

**Friends of Braidburn Valley Park
Minutes of AGM - Sunday 8th March 2015**

The AGM started with a walk through the park during which committee members pointed out the results of the past year's activities and planned projects for the coming year. The "Friends" were asked to provide input into where they would like to see future efforts directed, which will be considered depending on resources and funds.

The meeting then moved to Greenbank Church Hall for the formal part of the AGM. 16 members attended including some recruited on the day. Apologies were received from Linda Bendle, Louise Maguire, Alan Smith, Rona Somerville, Charles Black, Harris Keillar, Jerry & Chris Gregson and Irene Stewart.

Minutes of the 2014 AGM

- The Minutes of the 2014 AGM are available on the website.

Chairman's Report

Awards

- **Green Flag** – We received the prestigious Green Flag 2014/15 for the eighth year running. The new flag was raised at Tea in the Park in September.

Infrastructure

- **Stage Bridge** – In Sept 2014, just before "Tea in the Park", the river bank on the NW side of the stage bridge was eroded sufficiently that it collapsed and took the railing with it. Temporary fencing was erected for public safety and the railing was reinstated in February 2015.
- **South Bridge** – The anti-skid surface on the south bridge was topped up in patches.
- **Burnside erosion holes** – one of the deep erosion holes between the main path and the burn, near the north bridge (which had been shored up with gabion baskets, planking and earth in 2014) gave way and is a cause for concern.
- **South Interpretation Panel** – the Friends' wildlife interpretation panel at the south end of the park was stolen. Fortunately, the Friends had an identical panel in storage, and this was installed on the stone cairn.

Projects

- **Yoghurting Main Entrance Pillar** – in July 2014, in partnership with Waitrose, we applied yoghurt to the new urn at the top of the entrance pillar. Acting on the advice of Historic Scotland with a 1:10 dilution of natural yoghurt to water, the Friends' painted and super-soaked the new stonework. There are already visible signs of greening. The Evening News covered the event and also featured park users on the community page.
- **Extended Bee Meadow** – in the Spring, on the east side of the park, south of the pavilion, a large semi-circular area of turf was removed by 20 young volunteers with The Green Team and seeded by them and Greenbank Guides using free seed from the Kew Gardens Grow Wild Project, to extend our bee meadow from the original narrow strip. There was a good show of wildflowers during the summer and the turf has been stacked to create an additional habitat.
- **Tree Planting** –
 - Edinburgh Council have felled a number of White Poplar and Cherry trees at the south end of the park as they were deemed to be a health and safety risk.
 - A Wingnut tree was paid for and planted by the Friends in the autumn to replace a failed specimen tree near to the Oxgangs entrance.

- The South Morningside Primary School legacy tree planting continued with all 90 P7s planting trees donated by The Woodland Trust, mainly in an area near the earth works at the Oxfangs entrance, but also near the pavilion. A number of oaks and hazels donated by members of the public were planted at the same time.
- In the autumn, encroaching scrub was cleared back from this area by a series of Friends' Tree Work Parties.
- Edinburgh Council found funds at the end of this financial year to replace recently failed cherry trees and the memorial tree near the south bridge; as well as planting some hazel trees along the burn side, and specimen Dawn Redwood trees which have an interesting history.
- **Medal Routes Project** – run by The Ramblers and as a legacy of the Commonwealth Games. The Friends have mapped three routes from the main park gates “hub” – a 15 minute Bronze medal walk; 30 minute Silver medal walk; and 60 minute Gold medal walk. All have an informative commentary about what walkers can see. The walks are promoted on the Walks4life website, and it is to be hoped will be included in the Ramblers / Medal Routes website too.
- **Green Dog Walking Scheme** – in partnership with the Friends of the Hermitage, our Green Walking Dog Warden hands out leaflets, armbands and dog poo bags in the park to encourage dog owners to act responsibly.
- **Japanese Butterbur Removal** – hand-control of this invasive species continued with special help from Greenbank Scouts.
- **Wildflower Meadow** – in October 2014, 90 children from South Morningside Primary carried out the annual rake of the wildflower meadow and learnt about the uses of wildflowers.
- **Graffiti** – 15 young people from the Q2 youth group helped to paint over some minor graffiti in the electricity sub-station in September, and our own “in house” graffiti team have recently painted over some offensive graffiti on the pavilion.

Events

- **Tea in the Park 2014** – we had good conditions and an excellent turn out for our annual event which didn't have a “star act” but featured our usual favourites of the South Morningside Pipe Band, Auld Spice Ceilidh Band, magician, story teller, Greenbank Church activities, bouncy castle, face painting, raft building, crafts, teas, bar, Green Dog Walking Scheme, membership promotions and the (sell-out) Duck Race.
- **Park Spring/Autumn Clean** – events were held in April and October with around 40 volunteers each time. Next Spring Clean – **Sunday 26th April** – all welcome!

Management Plan

- In March 2014, the Friends submitted an extensive range of comments and requests as part of Edinburgh Council's overdue update of the Management Plan. Revisions to the plan have not yet been finalised and we have not seen a draft. We continue to press for this.

Communications

- **Website** – www.braidburnvalleypark.org.uk - 420 visits each month with the most popular pages being home, orienteering, how to get to the park and the map.
- **Facebook and Twitter** – the Friends regularly Tweet (82 followers) and Facebook (56 Likes).
- **Valley Voice** – two editions were produced and are available on our website.
- **Noticeboards** – regularly updated.

Membership

- **Membership** – at the end of 2014 the Friends had 151 Household Members, 45 Individual Members and 36 Life members. 8 new members joined during the year.

Presentation of Accounts and Annual Report

- Christine Johnston, Treasurer, presented the accounts. At the end of the financial year (31/10/14) the Friends had an annual surplus of £795.90 and have £8,428.94 in the bank available to support its operations and projects.
- Barrie Wilkinson was welcomed as the new Treasurer.

Email: info@braidburnvalleypark.org.uk
 Website: www.braidburnvalleypark.org.uk
 Scottish Charity No. SC040192

Election of New Committee

- Christine Johnston is stepping down as Treasurer and this role is being taken on by Barrie Wilkinson. Christine will remain on the Management Committee
- Rona Somerville is stepping down as the Greenbank Church representative and will be replaced by another volunteer from the Church Board.
- Keith Knight is stepping down as Hon Tree Warden, but will remain on the Management Committee, and is being replaced by Alan Fleming.
- The rest of the current Management Committee are standing for re-election and this was accepted.
- Christine and Keith were given small gifts as a token of our appreciation for all their help over the past years.
- We welcome volunteers who would like to help with different activities without being committee members, eg: organising the summer event, distributing the Valley Voice, etc.

Plans for 2015/2016

- **Spring Clean – Sunday 26th April 2-4pm**
- **Tea in the Park 2014 – Saturday 5th September, 2 – 4.30pm**
- P7s from SMPS are legacy tree planting in March.
- Greenbank Scouts are extending the north path and removing butterbur in May.
- A partnership is being developed with Edinburgh and Lothian Greenspace Trust (ELGT) with a view to bidding for c£100K of Heritage Lottery Funds to replace the remaining cherry trees, with associated interpretation and community involvement.
- A community orchard is being planned for the area near the north fly walk.
- The herbaceous border just outside the park main gates is being replanted with a permanent display rather than the seasonal ones. The Friends have inputted suggestions on the colour scheme (white, grey, silver, purple) and plant choices which should be good for wildlife

AOB

- Most of Greenbank is to be included in the new 20mph speed limit – except for Greenbank Road and Greenbank Crescent. The Friends may comment on these proposals.
- The partnership relationship between the Friends and the Council, and their respective roles and activities were described.