Park Quality Scheme – Excellent, 5% points higher than 2015, 4th equal in Edinburgh

Creating and maintaining interest: Events; Facebook (over 500 likes); Website, Twitter and blog (over 500 followers); Weekly e-mail reminders to members; Regular notices, Newsletters, articles

Working with others: Victoria Primary; Newhaven Heritage; Newhaven History; Brownies; Rainbows; Edinburgh Academy; TCV; It's Your Neighbourhood; Action Earth; MyParkScotland; The Haven at Newhaven Church

Alastair concluded by expressing thanks to the following: all the members and volunteers; Janet, Graham, Stan, Jenny; Ritchie Fraser and Jen Johnstone; Julie Milne and her team; TCV; Victoria Primary School; Sue Garbett and Asda; Starbank Inn; Old Chain Pier; Johnstone's; News Express; Porto & Fi; Newhaven Heritage; Newhaven History. He also announced that he would be stepping down from the position of chair after 3 years, but that he would continue to volunteer. He thanked everyone for their help and support.

Janet expressed the thanks of the Committee to Alastair for his work during his tenure as chair, highlighting his commitment and meticulous attention to detail.

3. **Treasurer's Report**

Graham presented the Treasurer's Report. The bank balance as at 20th November 2016 was £2,397.74 (£1,315.16 in November 2015); this success was due to significant grants and donations and to the success of the events. Much of the surplus of income over expenditure is earmarked for the plants and infrastructure required to complete the Children's Nature Trail. Membership subscriptions needed to be chased up.

A suggestion was made that there might be different categories of membership, e.g. business members.

The proposal was made that, in order to make accounting and the sending of reminders more straightforward, subscriptions should run from AGM to AGM irrespective of when the subscription is paid. Proposed by Judith Cousins, and accepted unanimously.

4. **2015 AGM:**

a. The draft minutes were accepted

b. Actions:

- Tim Parker reported on progress of Friends of Victoria Park. A small committee had been set up. A litter pick up had been organised with limited success. It was noted that the different nature of Starbank Park (much more compact than Victoria Park) made it easier for Friends of Starbank to get volunteers. It was proposed that planters might be put at Victoria Park entrances, and advice would be sought from Friends of Starbank on how to maintain them.
- There had been no advance on upgrading the bothies due to lack of Council funds.
- Peter Strong-Brown to be approached re signage.
- There would be no carol singing in December 2016; the 2015 event had been cancelled because of atrocious weather.

5. **Election of Office Bearers**

Chair: Janet McArthur; proposed by Alastair Robertson; seconded by Rhona Else

Secretary: Christine Shepherd; proposed by Graham Buckley, seconded by Vikki Floyd

Treasurer: Graham Buckley; proposed by Janet McArthur; seconded by Stan Dunlop

Committee members: continuing: Anna Dobie, Rhona Else, Vikki Floyd; proposed by Janet McArthur; seconded by Alastair Robertson; **new: Jenny Dixon;** proposed by Janet McArthur; seconded by Stan Dunlop; **Stan Dunlop;** proposed by Janet McArthur; seconded by Graham Buckley.

6. **Initiatives for 2017:**

- Nature Trail completion
- Replanting herbaceous plants by east wall
- Shrubbery next to gate
- Fuschia border
- Viewpoint chart – probably best at front of the park on account of the panorama.
- Issue of having a toilet open for events to be pursued (Karen Reeves – Open Spaces Strategy Manager).
- Pergolas
- Possibility of a memorial (steel needle) to fishermen lost at sea, sponsored by the Anglo-Scottish Fishermen Association. It was thought that the fountain might be a suitable location.
- Possibility of adult library
- Keep up reminders to council about state of bothies
- Possibility of tap at bottom of park

- Development of social media – Instagram, twitter, facebook
- Continuation of events

7. **AOB:**

The suggestion of flower planting on the slope had been raised with the Council. However the council was concerned about too much planting being done because of the problem of upkeep should Friends of Starbank cease to exist. It was suggested that better choice of plants might enable the star to stand out more.

The idea of a wild flower garden was also mooted, though it was noted that this would be labour intensive.

The meeting agreed that the park should be kept the way it is at present – with flowers at the top and a grassy slope at the lower part.

8. **Thanks and acknowledgements**

To Graham for keeping the finances in order

To Alastair for having been an amazing chair for 3 years

To all the volunteers, in particular Stan and Jenny

CS
December 2016