



The VALLEY VOICE

Newsletter of the Friends of Braidburn Valley Park

STORYTELLING FUN

Around 100 children and their parents enjoyed Storytelling in the Park on Saturday 6 September. The event, organised by the Committee and kindly supported by 114th and 60th Morningside Scouts, created a small tented village on the 'stage'.

Blessed with good weather, most stories were told outside against the fabulous backdrop of the Park. Four sessions, two for under-5s and two for over-5s, were held using two professional storytellers who enchanted young and old alike with a range of yarns from simple nursery rhymes to tales of mystery and magic.

A tent full of scrumptious refreshments added flavour to the day, while children further enjoyed a face-painting and hair-braiding stall, a treasure hunt in the Park with prizes for the inquisitive, and a chance to colour in and make their own badges.

Many thanks to all who contributed, particularly the Committee, the Scouts, those who baked for the tea tent and ran the stalls, Roseisle Cars Ltd for lending a van, Cluny Church Centre for lending chairs and tables, and Councillor McInnes who liaised with the Council to provide the very much appreciated portaloos.

Do let us know if you have any ideas for further events – and if you'd like to be put on a rota of helpers.

Karen Young
Committee Member



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FRIENDS OF THE BRAIDBURN VALLEY PARK and TALK ON THE CITY'S PARKS

Thursday 29 January 2004: 8pm
at Greenbank Parish Church
Braidburn Terrace

Open to all Friends:
refreshments will be served.

For further information see
insert to this newsletter or contact
Lindsay Walls, Chairman,
on 0131-445 5415
or **Rona Ferguson, Secretary,**
on 0131-447 6825
E: braidburnfriends@hotmail.com

**Do come along to join up, meet
your fellow members and
have your say about the Park.**

NEWS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

We are delighted to welcome two new members to the Management Committee: Colin McCulloch from Greenbank Church and Anna Miller from South Morningside School. Both organisations make regular use of the Park and their participation will be most valuable.

My thanks go to the Committee for their support in helping organise many recent activities, particularly the consultation exercise carried out over the autumn, the successful storytelling event in September, the Newsletters and our stall at the Braids Fun Day on a scorching August afternoon. In addition, members have assisted with Tree Warden duties, site visits relating to flooding and the Pavilion, and this Newsletter gives a flavour of our work.

The consultation feedback on page 3 deals with the main issues raised, but further concerns were expressed:

- the Scottish Power substation: plans are in hand for landscape planting to disguise it and to discourage youths from congregating there to drink;
- the Transco installation at the Greenbank gate: there has been a full clean-up of this and the surrounding planting has been tidied up;
- flooding at the southern end of the Park: we are liaising with Scottish Water and the Council.

Unfortunately, despite the Committee's objection to the proposed erection of a communications mast on the Park boundary at Pentland Terrace, the equipment has now been installed.

Please come along to the AGM on 29 January (see insert) to have your say on the future of the Park. James Hunter, the local Parks Manager who has worked so hard for the Park and done so much to support the Friends, will give a fascinating talk on Edinburgh's Parks. We look forward to seeing you then.

Lindsay Walls, Chairman



Front page: The storytelling day on the stage took place in glorious weather

Above: children and adults alike are enthralled by the stories

Below: Committee member Claire Dorren (left) uses her artistry to make someone happy.



FEEDBACK ON CONSULTATION ON PARK IMPROVEMENTS

At the last Friends' AGM, the Committee promised to consult on a range of ideas about the Park. These were circulated with the previous newsletter and the feedback results are given below. Over 40 forms were received and we thank all who responded, particularly those who also gave generous donations. The AGM can provide further details.

Benches

Most responses indicated satisfaction with the benches, with a couple suggesting we have more or fewer or in different situations.

Bins

Most responses indicated there were enough bins. The Council does not provide dedicated bins for dog fouling, but dog litter signs are being positioned next to regular bins.

Trees

Almost all respondents felt strongly that the stately avenue of Wheatley Elms flanking Pentland Terrace be replaced with similarly imposing trees as the diseased elms are removed. Suggestions included silver birch, copper beech, poplars and plane trees. The Council is proposing the Red-twigged Lime (see page 4).

Theatre area

Almost all respondents are happy that the flat 'stage' will be kept, and several would like to see it used more. Most were happy that lower tiers of terracing will be kept and the 'crown' shape of the shrubbery enhanced, though some would like to see all terracing remain.

Cycling

Presently only children are allowed to cycle in the Park, but the Council wishes to promote safer routes for cyclists. This issue provoked strong responses with much concern about the safety of children and old people if cyclists went too fast. 11 were definitely in favour of allowing adult

cycling along the existing path, and 9 definitely against it. 15 supported cycling, but only on a dedicated track (like the Meadows).

Signage

Several respondents asked for more dog fouling signs and these are being erected. Several asked for information signs on the nature and history of the Park: the Committee has been working on designs for the past year and will shortly apply for a grant to install these. Content for signs at Park entrances remains to be resolved. Further details at the AGM.

Toilet block/Tea pavilion

15 felt it would be useful to refurbish this so it could be used for special events, but 14 felt this was an invitation to vandalism and therefore a non-starter. The Committee is investigating the insurance situation before further consideration.

Dog fouling

This emerged as a major concern, and the Committee hopes more signs and bins will alleviate this. Dog owners are asked to be considerate, and to note new Council regulations which impose fines for dog fouling.

Play Area/Football Pitch

Most members expressed views valuing the natural beauty of the park, and the open space it offers. Some strong views were expressed against a play park, but those prepared to consider it suggested a natural wood feature, rather than coloured plastic.

Regular activity

There was an enthusiastic response to proposals for further planting and clean-up events. A burn clean-up and a wildflower planting event will take place this spring, so watch out for notices of date and time at Park entrances. Meanwhile, the Committee continues to liaise with the Council on maintenance issues.

Rona Ferguson
Committee Secretary

PARK TREES IN WINTER

After a spectacular autumn show of colour from rowans, elms and cherries this year, winter places the emphasis on shape and structure. The Wheatley Elms, lining Comiston Springs Avenue and Pentland Terrace, become the outstanding feature of the landscape.

Each autumn the Council surveys all elms in the city for signs of Dutch Elm disease. When found, the tree is ring-barked and felled as soon as possible. This year, at least one tree in the Park will be felled. The choice of tree to replace the Wheatley Elm is an important and difficult one. The early replacement planting near Greenbank Church has not been very successful, and feedback from our recent consultation yielded around a dozen different suggestions of tree.

The Council has decided to replace the felled elms with the Red-twigged Lime (*Tilia platyphyllos rubra*). This broad-leaved lime is considered to be a good street tree: tall, well-shaped, providing good winter colour. Planting should begin in early 2004.

Other work scheduled for early next year will include removal of a couple of damaged large willows along the burn just south of the theatre. These will be replaced with other willows, and some more alder will also be planted.

Meanwhile, take time to enjoy the trees and shrubs we already have in the Park. Do let us know if you discover any unusual features or if you have any memories or tales to relate about the trees.

Christine Johnston
Committee Member & Tree Warden

(If you are interested in finding out more about Tree Wardens in Edinburgh, please contact mike.foy@edinburgh.gov.uk at the Council.

HABITAT SURVEY

The Committee, with the help of a grant from Scottish Natural Heritage, has commissioned a full habitat survey of the Park from McBride Habitats. This will list the flora and fauna of interest in the Park, and offer management suggestions for the Park, eg control of burnside vegetation or whether to create a wildflower meadow.

The final report will contain pictures of species which will contribute to the interpretation panels being developed.

SPRING WORK IN THE PARK

As well as the tree work already mentioned in Christine Johnston's report on this page, the Council will carry out further work in the Park.

Building on last year's successful planting of daffodil bulbs beneath trees at the Greenbank end of the park, the Council will plant more daffodil bulbs around the next tree group. Around 1,000 bluebells will expand the planting on the Comiston Road bank.

In addition, the flower bed at the Greenbank entrance is being left fallow until spring, in order to treat the infestation of celandine. Following this, the beds will be planted with summer flowers.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome new Friends. Please come along to the AGM and join, or complete the form on the insert to this newsletter. Subscription for one calendar year is £3 per individual and £5 per household.

PLEASE KEEP OUR PARK BEAUTIFUL

Additional litter bins and signs have been installed by the Council. Please use them to keep the Park beautiful. In particular, please do not allow your dog to foul the park. Thank you.