



FRIENDS OF BRAIDBURN VALLEY PARK

Registered Scottish Charity No: SC040192

**Annual Report & Financial Statements for the year ended 31
October 2023**

Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 October 2023

The Trustees present their Annual Report together with the financial statements of Friends of Braidburn Valley Park for the year ended 31 October 2023

Reference & Administrative Information Charity name

Friends of Braidburn Valley Park

Charity number

SC040192

Contact address

Steve Ambler 105 Greenbank Road, Edinburgh, EH10 5RS

Management Committee (Trustees)

Paul Bailey	Chair
Steve Ambler	Treasurer
Claire Jellema	Tea in the Park coordinator
Brian Smith	Volunteer Co-ordinator
Arthur Trew	
Margaret Bruce	
Alastair Bruce	Membership Secretary and Website
Alan Fleming	Honorary Tree Warden
Lucy Frankel	Social Media and Communications; Minutes secretary
Robin Harper	
Alice Nelson	Valley Voice editor

Local organisations' representatives on the Management Committee (not Trustees)

Brian Barron	Greenbank Parish Church
Vacancy	Schools Liaison

Structure, Governance & Management

Constitution and membership

The Friends of Braidburn Valley Park is an unincorporated association. It is governed by its Constitution which was adopted in January 2003 and last amended in February 2017. Charitable status was granted by the Office of the Scottish Charities Registrar on 15 January 2009. Membership of the Friends is open to any person who

supports the objectives of the Friends on payment of an annual membership subscription which remains unchanged since 2002 at £3 & £5 (family).

Appointment of Trustees

The management committee, which normally meets quarterly, are the charity's trustees. Membership of the management committee is open to all members of the Friends. Members are elected at the Annual General Meeting. Under the constitution, there must be a minimum of five and not more than eleven elected committee members. The committee may co-opt two members of committee during the year to fill any vacancies.

Management

The Management Committee is responsible for policy decisions and general management of the charity. We have continued to have committee meetings online with one meeting in the park itself.

Aims and charitable purposes

To conserve, enhance and promote the Park for the benefit of people and wildlife, to encourage community involvement in the Park and to work with the Local Authority and other organisations to achieve these aims.

Annual report from the chair

The park continues to be used by a wide variety of people; we have 208 members of our Friends group, who pay the same subscription (£3 single / £5 family) as when the Friends group was started over 20 years ago! Most of the comments received from members and park users were positive and we appreciate suggestions for improvement. It has been a good year though the most significant aspect of the year is the frustration of waiting for projects to be completed. Therefore, this report contains many plans rather than achievements.

Awards, events and projects

Play equipment: The most significant project at present - in response to requests from park users - is to install play equipment in two places - for toddlers at the Willow Arch near the Oxgangs exit - and for older children near the theatre. We have paid for an extra picnic table by the Toddler equipment; the council provide the equipment. We hoped to get the work completed this year but are reliant on the council who have lots of work in other parks too. A map showing the locations and proposed play equipment is available on our [website](#).

AGM 2022: We resumed using the church hall for the AGM, and we were able to use a projector to show photographs of our achievements.

Green Flag: This was the seventeenth year that our park has been awarded the Green Flag, welcome recognition of the healthy state that the Council, Friends and volunteers have managed to maintain over the past year.

Park Quality Assessment: The council inspects all its 141 parks and grades them on about 25 criteria. Over the years we have maintained a B grade, but this year, thanks to the many improvements which previous committees have overseen, the park has been awarded an A grade and is rated the 5th best park in the whole of Edinburgh. None of this could have been achieved without the help of our Friends group, committee members and volunteers, together with our Parks officers, Mike Shields and Peter Davidson.

		GFA Park			PQS	PQS	Trend	
Rank	+/-	Park Name	Park Type	Locality	2022	2023	+ / -	
1	0	Starbank Park	Community	North West	87% (A)	87% (A)	↔	0
2	0	Easter Craiglockhart Hill	LNR	South West	86% (A)	85% (A)	↓	-1
3	0	Pentland Hills Regional Park	Regional	South West	83% (A)	82% (A)	↓	-1
4=	+1	Braidburn Valley Park	Community	South East	80% (A)	80% (A)	↔	0
4=	+4	Cammo Estate LNR	LNR	North West	79% (B)	80% (A)	↑	+1
4=	+4	Figgate Burn Park	Community	North East	79% (B)	80% (A)	↑	+1

Volunteers: You will all be aware that the council do not have the manpower or finances to do everything in the park and that we rely on volunteers to do various tasks, but very few of you will know about **all** the different groups who help us.

We are again indebted to Brian Smith, a committee member, for co-ordinating volunteer tasks this year. Brian knows what needs to be done, and knows which organisations are offering help, and which of our members have offered their services. A group of Duke of Edinburgh award students have continued their excellent work this year, and we have our own members and schoolchildren to thank for various tasks, such as scything, fruit tree planting, help on the Burn and Clean-Up days. Recently the willow arch received its annual 'haircut'. Litter has been a problem until we got new double size bins which have been very effective resulting in very little litter and the cancellation of the regular autumn clean-up day. But it is not just the bins; I know of park users, many whose names I don't know who help by picking up bottles and cans which youngsters often leave by the mural. Thank you, unnamed volunteers, for your invaluable work!



Tea in the Park: This year's Tea in the Park and Dog Show on Saturday 2nd September were both great successes. We were blessed with good weather, which resulted in a fun filled day with stalls such as 'toss the welly', 'beat the goalie', the coconut shy and the obstacle course providing lots of classic family fun. The day raised £1500 - so a huge thank you to everyone who came along, but especially to all the many volunteers who gave up a Saturday afternoon. We couldn't do it without you!

The Wildflower Meadow: Alan Fleming again deserves particular praise for his energy and ability to enthuse his teams for work on the meadow! In response to requests, we built a winding pathway through the wild meadow. A group of our own volunteers responded to the call to scythe the wild meadow and the willow arch.

Dianne's Garden: A small group of our own members, led by Val Cox, continue to do outstanding work on the upkeep of Dianne's garden; once again a long dry spell made work difficult. We can always do with more volunteers here, and to help them, we are planning to install a police-approved metal shed to keep their tools in. We were able to apply for a grant in June, but this is one of the frustrating aspects where council procedures delay things; after six months the council have not yet processed the grant applications.

The 'flower-bed' outside the main entrance: In the good old days, our council provided bedding plants each spring in the flower bed on the corner of Comiston Rd and Greenbank Crescent. That doesn't happen any more. At times it doesn't look too bad such as in spring when tulips appear, but generally it looks unsightly with invasive few-flowered leeks and other weeds taking over. Members and passers-by have commented on the unwelcoming appearance. The plan is that it will be completely replanted in the spring.



The Exercise Equipment: Another frustrating aspect is the delay in repairing one piece of exercise equipment; for two years now the popular cross trainer has been out of action; the council tried to repair it but with bolts which didn't quite fit. We keep on reminding them!

Cyclists: Cyclists are very welcome in the park though the speed of a few has been a concern. We had another frustrating time waiting for the SLOW signs, but they arrived after a four year wait, firstly white signs painted on the tarmac, and secondly metal signposts along the way; we would have preferred the signs to say "Cyclists, ring your bell!" But the council chose to indicate that children may be playing on the paths - which they don't.



Dogs: Dog walking is very popular. The Duke of Edinburgh volunteers and Scouts have been infilling holes with wood chip to prevent injuries. Our dogs love the water, and to get there they have created many “dog-runs” down the banks of the burn and this is causing problems with erosion. The council intend to infill several of these “dog-runs” either with earth or willow.

The Burn & Rowan Tree Bridge: Apart from the erosion we have serious problem with the Rowan Tree Bridge which was a welcome addition in 2009. Some of the wooden sleepers broke completely and the council have been prompt in placing temporary sheeting on it. Close examination has revealed that the “stringers” beneath the bridge are worn out and therefore the bridge needs replacing. The council suggested simply removing the bridge; the Friends committee strongly opposed this suggestion as it is very well used on a circular walking route. Our Parks Manager is negotiating with the council’s financing department; it could take a while!



The tram shelter: Although the tram shelter is within the park, it is surrounded by railings. It gathers litter, weeds and leaves which we cannot clear. After discussion the council intends to build a locked gate there to enable our group to keep it tidy.

The Book Store. A kind soul put a plastic box of books at the entrance to the park; it lasted a while until somebody thought it would be good fun to kick it to bits.



Therefore we asked two of our members, Andrew and Alan if they could design a sturdier one - which they erected on April 14th and it looked wonderful for a time. But once again it attracted the vandals. Three youngsters ripped the upper doors off at 2.30 am on May 29th. Fortunately the prompt action by neighbours interrupted their vandalism and Alan and Andrew repaired it. It is a very popular feature in the park.

The demolished Pavilion: When the pavilion was demolished, the committee spent considerable effort trying to get a grant for a pétanque court but it proved prohibitively expensive. The area is now a complete mess with an added problem of water draining into the area. The council have promised to sort out these problems, leaving us to consider how best to make use of the space. They suggested table-tennis tables which they have in other parks.

Communications

Email: All members are encouraged to provide an email address. The resulting members mailing list (maintained in membership@braidburnvalleypark.org.uk) allows us to notify members about park developments and membership matters; and to receive feedback from members.

Website/Facebook: Our website (www.braidburnvalleypark.org.uk) provides an archive of material about the park. The website and our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/BraidburnValleyPark) allow postings about park developments (matching those communicated directly to members by email) which are then accessible to those who are not members. Feedback from the public comes by email

through the website email account info@braidburnvalleypark.org.uk, through postings on Facebook, together with suggestions from members bumping into committee members in the park.

Newsletter: Two editions of our newsletter, *The Valley Voice*, are produced annually and distributed to members (either electronically or on paper). Alice Nelson, does a spectacular job, combining text and images to produce a professional document. An archive of all editions is maintained on the website and is well worth a read to reflect on our achievements.

Notice boards: The static notice boards at the main entrances to the Park hold Council contact information, and the Friends add news and announcements.

Committee membership

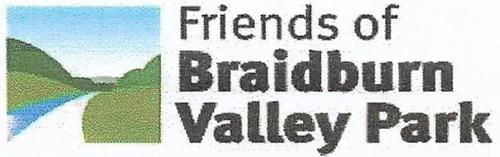
I am very pleased to report that there were no changes of personnel on our committee. Looking ahead Alice Nelson, who produces *Valley Voice*, intends to step down from the committee in February 2024. We thank her for her excellent work.

Membership: In the course of the year, we welcomed 15 new members, many joining around the time of Tea in the Park, and just enough to offset the number who did not get round to renewing their membership. The current membership total stands at 208. A full report on membership numbers is available on our [website](#).

We encourage members to continue to recruit friends and neighbours.

Most subscriptions are renewed in January and many members will already have done so. Those in the habit of paying by cash or cheque are asked to consider setting up a standing order for future payments. It makes our administration easier and will ensure your membership does not lapse accidentally!

The number of members we are unable to reach by email keeps dropping pleasingly and is now down to 22. **Any member able and willing to (re-) establish email contact with us needs only email membership@braidburnvalleypark.org.uk to say so.** Please do this if you can: it helps save paper and trees!



FRIENDS OF BRAIDBURN VALLEY PARK

Registered Scottish Charity No: SC040192

Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 October 2023

Financial review

This year we held the Fun Day on 2nd September. This year the Fun Day made a profit of £1,503.03, which is considerably more than last year.

Membership fees remain low at £3 / £5 and the income this year was only £16 more than last year (2022/23 - £939). Several members pay more, and in 2022/23 members' donations totalled £259.

Other donations amounted to £500 from Tesco. This was spent on a new park bench and table which hopefully the council will install for us. The purchase and delivery of the bench/table has cost us £1390.

We resumed our insurance payment to Zurich of £170.35.

In total, this year we made a profit of £463.33 but, in part this relates to a low expenditure this year.

We now have £10,523 in the bank.

Approved by the trustees on Jan 10 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

Steve Ambler

Steve Ambler, Treasurer

Independent Examiner's Report to the Friends of Braidburn Valley Park

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 October 2023 which are set out in succeeding pages.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (d) of the 2006 Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1) (c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeks explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 8 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations have not been met, or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: Margaret F. C. Walsh

M Walsh

Name: Margaret F C Walsh

Relevant Professional qualification/professional body: Self Employed Accountant
Address: 21 Gillespie Road, Edinburgh EH13 0NW

Date: 10/1/24

Statement of Receipts and Payments for the Year ended 31 October 2023

	Note/Table	Total 2021/22	Total 2022/23
		£	£
Receipts			
Membership subscriptions		923	939
Membership donations		258	259
Grants and Donations from others		5,164	500
Gift Aid		261	245
Refunds		4	0
Fund raising		1,428	1,823
Total Receipts		8,038	3,766
Payments			
Charitable activities	Table 2	13,013	2,666
Governance costs	Table 3	518	636
Total Payments		13,531	3,302
Profit for the year		-5,493	464

Statement of Balance at 31 October 2023

Assets

Cash at Bank **£10,523**

Approved by the trustees on January 10 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

Steve Ambler

Steve Ambler, Treasurer

1. Basis Of Accounting

These accounts have been prepared on the Receipts & Payments basis in accordance with the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and Charities Accounts (Scotland) 2006 (as amended).

2. Table 2 – Cost of Charitable Activities

	Total 2021/22	Total 2022/23
	£	£
Annual fun day	247	320
Clean up days	0	0
Nature trail project	0	0
Picnic benches	0	1,390
Mural	7,160	125
Printing - Valley Voice/cards/facebook	109	140
Postage, stationery & telephone	13	28
Tools and materials	204	663
Trees	5,280	0
Totals	13,013	2,666

3. Table 3 – Governance

	Total 2021/22	Total 2022/23
	£	£
Independent Examiner's fee/honorarium	80	80
Rent (Greenbank Church)	250	250
Insurance	174	170
Zoom	14	0
Web site	0	86
Retirement gift to Parks Officer	0	50
Totals	518	636

4. Trustee Remuneration and Expenses

The trustees do not receive any remuneration but claim expenses for stationery and postage etc. These are recorded in Table 2.