



BRAIDBURN VALLEY PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Braidburn Valley Park circa 1954



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Main Entrance to the Park.

August 2007

BRAIDBURN VALLEY PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Section 1 - Introduction

1.0 Location

Braidburn Valley Park (Figure 1.1) was created as a public park in 1933. It is open to the public 24 hours and is well used by the local community of all ages. The linear shape of the park means that it provides an important and popular through route with commuters, dog walkers and is used for informal activities.

The park is located below the busy Comiston Road. Comiston Road, to the East, binds the park on the West to the gardens of Greenbank Crescent properties, and the south by Pentland Gardens and Comiston Spring Avenue. The initials of King George VI and the Queen Mother adorn the main entrance gates, which used to belong to Comiston House but were relocated in the 1930's

Inside, the park is bisected by the Braid Burn a narrow watercourse that flows from the south to the north of the park. The two metre wide burn rises on the northern edge of the Pentlands and flows through the city to the sea at

Portobello. The value of this wildlife corridor has led to the listing of the Park as an Urban Wildlife site in Edinburgh's urban wildlife strategy.

The park consists of mainly short mown grass with trees and shrubberies around its edges. There are groups of staked Sorbus trees with naturalised bulb under planting on the western slopes and a row of Wheatley Elms on the east side. A new wildflower meadow and a cherry tree trefoil planted in 1935 on the south east bank. There is also an amphitheatre cut into the grass on the western slope with a stage opposite fringed with hornbeams.

In addition to the main entrance at Greenbank Crescent there are also another two entrances from Comiston Road, one at Comiston Spring Avenue and a further two from Greenbank Crescent accessing the "Fly Walk" a historic Scottish Right of Way used by Robert Louis Stevenson on his way to Swanston Village at the foothills of the Pentlands.

The Council's in-house Department, Services for Communities, are responsible for the maintenance and development of the park in close partnership with the Friends of Braidburn Valley Park, a community group formed in 2002.



EDINBURGH
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL
SERVICES FOR COMMUNITIES

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Braidburn Valley Park

Map No	NT2469	Scale	NTS
Map Date	14/01/08	Author	A. Grayles
Map Title	South	Project	BBYP 1/03

Figure 1.1 – Location Plan

1.1 Management Plan Framework

This plan sets out the future management, maintenance and development of Braidburn Valley Park and has been produced by the City of Edinburgh Council to provide not only a long-term vision but also details on both developmental and operational duties required to achieve that vision.

The plan covers the period 2007 to 2012 and has a detailed plan of works for that period.

Like any management plan its purpose is to:

“Provide a framework within which all future management is carried out. The plan enables any person involved to understand how and why decisions are taken, and the reasoning behind the policies and proposals for action.”

This plan’s target audience is Elected Members, the local community and Council officers and its style and content should ensure continuity of purpose and consistency in service delivery. It is intended to be a flexible, working document that will be reviewed and updated annually with the Friends Group prior to their Annual General Meeting.

1.2 Green Flag Award Scheme

The Green Flag Award Scheme is a national standard for quality in greenspace management in England and Wales. It is being piloted as a methodology for benchmarking the quality of parks and green spaces in Scotland in 2007 by Greenspace Scotland in partnership with The Civic Trust in England.

Braidburn Valley Park is one of the pilot locations submitted by the City of Edinburgh Council. In 2007, the park was successful in its application for a Green Flag and is applying again in 2008.



Green Flag arrives at Braidburn Valley Park.

October 2007

Section 2 – Vision and Aims

2.0 Introduction

This section sets out a new vision for the park and a series of new objectives that are developed into actions later in the plan.

2.1 Vision

The Council adopted its Edinburgh Public Parks and Gardens Strategy in March 2006. The strategy sets out a vision for its parks that states:

“A quality parks system worthy of international comparison, accessible, diverse and environmentally rich; which fulfils the cultural, social and recreational needs of the people”. (Edinburgh Public Parks and Gardens Strategy, 2006, p49)

In developing this management plan for Braidburn Valley Park, its vision is

“To provide a park that is safe and secure, enhances biodiversity and meets the needs of the local community”

You'll be having your afternoon

TEA IN THE PARK

Saturday
1st. September, 2007
Braidburn Valley Park

Pipers	The 7 Stanes	Art & Crafts
Highland Dancers	Mountain Bike Team	Fire Engine
Family Highland Games	'improve your skills' area.	Vintage Cars
Auld Spice Ceilidh Band	Bikes and instructions provided for children	World-famous 'Duck Race'

Organised by The Friends of Braidburn Valley Park

2.2 Aims

Beneath the new vision lie a series of aims that have been linked to the Green Flag Award Scheme criteria.

The aims are set out in Figure 2.1. Each of these aims is further developed into targets, measures and timescales.

Figure 2.1 - The relationship between Green Flag Award criteria and Management Plan aims

Criteria	Aim
A Welcoming Place	To ensure that Braidburn Valley Park is welcoming and accessible to all possible users
Healthy, Safe and Secure	To ensure the safety of all staff and users of the park
Clean and Well Maintained	To maintain the highest standards of horticulture, cleanliness, grounds and building maintenance
Sustainability	To adopt environmental management principles and therefore reduce the impact of management operations on the environment
Conservation and Heritage	To promote biodiversity through appropriate management and to maintain and promote the historic significance of the park
Community Involvement	To encourage community involvement in the park through consultation, events and activities and the Friends of Braidburn Valley Park
Marketing	To actively promote the park to all potential users
Management	To provide a responsive, flexible and high quality management service

Section 3 – Survey

3.0 Introduction

This section looks at the historic significance of the park and also examines the legal situation with respect to ownership and designations that apply to the park, as well as confirming the strategic significance in the Local Plan. It pulls together recent surveys that have been undertaken to update the baseline data about the park and finally considers the involvement of the community through the Friends group and events.

3.1 Historic Survey of the Park

A full historic survey is still to be undertaken for Braidburn Valley Park.

What is known is that the site, extending to 12.5 hectares, was former farmland, purchased by the Council in 1933 to be used as a public park. In 1935, Girl Guides and Brownies, to commemorate the silver jubilee of King George V, planted around 400 Cherry trees in a trefoil design.

During WWII, much of the ground to the north end of the park was given over to allotments, which were still tended into the 1960's.

Edinburgh's tram service terminated at Braidburn Valley Park, half way along Comiston Road. A tram shelter and pavilion for the comfort of the drivers were built and remain to this day. The last tram ran in 1956 and was commemorated 50 years later in 2006.

More historically, it is understood that Robert Louis Stevenson used Fly Walk on the western boundary of the park. This connected Greenbank and Comiston farms, so was the traditional route from his home in the Pentland hills to The City of Edinburgh.

3.2 Strategic Significance of the Park

Edinburgh values its reputation as one of the most beautiful cities in Europe, renowned for its setting, history and built heritage.

3.2.1 Edinburgh Public Parks and Gardens Strategy

A full review of local policy has been carried out as part of the production of the Edinburgh Public Parks and Gardens Strategy that was adopted by the council in March 2006.

Following adoption of the Edinburgh Public Parks and Gardens Strategy, the Council announced a funding package of £5.6 million to reverse a 30-year decline in spending for parks and gardens.

3.2.2 Development Plan

The development plan for the City comprises the Edinburgh & Lothian's Structure Plan (2004) and a number of local plans. These documents provide the statutory planning framework for the Council's policies and proposals towards the protection and use of the city's open spaces, including the

majority of those identified by this Strategy, and the creation of new areas of open space where there is considered to be a deficiency in its provision.

The Council is in the proposes of reviewing its local plans and aims to reduce their number to two: one to cover Rural West Edinburgh i.e. land west of the city by-pass extending from South Queensferry to the Pentland Hills; the other, a new local plan to be called the Edinburgh City Local Plan, to cover the rest of the City. The Parks & Gardens Strategy, along with other strategies prepared for sports pitch provision, allotments and access to open space, will be important considerations for any new local plan.

3.2.3 Local Plan

The City of Edinburgh Council is currently reviewing its Local Plans. The Edinburgh City Local Plan Consultation Draft was approved for consultation purposes by the Planning Committee on 9 March 2006.

Through its local plans, the Council process a policy of protecting all open spaces, both public and privately owned, which contribute to the amenity of their surroundings and the City, which provide or are capable of providing for the recreational needs of residents and visitors or which are an integral part of the city's landscape or townscape character. These may include open spaces of historic or nature conservation interest. It also promotes both through local plans and supplementary planning guidance, the creation of new areas of major public open space as part of new development and regeneration proposals. The majority of these open spaces are identified on local plan proposals maps and may be covered by one or more designations depending on their environmental quality and value to the community.

3.2.4 Open Space Framework

In addition to its local plans, the Council has produced a number of strategies that promote the better planning and management of its open spaces, principal among these is the Draft Open Space Framework. The Framework acknowledges the ongoing work of both the Council and its stakeholders to improve the open space across the city. There is also an appreciation of the increasing pressures and changing attitudes to open space.

The Framework sets a vision for Open Space:

“Deliver quality and sustainable open space for the City of Edinburgh that continues to contribute to economic prosperity and quality of life”.

There are various projects and strategies underway across the Council that are addressing a range of open space issues. In order to be able to develop both strategy and policy guidance that will update existing open space agendas it was recognised that it would be important to engage those in the city responsible for, or are guardians of, open space to consider the whole picture (the Framework).

The Open Space Framework considers the different types of open space that the city has and should offer, looking at not just green but also civic spaces and considers how the overall protection, enhancement, provision, promotion of open spaces can be achieved and sets out a series of aims to do this.

3.2.5 Biodiversity Action Plan 2004-2009

Braidburn Valley Park is designated as an Urban Wildlife Site in the Edinburgh Urban Wildlife Strategy and contributes to many species and habitat action plans identified in Edinburgh local Biodiversity Action Plan, e.g. :Urban Habitat at Action Plan wetland and Water-courses Action Plan

3.3 **Management Rules**

A revision of Park Management Rules is underway to remove the conflict with the new Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.

3.4 **Park Classification**

Braidburn Valley Park is classified within the Edinburgh Public Parks and Gardens Strategy as a “Community Park”. It is fourth the largest Community Park in the strategy.

Community Parks are defined as “parks serving chiefly the people of a defined local area. These are generally smaller in area and the facilities provided are likely to be relatively simple. Functions should be determined as far as possible by consultation with users and potential users. Access to these parks will be mainly on foot or by cycle.” (Edinburgh Public Parks and Gardens Strategy, 2006, p66).

3.5 **Community Involvement**

The Friends of Braidburn Valley Park provide invaluable support in the management, maintenance and development of this community asset.

Established in 2002 with some 250 members, their most recent and ongoing projects include:

- design and installation of interpretation panels to provide a welcoming place and explain the historic and natural features of the park
- a wildflower meadow development promoting biodiversity and groups an environmental educational package for local schools
- an annual Family Fun Day.
- bulb planting with around 300 children annually.
- tree planting.
- the development of an orienteering course to promote healthy physical activity within the park
- local community task days carrying out voluntary clean-ups. These task days, alongside organised family events promote a real sense of community spirit within the area.



The opening of the interpretation panel and cairn.

April 2005



The Friends of Braidburn Valley Park work in partnership with the Council and have secured external grant funding towards these projects.

The efforts of the friends of Braidburn Valley Park are being recognised and the group have been asked to give talks and provide guidance to other friend groups, Scottish green space initiative and even the Global Strategy on plant conservation.

Dog Show held in Braidburn Valley Park circa 1961.



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3.6 Surveys and Assessments Undertaken

3.6.1 Ecological Survey

An ecological survey was made in 2003 by McBride Habitats, recommendations from this report are being used to shape the future development of the biodiversity of the park.

3.6.2 Hard and Soft Landscape Survey

Plans showing the location of all hard and soft features are currently being revised. An aerial view of the park is shown in Figure 3.1.

3.6.3 Tree Survey

Hamilton Landscape Services produced a woodland management plan with a comprehensive tree survey. Recommendations from this report will be used to shape the future development of the landscape features of the park and will be reflected in future in this management plan.

Section 4 - Analysis

4.0 Introduction

This Section follows the criteria headings within the 'Raising the Standard – The Green Flag Award Guidance Manual' (2004) and highlights how the park ties in to the Green Flag Award Standard.

4.1 A Welcoming Place

The park is, on the whole, a welcoming place, that leads the visitor in with views opening out into the wider park from all approaches.

4.1.1 Finding the Park

The location is in the southern fringes of Edinburgh. The park connects the Council housing estate of Oxfords and the suburbs of Greenbanks, Braids and Morningside.

There is a well defined main entrance at the junction of Greenbank Crescent and Braidburn Terrace with Comiston Road, a busy intersection. This intersection has pedestrian crossings which enables easy access to the park to the South.

There are six other entrances to the park. An approach should be developed to define these more coherently, e.g.: through welcome boards, identification signs, management of the weeds in Fly Walk and consideration of aesthetics.

Public bus routes regularly pass along Comiston Road (Nos.11 + 15) and Greenbank Crescent (Nos. 5+16) in and out of the city and cyclists and pedestrians can travel through the park.

4.1.2 Physical Access

The majority of park users will be local residents; however, it is possible for others to visit the park by a variety of means.

Car parking is available along side streets within easy walking distance of the park.

Walkers can access the "Fly Walk", a historic Scottish Right of Way used by Robert Louis Stevenson on his way to Swanston Village at the foothills of the Pentlands. The route is way marked through the park.

The park is used by cyclists mainly as a through-out route or for teaching children. Responsible cycling should be encouraged through signage and monitoring.

4.1.3 Social Access

Community involvement in Braidburn Valley Park has been key to improving the park for the use by local residents.

The park offers access to the infirm and disabled.

4.1.4 Aspects of Design

The Friends of Braidburn Valley Park are active in developing the park, it is crucial that this continues and that future plans for the development of the park continue to be supported through consultation with the Friends and the wider community, e.g.: Tree planting proposals.

4.2 Healthy, Safe and Secure

4.2.1 Site Equipment

Being a local park most users arrive on foot or on bicycle, however there is a bus stop near many of the park entrances. Pedestrian crossings provide safe access across some of the busy roads.

The main pedestrian access through the main route via Greenbank Crescent to Oxbgangs Avenue is a three metre wide tarmac path in good condition with a small area of damage caused by a recent burnt out litter bin. There is scope for improving the other entrances and footpath linking the Fly Walk, in addition to resurfacing the steps from Comiston Spring Avenue.

There are ample seating areas throughout the park with litter bins also well provided. The Park has a few minor problems with vandalism generally, through displacement of the litter bins and graffiti.

The park is a popular route for cycling commuters and responsible cycling should be promoted with additional signage.

4.2.2 Personal Security

There are clear sight lines that assist in lending a sense of safety through the park, with the possible exception of the southern section of Fly Walk which has more vegetation close to the path, and a lit route from Comiston Road to Greenbank Crescent and most paths are in good condition.

There is potential for the installation of an additional footbridge near the main entrance, this would link the desire line from the east side of the burn to the main footpath. Although the burn in general is banked by gentle slopes there is a requirement for either a bridge or section of rail at this point wide enough for pedestrian and pass, but not for vehicles.

Park Rangers patrol daily via a mobile unit and log incidents to the Supervisor and Community Parks Officer.

The Community Police Officer walks through the park and liaises with the department on incidents of anti social behaviour.

Environmental Wardens are also available for enforcement of dog fouling fines and clearing of litter and patrol the park on occasions.

Accidents are reported to the Health and Safety Officer and recorded centrally.

A Disability Discrimination Act compliance audit was undertaken in 1999.

4.2.3 Facilities

It is not likely that the Council would prioritise provision of toilets at the moment in this park as most people use it as a through route and on the occasion of events etc. it may be more cost effective for a temporary toilet block.

4.3 **Clean and Maintained**

The park is currently maintained by The Council's Services for Communities department. Maintenance is carried out in the Best Value standard and measured in the contract specification.

4.3.1 Litter

The Taskforce will cleanse the park and empty the litterbins every day.

The Friends of Braidburn Valley Park undertake a comprehensive clean up of the park and burn twice annually. Local Schools also undertake regular clean ups.

Both are supported by the Council through their local services provision.

4.3.2 Grounds Maintenance

All work will be carried out in accordance with the annual ground maintenance specification.

- Most of the grass is closely mown roughly 17 times a year.
- Hedges are cut twice a year
- The bedding at the main entrance gate is changed twice a year.
- The wildflower meadow will be strimmed and the cut material removed once a year.
- The burn is cleared out twice a year by the FBVP
- Shrub beds and annual bed should be kept weed free.
- The burnside vegetation will be left alone, except twice annual cuts of vegetation opposite seats, in front of the stage/ amphitheatre, in strips beside the bridges and in front of the area used for park events.

4.3.3 Buildings and Fabric Maintenance

The two substations in the park belong to Scottish Gas and Scottish Power respectively. Reporting of graffiti is made to them with a request for its removal.

The Council also provide a dedicated anti-graffiti unit to clear up other areas. Structural defects are reported to either the Council's Property Services Department or the Services for Communities, Parks Workshop staff, who employ a small squad of trade staff.

4.4 Sustainability

4.4.1 Environmental Sustainability

The Council has a duty to protect the environment wherever possible by use of suitable purchasing operations.

In the course of our operations and within resource constraints, we will improve our environmental performance [in purchasing] by encouraging manufacturers, suppliers and contractors through our contracts and other means to improve or develop environmentally preferable goods and services at competitive prices.

The lighting in the park is provided by low energy light bulbs, Council vehicles are diesel, machinery used in the park use unleaded fuel and products for fabric maintenance are CFC free.

4.4.2 Pesticides

A pesticide policy needs to be developed that considers the minimisation of the use of pesticides.

However, current best practice suggests that pesticide application is only used when cultural practices will not provide an adequate control.

Only affected areas are treated and using strategies that are sensitive to the needs of the public and the environment.

Application of any chemicals are scheduled during non-peak times of park use and wherever possible signs will be posted per manufacturer label for safe re-entry time period, if appropriate.

All operatives involved in the application of pesticides are trained to the approved certification level required.

The only pesticides used in Braidburn Valley Park are glyphosate; this is for mainly path areas and for spot treatment in shrub beds and treatment of any invasive giant hogweed.

This is twice a year and but could be minimised by cultural methods i.e. hoeing or winter edging of the pathways. Parks Operations record all chemical usage.

4.4.3 Peat use

The UK 1994 Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) states that UK consumption of peat based growing media was to be cut by 40% by 2005 and a further 90% reduction was set for 2010. Government surveys are undertaken regularly which monitor the use of peat and peat based alternatives.

Prior to 2004 our central nursery at the Inch in Edinburgh, used only peat based growing mediums. Since then they have reduced our consumption of peat by 25% and aim to meet the 2010 targets set under B.A.P.

A number of alternatives to peat have been incorporated at the Inch Nursery and the following peat free materials have been used in our growing mixes;

- Inch Nursery compost
- Peat free composts
- Recycled composts (green waste)
- Worm Cast
- Fine bark
- Vermiculite
- Sand

A number of changes have been introduced in our growing practices with a view to reducing peat use across the city.

- Re-measuring of flower beds with more accurate numbers of required plants
- Introduction of stricter stock control
- Only grow required numbers and improve growing practices to minimise loss
- Use smaller pot and pack sizes.

Trials were undertaken in 2007 using various mediums, 50% Peat free and totally peat free mixtures were trialled with mixed results. Similar trials will be undertaken in 2008 and the information gathered over the two year period will give greater indication as to the structure of the future growing mediums to be used at our nursery.

The 2007 trial indicated that the in house peat free mixture was in general the better medium but the continuation of the trial this year will give a clearer picture of the outcome.

There is no peat used in the park except in the production of the bedding plants used at the bed at the main entrance.

4.4.4 Waste minimisation

Where possible tree works are chipped on site otherwise timber is transported and stored for future sale.

The central nursery is to replace its gas boiler with a wood chip boiler; this would be sustained from Council timber stock.

The Council where possible use green waste for composting, future changes to the cutting dates of grass would allow for the composting of this material.

Leaves are collected and composted and used in the Council owned allotment sites.

4.5 Conservation and Heritage

A prime function of City Parks and Gardens is to provide the opportunity for people to experience the natural environment and to gain insights into and participate in wildlife and woodland management. Everyone has a responsibility to heighten their environmental awareness and to put into practise the principles of nature conservation. The City of Edinburgh Council has introduced its Biodiversity Action Plan in conjunction with a wide partnership of Groups including the Forestry Commission, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Wildlife Trust. The current key issue is whether the Action Plan is being effectively implemented.

In 2003, the Friends of Braidburn Valley Park commissioned an ecological survey. This baseline information and recommendations is being used to help develop the park's biodiversity, for example, the wildflower meadow introduced 22 species in a concentrated area. This was funded through the Scottish Government's Biodiversity Action Grant and the City of Edinburgh Council's local Biodiversity Action Grant Scheme

In 2006, to mark the launch of 'Biodiversity Fortnight', schoolchildren joined Deputy Environment Minister to plant more wildflowers into the wildflower meadow at Braidburn Valley Park.

The seated area of the theatre has lost some definition over a period. The cutting method/machine type should be re considered to make this feature more prominent as it is unique amongst Edinburgh parks.

There is a listed tram shelter at Comiston Road that should be opened up for access and interpreted for its historical significance, plans are ongoing with a view to re-opening the shelter for public use.

4.5.1 Arboriculture and Woodland Management

Trees form a major part of the park's landscape. In addition to large mature species there are the interesting features of the Cherry trees and Hornbeams.

The Council have a Forestry Division which manages most of the City's tree stock. It is a unit that also provides an on-call system for emergency/storm damaged trees.

In 1935, 400 Cherry trees were planted by the Girl Guides and Brownies in the shape of a trefoil to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of King George V. These trees are now in decline and a recent feasibility study was made to assess the options for removal and replanting.

The decline in the health of the cherry trees resulted in a feasibility report on their replacement and a woodland management plan for the rest of the park, this included a full tree survey being conducted. In terms of woodland and

tree cover and for the purposes of management the Park has the following features.

Cherry Tree Trefoil - Individual Trees -	located on the south eastern slopes of the Park primarily located on the Park's eastern boundary, and around the stage
Woodland areas - Staked Trees -	there are three small areas of woodland cover these are relatively recently planted trees, primarily located on the western slopes and on the eastern boundary
Riparian Zone -	this comprises the vegetation adjacent to the Burn, including a wooded element.

4.5.1.1 Trefoil Management

The cherry tree trefoil was generally in poor condition, with many of the trees in decline and in the long-run they will need to be replaced. There were four main management options put forward for consideration in 2007, for the replacement of the cherry trees and following discussions with the Friends of the Braidburn Valley Park the option below was considered to be most feasible for implementation in silvicultural terms and acceptance in amenity terms.

A phased removal of sections of the trefoil, based on overall condition has now been agreed.

This option provides a compromise between visual disturbance and frequency of operations, with felling restricted to three phases in which a third of the trefoil will be removed and replaced at a time. The approach would limit the initial impact of the works, while still achieving some economies of scale. It would also provide a good test of the replanting methods, which could be refined following an assessment of the initial phase of works.

4.5.1.2 Individual Trees

In this section the mature specimen trees in the Park are described and recommendations given. The majority of trees are mature Wheatley elm in a line of along the east side of the site, beside Comiston Road. These trees have been subject to careful management in the past, with felled elms having been replaced by Lime and Norway Maple standards. The policy now is to replace Elms with Red- Twigged Limes to give height and structure to this avenue feature. There are also a few trees in the north and south ends of the site which as a result of position or condition are worthy of mention. These trees are listed in the table below. In addition, there are a number of Hornbeams, which surround the stage area on three sides and a group of poplar and birch trees on the southern boundary.

Trees on Southern Boundary, of the site are mature mixed broadleaves with an understorey of mixed shrubs. In total there are 33 Lombardy poplar, 15 birch and 1 whitebeam. The poplar are on average 18m tall and the other species are around 14m tall. The shrubs (laurel, snowberry and cotoneaster) form a dense thicket to 4m tall. Although the poplar add landscape and ecological value to the area they are likely to cause problems in the future.

4.5.1.3 Woodland Areas

There are three small areas of mature woodland and scrub within the Park, mainly around the outer edges. These woods are small and linear in shape as they are restricted by the site boundaries and the mowing regime. The only piece of long-standing woodland is a strip at the North-East corner of the park, which is shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map from 1855 as woodland. The two other areas are younger and are dominated by sapling to semi-mature trees and scrub.

There is little opportunity to enlarge the existing woodland areas and there are sufficient young trees within them to ensure their continuance, so management should concentrate on maintaining the overall health of the woods and ensuring the safety of the trees.

The woodlands are so narrow and in such close proximity to roads and paths that the retention of standing deadwood is neither necessary nor practical.

4.5.1.4 Staked Trees

There has been a significant amount of standard tree planting in the Park in the last 5-10 years, the vast majority of which has been Sorbus species. The planting has taken the form of a series of small rowan roundels close to the paths and larger swathes of planting around the edge of the site.

The trees have generally been secured with wooden stakes, rubber ties and spacer blocks, in some cases the stake is causing rubbing damage on the stem of the tree.

4.5.1.5 Riparian Zone

The Park has a distinct valley shape with the Braid Burn running northwards through its centre. On both sides of the burn there are generally narrow riparian strips, which are confined by the maximisation of the amenity grassland through regular mowing. At the northern end, where the burn leaves the site, is a broader area of rough grassland which has been planted with standard trees, being mainly rowan with occasional alder and cherry.

Within the riparian area there is a relatively good mixture of full shade, dappled shade and no shade provided by a good variety of tree and shrub species (grey willow, cherry, white willow, hawthorn, elder, crab apple, sycamore, crack willow and white poplar) which are in a reasonable range of age classes. The south end in particular has almost full canopy cover by the burn, while the central section is variable and the north end is rather open. If anything there is a lack of mature to over-mature trees on the river bank, but this is to be expected given the proximity of the footpath. Where the burn passes the cherry trefoil there is considerable cherry sucker regeneration on the east bank, as the grass is not regularly cut.

The trees at the North end of the park were planted by the Primary 7 pupils of South Morningside Primary school which is local to the park, and were planted as part of their legacy tree planting project.

Management Proposals

The riparian habitat could be improved by expanding the extent of un-mown vegetation around the burn and by planting more trees which are appropriate to the location.

Currently the un-mown strip next to the burn is as little as 3m wide in places, and quite often it is contained by footpaths. By reducing the mowing next to the burn, taller herbaceous vegetation can become established which will filter water entering the burn improving water quality; act as a greater store for flood water; provide food for invertebrates and also give cover for stream-side animals.

4.5.2 Natural features and biodiversity

A prime function of City Parks and Gardens is to provide the opportunity for people to experience the natural environment and to gain insights into and participate in wildlife and woodland management. Everyone has a responsibility to heighten their environmental awareness and to put into practise the principles of nature conservation. The City of Edinburgh Council has a five-year Biodiversity Action Plan (2004-2009) produced in conjunction with a wide partnership of groups including the Forestry Commission, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Wildlife Trust. Sections relevant to this park are the:

- Wetlands and Watercourses Habitat Action Plan
- Urban Habitat Action Plan
- Woodland Habitat Action Plan
- Water Vole Action Plan

For further information go to www.edinburgh.gov.uk/biodiversity

In 2003, the Friends of Braidburn Valley Park commissioned an ecological survey. This, and its recommendations, is being used as the basis to enhance the park's biodiversity. Wildflower meadows have been created, which have introduced 22 species to the park. This project was funded through the Scottish Government's Biodiversity Action Grant and the City of Edinburgh Council's local Biodiversity Action Grant Scheme. Local school children helped plant the meadows and are involved with their annual maintenance.

Other developments to improve biodiversity and attract wildlife to the park, include the installation of bird and bat boxes and bluebell planting. An education pack and interpretation panels, both produced by the Friends group, provide further in-depth information on the wildlife of the park.

The Braidburn, which runs northwards through the park provides a natural wildlife corridor. Within the riparian zone there is a relatively good mixture of full shade, dappled shade and no shade provided by a good variety of tree and shrub species (grey willow, cherry, white willow, hawthorn, elder, crab apple, sycamore, crack willow and white poplar) which are in a reasonable range of age classes. The south end in particular has almost full canopy cover by the burn, while the central section is variable and the north end is rather open. If anything there is a lack of mature to over-mature trees on the

river bank, but this is to be expected given the proximity of the footpath. Where the burn passes the cherry trefoil there is considerable cherry sucker regeneration on the east bank, as the grass is not regularly cut.

Along the length of the burn there is approximately 3m wide strip of un-mown grass. The riparian habitat could be improved by expanding the extent of this un-mown vegetation around the burn and by planting more trees which are appropriate to the location. By reducing the mowing next to the burn, taller herbaceous vegetation can become established which will filter water entering the burn improving water quality; act as a greater store for flood water; provide food for invertebrates and also give cover for stream-side animals.

4.5.3 Other features

The seated area of the theatre has lost some definition over a period. The cutting method/machine type should be re considered to make this feature more prominent as it is a unique amongst Edinburgh parks.

There is a listed tram shelter at Comiston Road that should be opened up for access and interpreted for its historical significance.

4.6 Community Involvement

The City of Edinburgh Council actively promote community involvement in decision making of park management through its friends groups.

4.6.1 Events

At present the park is used for an annual Family Day organised by the Friends of Braidburn Valley Park. It is also used for a range of other events organised by a range of organisations, eg: local primary school sports day, cross country and orienteering events, duck racing ect. Consideration should be given for increasing events in the park particularly in use with the amphitheatre.

4.6.2 Consultation/User Surveys

Park user surveys usually aim to ascertain the type of user, frequency of use, form of use and satisfaction with the park and its facilities. The City of Edinburgh Council commissioned a user/non-user survey the results of which were published by The Audience Business (TAB) in September 2002. The aims of the survey were to:

- Estimate usage of parks and gardens;
- Establish the visitor demographic profile;
- Understand motivations and barriers;
- Establish demographic profiles and identify barriers for non-users;

The survey was therefore broad in scope in that non-users and visitors to Edinburgh were included in the sample population.

4.6.3 Friends Group

The Friends of Braidburn Park have approx 250 members and are very proactive and have been involved in a number of projects including the design and installation of interpretation panels, development of the wildflower meadow and voluntary burn clear ups.

There could be sections of the local community however that do not at present use the park; this could be minority groups or other disadvantaged groups.

The friends also produce a newsletter- The Valley Voice- which reaches a wider audience through circulation to local schools, uninformed organisations, etc.

Current contact details:

Chair Karen Young, 13 Greenbank Loan, Edinburgh.

Telephone: 0131 446 9795 E-mail: Young.Family@talktalk.net



Planting of Spring flowering bulbs within the tree belt area.

November 2002



Result of the Spring bulb planting.

2004

4.7 Marketing

4.7.1 Park Promotion

A range of media is used to promote Braidburn Valley Park and the activities that occur within it.

At the entrance of the park there is a high quality notice board which is updated on a regular basis by the Friends group. The notice board is used to inform the local people about current improvement programmes, advertise park events and volunteer opportunities and also provide contact information.

The Friends produce 'The Valley Voice', a bi-annual newsletter highlighting events that have taken place within the park, the work of volunteers and future events. This is distributed widely in the local area. They have also received a grant to set up a website and it is envisaged that this will be operational by March 2008

Due to the number of improvements and events in the park, and the achievement of Green Flag status in 2007 – a number of press releases have been produced and appeared in local press. These included two large articles featuring the Friends group following the announcement of the park obtaining its first Green Flag, and a feature on the Girl Guide involvement with the start of the Cherry tree replacement.

The Councils website (www.edinburgh.gov.uk) is used to promote parks and greenspaces in Edinburgh, and highlight the parks achieving Green Flag status. At time of writing the Friends group are seeking funding to create their own dedicated website for the park.

To raise the profile of the Green Flag Award in Scotland, Beautiful Scotland (equivalent to Britain in Bloom) judges will be brought to visit the park during the summer.

4.7.2 Interpretation and Education

The Friends have produced, with Glidden Design, a series of orientation and interpretation panels documenting the history, wildlife and geological features of the park. The panels are designed to communicate on a number of levels. This means that the viewer can simply glance at the panels for basic orientation, or can read some key information. For those desiring more detailed information, there are many facts and figures presented in easily digested form.

Braidburn Valley Park is regularly used by local primary schools for environmental education and learning practices, sports day, cross country running and privilege time. In the last year pupils have been involved with bulb planting and wildflower work. The pupils of South Morningside PS also took part in a story and picture competition about what they liked about the park. The winning entry was featured in the Valley Voice. Following the successful work with local schools the Friends group have developed an education pack for the park.

In the winter the Friends group obtained a Parks and Gardens Community Grant which allowed them to create a permanent orienteering course in the park. The 21 point course was designed by pupils from South Morningside PS. A map of the course will be available on the Friends website. The Edinburgh Orienteering Club has trained local teachers and youth group leaders on orienteering and using the course. This will encourage more people to use the course.

Finally, Braidburn Valley Park was the venue for the Scottish Green Flag judges training in 2007. This brought park professionals from across Scotland to the park, and helped raise its profile.

4.7.3 Marketing Plan and Park Promotion

A marketing plan for the park sets out how it intends to improve the way the park is promoted. This plan identifies the current user groups and an action plan for the future marketing and promotion of the park.

Marketing is recognised as being the most difficult part of the process in encouraging people to use the park and become aware of the issues surrounding it. By creating a good quality and safe area in which to visit and play it is hoped this will encourage users to the park.

The Friends of Braidburn Valley Park do not have a web site at present, but have a promotional leaflet about the park currently in production.

The Council also have an important role to play in marketing the park and have been working on developing its website to include information on key green spaces.

4.8 Management

4.8.1 Environment Service Grouping

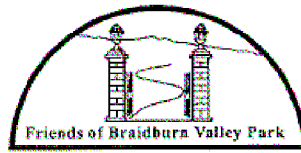
The overall management, development and maintenance of the park will be guided by this plan. The overall direction of the city's parks will be influenced by the Edinburgh Public Parks and Gardens Strategy and acting on its recommendations.

On 1 May 2007 the Parks Unit was transferred to the new Services for Communities Department. The Department will have responsibility for many locally delivered services including roads, street lighting, housing, street cleaning and refuse collection, and means that the Task Forces and Parks Unit was reunited within the same division. The structure of the new Department is likely to mean that significant efficiencies will result, and will be an aid in achieving best value.

The management plan provides an opportunity for the input of the operational section to assist in the success of the future management of the park. A review will be undertaken over 2008, recommended changes in the mown areas and the bedding display will be considered at this time to provide a greater impact at the main entrance.

4.8.2 Park Management

The service aims to provide a responsive, flexible and high quality management service, which needs some form of assessment, and therefore be monitored at regular intervals.



FRIENDS OF BRAIDBURN VALLEY PARK

Clean Up of Braidburn Valley Park

Sunday 7th October

2-4pm

Waders and Litter Pickers provided

BRAIDBURN VALLEY PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Section 5 – Action Plan

This document briefly outlines progress with the City of Edinburgh's Council Management Plan for Braidburn Valley Park. The management plan also sets out future management, maintenance and development of the park and has been produced to provide not only medium a long-term visions but also details on both developmental and operational duties required to achieve that vision.

The management plan is used primarily for guiding everyone involved in the park through the day-to-day, as well as year to year, management and maintenance issues.

The action plan will be reviewed and updated annually, coinciding with the friends of Braidburn Valley Park's Annual General Meeting.

Throughout this document reference is made to the following abbreviations:

CPO= Park's Officer CPR= Park Ranger FOBVP= Friends of Braidburn Valley Park. NEM = Neighbourhood Environment Manager
 ASC = Active Schools Co-Ordinator SEPA = Scottish Environmental Protection Agency.

Section 1 – A Welcoming Place

Aim: To ensure that the park is welcoming and accessible to all possible users.

Actions	Recommendation	Measures	Timetable	Lead Officer	Progress	Review
Lack of park signage at entrances	1	Signboards at entrances	2008	CPO	Partially Met	2009
Review existing signage	2	Undertake an audit and review existing signage	2008	CPO	On Going	2009
Improve Access	3	Repair steps at Comiston Spring Avenue	2008	CPO	Quotes Sought	2009
Programme of Park Improvements.	4	Develop a programme of improvements for consultations with FOBVP	2008	CPO	ON Going	2009

Section 2 – Health, Safe and Secure

Aim: To ensure the safety of all staff and users of the park

Actions	Recommendation	Measures	Timetable	Lead Officer	Progress	Review
Dog Fouling management	5	Provide Dog bags, Develop a media campaign to raise awareness.	2008 2008	CPR CPR	On Going Complete	2009
Toilet provision and pavilion redevelopment	6	Consider the use of the pavilion and develop suitable uses or removal.	2009	CPO/NEM	On Going	2009
Programme sports activities for young people.	7	Completed and launch orienteering course. Develop a trim trail	2008 2010	CPO/CPR ASC. CPO/CPR	Expected completion by May 2008 On Going	2010
Repair park furniture	8	Replace benches and consider additional sites	2008	CPO	Benches Ordered	2009
Public education	9	Run community event to promote responsible park use	2008	CPO/CPR/FOBVP	Not Completed	2009
New footbridge	10	Locate funding for the new installation of a new footbridge.	2010	CPO	Quotes and plans received funding being sought.	2010
Park user Surveys	10a	Carry out user survey of park to provide information on park use and safety.	2009	CPO/NEM/FOBVP	Not Completed	2009

Section 3 – Clean and Well Maintained

Aim: To maintain the highest standards of horticulture, cleanliness and grounds maintenance.

Actions	Recommendation	Measures	Timetable	Lead Officer	Progress	Review
Work Programming	11	Develop works programme with operational managers	2007 2008	CPO	2007 schedule complete New schedule in progress.	2009
Improve maintenance standards	12	Identify ways of improving standards and work with operational managers to make improvements. Measure and evaluate progress.	2008	CP	On Going	2009

Section 4 – Sustainability

Aim: To adopt environmental management principles and therefore reduce the impact of management operations on the environment.

Actions	Recommendation	Measures	Timetable	Lead Officer	Progress	Review
Environmental Strategy	13	Create an action plan and documents	2008	CPO		
Corporate Procurement	14	Awareness of environment-friendly products	2008	CPO	Continuous	2009

Section 5 – Conservation and Heritage

Aim: To promote biodiversity through appropriate management.

Actions	Recommendation	Measures	Timetable	Lead Officer	Progress	Review
Cherry Trefoil Replacement	15	Engage with Girls Guides on suitable way forward.	2007	CPO/FOBVP	Work starting Jan 2008	2008
Develop spring meadow	16	Develop spring meadow at Comiston Avenue entrance	2007	CPO/FOBVP	On Going	2008
Wildlife Planting	17	Additional 1000 bluebells planted. Ongoing Natural Bulb planting to include snowdrops, daffodils, crocus and bluebells.	2008	CPO/FOBVP	Completed 2007 On going	2008 2009
Burn improvements	18	Develop plans for increasing riparian zone and creation of backwaters. Develop monitoring programme for water quality.	2008 2007	CPO/FOBVP CPR/SEPA	On going On going	
Promoting habitat creation	19	Promote education package to local primary schools.	2007	CPR/FOBVP	Not completed	2008
Habitat management	20	Evaluate a monitor grass cutting regime	2008	CPO/FOBVP	On going	2009

			changes on eastern slopes.			
Install bird and bat boxes	21	Installation of 10 bat boxes.	2008	CPR/FOBVP	Funding agreed	2009

Section 6 – Heritage

Aim: Maintain the historical integrity of the park, its character zones, views and vistas and build style.

Actions	Recommendation	Measures	Timetable	Lead Officer	Progress	Review
Tram Shelter	22	Consider remove of railings and install interpretation panel.	2008	CPO		
Amphitheatre	23	Develop a programme of improvements to the maintenance. Undertake a review of Amphitheatre steps and potential renewal.	2007 2008	CPO CPO	On Going Quotes sought	2008 2009

Section 7 –Community Involvement

Aim: To involve the community in decisions affecting the park.

Actions	Recommendation	Measures	Timetable	Lead Officer	Progress	Review
Equalities assessment	24	Arrange meeting with FOBVP and an equalities group.	2007	CPO		

Section 8 – Marketing

Aim: To actively promote the park to all potential users.

Actions	Recommendation	Measures	Timetable	Lead Officer	Progress	Review
Marketing the park	25	Developing a marketing strategy for the FOBVP	2008	CPR		
Promotion	26	Parks Leaflet + friends leaflet	2008	CPR/FOBVP		
Create a FOBVP website	27	Assist in the development of a FOBVP website	2008	CPR/CPO/FOBVP	Proposed start date March 2008	
Update council website	28	Update council website	2008	CPO		

Section 9 – Management

Aim: To actively promote the park to all potential users.

Actions	Recommendation	Measures	Timetable	Lead Officer	Progress	Review
Green Flag Award Scheme pilot	29	Success in pilot Continuation in Pilot	2007 2008	CPO CPO/NEM	Green Flag Awarded Agreed	2008 2008

Section 6

Marketing Plan – Braidburn Valley Park

Our Goal

The Council aims to encourage and maximise the use of the park by everyone with a particular focus on our corporate priorities, so that we can:

- Make community planning a reality
- Move towards an inclusive society
- Making Edinburgh a safer and healthier place
- Secure prosperity and manage growth
- Deliver better education, training and lifelong learning
- Develop a quality and sustainable environment

Current user groups

Broad sectors of the community currently use this site:

- Retired and elderly- use the park occasionally for sitting and relaxation requiring a number of seats close to the path network.
- Parents with pre-school children - use the park as a through route to and from the primary school.
- School children- use the park for school visits and projects on wildlife as well as for recreational purposes and as a meeting area outside school.
- Disabled users – the level path network through the park is inviting to disabled users although the steeper slopes and rougher paths on the Valley sides are more challenging.
- Sports users – There are no formal sports facilities but the park is used for cross country running, orienteering and informal sports.
- Dog walkers - use the park to exercise their pets, in safety all day.
- Formed in 2002(The friends of Braidburn Valley Park organise some of the parks events, as well as promotional activities for the local community with additional help being available from the council.
- Visitors and other members of the community – use the site for recreation, relaxation and visiting events and taking part in activities.
- Cyclists- they use the park as a through route and it is a popular route to teach children to cycle

Future marketing of the park.

The council want to see increasingly diverse and inclusive use of the park in the future. The council shall promote the park by:

	Marketing Aims	Targets Identified	Action by	Date	Targets Achieved
1	Obtain a Green Flag Award in 2007 pilot.	Green Flag Status in 2007. Raise Green Flag Award profile within local community.	CPO CPO/FOBVP	2007 2008	YES On Going
2	Making people feel welcome, providing good well maintained facilities and providing an opportunity to become involved in the parks maintenance and management to improve the visitor's experience.	Supporting the Friends Group and involving them in parks management. Install appropriate signage to and from the park.	CPO/CPR/FOBUP CPO	2007 2008	YES YES
3	Facilitating park usage by community organisations such as youth groups – scouts, guides and cadets, and groups of other age sectors including the elderly and disabled.	Supporting the Friends Group to use the park for events and encouraging participation by other organisations through annual events programmes.	CPO	2007	On Going
4	Hosting additional events and assisting on funding applications to enable the Friends Group year on year.	Supporting the friends Group to use the park for events and encouraging participation by other organisations and public support through an annual events programme.	CPO	2007	On Going
5	Introducing literature about the park, its history, character, features and organised events. These shall be distributed to all local tourists information points, libraries, and council offices and posted online on the councils web site.	Develop Council's Website Assist the Friends Group in development a site leaflet.	PGM CPR	2008/09 2007/08	On Going On Going

	Marketing Aims	Targets Identified	Action by	Date	Targets Achieved
6	Improving access to the park by sign posting from the town centre as well as welcoming signs at the park as part of the Edinburgh core path network.	Install new signs in partnership with Services for communities, Roads department and others, including new park signage.	PGM	2008	
7	Promoting the unique character of the park.	Undertake programme of improvements as identified within the Management Plan, advertise and promote improvements as they happen, through events, posters and media campaigns.	CPO/FOBVP/CPR	2007	ON GOING
8	Increasing opportunities for improving health through exercise, recreation and activities.	Partnership working with community groups, local care providers, doctors by the Park Rangers.	CPR/ ASC	2008	NOT MET
9	Forge long term links with local primary and nursery schools in providing a site for use by them in order to meet the needs of the national curriculum, supply education packs and other useful information to local schools.	Support link between local schools and the Friends to further develop school needs in the park and help to develop and implement these.	CPR/FOBVP	2007	

CPO - Parks Officer
 PGM - Parks and Green space Manager
 CPR - Park Ranger
 FOBVP - Friends of Braidburn Valley Park.
 ASC - Active Schools Coordinators



Wild Flower garden grass raking by local children and Friends Group.

October 2007