

The Valley Voice

Issue 47

January 2024



Friends of
**Braidburn
Valley Park**

For further information about the Friends and our wonderful Park, visit our website:

www.braidburnvalleypark.org.uk

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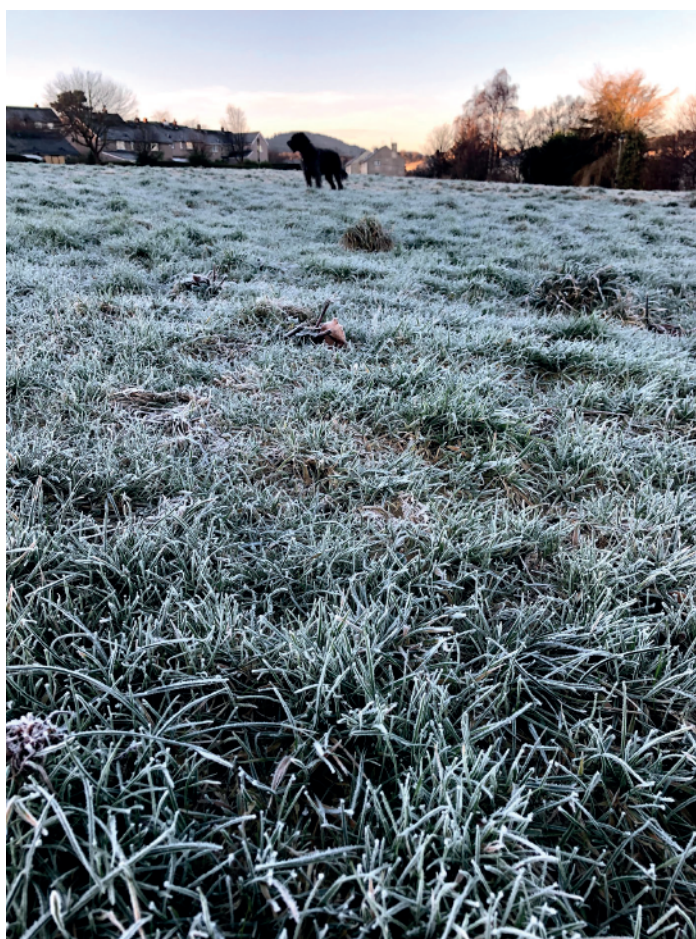
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Tree and Conservation Activities

Here is a summary of what happened in 2023 and some plans for 2024.

Trees planting and care: School children planted some trees along the burn and up on the bank beside Comiston Road between the Wheatley elms. Some watering was necessary in the long dry spell in May and June. Continued care may be necessary in 2024 as they struggle against the surrounding vegetation and lack of moisture late Spring and early Summer (if recent years are to go by).

Butterbur removal: There are two species of butterbur in the park growing profusely along the banks of the burn. The Japanese variety with white flowers appears to be more common than the European variety whose flowers are pink. The light green buds of flower spikes emerge from the winter soil in February or March. The large round leaves eventually shade out almost all other plants. So this year we decided to remove the shoots and leaves, in March and April, to see if more diversity in the summer months could be encouraged. This was undertaken in a small area just south of the Willow Bridge by children from South Morningside Primary School, Duke of Edinburgh award and other volunteers. The tubers remained in the ground and leaves made a delayed appearance, compared to other areas. Nonetheless, in June and July there certainly was an increase in the diversity of plantlife. So, in 2024 we will try more regular removal of the leaves, some more recording of the results, and hope that children and others can continue to contribute to our small citizen science experiment!

Community orchard: The orchard was started 8 years ago and now contains some very productive trees, for example, the Egremont russet at the north end and the Ellisons Orange nearby. It is an exposed site so it is not surprising that most of the apples are quite small. However, this Autumn there seemed to be another big increase in fruitfulness. Hopefully future years will also bring a good crop of plums, pears and cherries on the more recently planted trees. Be patient, wait for them to ripen pick and enjoy!

Willow sculpture: This continues to do well with plenty of growth. Volunteers pruned it at the beginning of December. We kept some of the cuttings for infill planting of some of the gaps. Some may also be used as some natural bank stabilization particularly where the burn runs very close to the main path.

Wildflower meadow: Volunteers enjoyed using our two scythes for the regular Autumn maintenance of the wildflower meadow. Cutting back the grass is necessary to make sure it doesn't take over. Regularly sharpened, the scythes are an excellent way to mow the meadow with minimal harm to wildlife. Several frogs who'd obviously been sheltering from the warm sun, were observed safely hopping away. The plan had been for school children to come and rake away the cut grass but at time of writing the rain has prevented them. If you'd like to come and help with a spring scything of some of the meadow let us know!

volunteering@braidburnvalleypark.org.uk

Tea in the Park and Dog Show

This year's Tea in the Park and Dog Show on Saturday 2nd September were both great successes. It is always so lovely to see so many families and locals out to support the event either by volunteering their time or spending their cash!

This year saw two great mini duck races where once again the top 5 ducks in each race won a pineapple! (what would you do if you were to win a pineapple? Personally, I'd be making a pineapple upside down cake). It was 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. We of course also had plentiful treats at the home baking and ice cream stall, both of which ran out! And face painting volunteers once again were inundated with requests bringing colour and cheers to so many faces too.

The day raised £1500 so a huge thank you to everyone who came along, but especially to all the many volunteers who give up a Saturday afternoon. We couldn't do it without you!



Some pics from Tea in the Park: the famous Duck Race; the Dog Show and the Coconut Shy

After the Pavilion

Most members will recall the old pavilion building (a comfort station for tram drivers) which stood on the east side of the park, close to Comiston Road. The Council deemed it unsafe, and it was demolished early in 2022. Members were asked to consider various possibilities for how the site might be used.

A petanque court emerged as the favoured option, but quotes we obtained for the work involved were prohibitively expensive, far higher than initial estimates had suggested. The FOBVP committee decided that, for the time being at least, our resources (money and planning effort) would be better used in setting up a play area elsewhere in the park. The progress on that project is reported elsewhere in this edition of VV. We have been given reason to believe that the Council workforce will return to improve the pavilion site (surface and drainage); at that point the committee expects to reconsider its possible future use.

A New Play Area

The Friends are looking forward to the installation of our new play equipment. There will be a play area for older children installed just south of the stage in the Park. The equipment for the younger kids will be located near the willow tunnel. The Friends are providing a table and bench set thanks to a financial donation from Tesco. Edinburgh Council will install that along with the equipment. We hope to see it in place this year!



Play Equipment and site location

Park Fitness

Our park offers a great location for various sporting activities and groups to use and enjoy. Zoe from MacFit (macfitedinburgh@gmail.com) runs an incredibly welcoming and inclusive range of outdoor fitness classes, up by the outdoor gym, including bootcamps and circuit training. And Syra from Syra Yoga (syrayoga@hotmail.com) often holds her sessions outdoors in the park when the weather permits. Such a serene and relaxing back drop to practice, for sure. And South Morningside Primary School also use the park on Wednesday mornings, for their cross country running club, getting their session in before school has even started!



Syra Yoga

Finally a quick shout out and massive congratulations to Seb Jellema for completing his Run Every Day in 2023 challenge. Many of his runs have taken him through the park, and he even organised two mini fun runs in the park, to encourage and inspire others to get running too. By setting himself this challenge he has run over 1300km and raised over £1600, which was split between his two chosen charities, Kids Love Clothes and the Scottish SPCA. Well Done Seb, what an outstanding achievement, showing great motivation and determination!



Seb (centre) in action

Membership matters

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. 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 to say so:
membership@braidburnvalleypark.org.uk

Please do this if you can: it helps save paper and trees!



Tea in the Park's Dog Show was a great success again this year especially for this clever pooch who won Best Trick! Our thanks to all the local businesses that sponsored the event including The Hermitage Bar, La Telve and Leaf and Bean.