



Friends of Braidburn Valley Park

Minutes of AGM - Sunday 28th February 2016

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.

In particular, a tree was planted in the David Wright Community Orchard for Louise Maguire, and photos of the park were presented, with grateful thanks to Louise for her contribution to the park and Management Committee over the years. This was particularly in relation to her role as Honorary Tree Warden; as editor of the Valley Voice; and most recently as a driving force behind the Dog Show.

The meeting then moved to Greenbank Church Hall for the formal part of the AGM.

Apologies were received from Linda Bendle, Alan Smith, Charles Black, Jerry & Chris Gregson, Margery and Gerald Goodban, Barrie Wilkinson and Alan Fleming.

Minutes of 2015 AGM – accepted without change.

Chairman's Report

Awards

- **Green Flag** – We received the prestigious Green Flag 2015/16 for the ninth year running. The new flag was raised at Tea in the Park in September 2015.

Infrastructure

- **Main Entrance Pillar, East Urn** – In April 2015, a Council vehicle hit the Grade C listed east pillar and knocked off the decorative urn. Fortunately, it was not as damaged as the west urn that was knocked off a couple of years previously, so was salvaged by the Council and reinstated. There are still small parts missing that the Council say that they will replace.
- **Sacrificial Bollards** – in June 2015, two movable sacrificial bollards were installed next to the entrance pillars with the intention is that they force vehicles to square up to the main pillars before progressing through. The bollards were not to the specification that the Friends had suggested, and the west one had rusted into position by September so that a fire engine could not get through for Tea in the Park. The central bollard continues to be a concern, as the Friends are regularly called upon to remove it if there are accidents in the park to allow ambulances to enter.
- **Herbaceous Border at Main Entrance** – this was replanted with a permanent display rather than the seasonal ones. The Friends chose the colour scheme (white, grey, blue, purple) and plant choices which should be good for wildlife.
- **Scout Path** – In May, as a community service, Scouts from Greenbank Church completed the last three meters extension of the north path and topped up the surface

of the whole path.

Projects

• Trees

- In March 2015, 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 Oxgangs entrance and near the pavilion. A number of oaks and hazels donated by members of the public were planted at the same time.
- In March 2015, Edinburgh Council 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.
- Also, in March 2015, the Council replaced 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 grown in the Botanics.
- The Friends approached Edinburgh Council for support for the replacement of all the rest of the Cherry Tree trefoil and were passed to Edinburgh and Lothian Greenspace Trust. After a site meeting and sharing information, ELGT are approaching different funding sources to start the project.

- **The David Wright Community Orchard** was planted on Sunday 1st November 2015. 10 trees (8 apples, 2 plums) were planted to coincide with the 80th anniversary of the cherry tree trefoil being planted, and two of the original Girl Guides attended the planting event. The David Wright Community Orchard is named after a much loved local greengrocer who recently passed away. A Just Giving page was set up in David's memory and some of these funds will be used to site a memorial bench in the park in David's name overlooking the orchard – the bench will be painted 'greengrocer green'. An interpretation panel will also be erected near the orchard

- **Medal Routes Project** – run by The Ramblers and as a legacy of the Commonwealth Games the Friends mapped three walking routes from the main park gates "hub" – a 15 minute Bronze medal walk; 30 minute Silver medal walk; and 60 minute Gold medal walk. These have been uploaded to, are being promoted through, The Ramblers website (www.ramblers.org.uk) and Walks4life website (www.walk4life.info). Feedback is positive.

- **Green Dog Walking Scheme** – in partnership with the Friends of the Hermitage, we were successful in getting a substantial grant from Edinburgh Council to pay for promotional material for the Green Dog Walking Scheme, eg: leaflets, poo bags, lanyards. We have approached local schools to provide education in responsible dog ownership and in promoting the scheme.

- **Japanese Butterbur Removal** – hand-control of this invasive species continued with special help from Greenbank Scouts in May 2015.

- **Wildflower Meadow** – in October 2015, 60 children from South Morningside Primary carried out the annual rake of the wildflower meadow and learnt about the uses of wildflowers.

- **Graffiti** – in August 2015, 15 young people from the Q2 youth group helped to paint most of the pavilion dark green to deter graffiti. The rest of the painting was completed by our Graffiti team, although it was disappointing to note an outbreak of graffiti during the February half term, 2016. South Morningside Primary plan to paint over the graffiti on 11th March 2016.

Events

- **Tea in the Park 2015** – the addition of a Dog Show, and excellent weather, resulted in the best ever numbers attending this event. Despite low advance registrations for the

Dog Show, 170+ dogs were registered on the day for the 10 classes, resulting in huge, supportive crowds. Tea in the Park featured our usual favourites of the South Morningside Pipe Band, Auld Spice Ceilidh Band, singers from the Morningside School of Music, Greenbank Church activities, bouncy castles, face painting, raft building, crafts, home baking, games, teas, bar, ice cream and the (sell-out) Duck Race.

- **Park Spring/Autumn Clean** – events were held in April and October 2015 with around 40 volunteers each time.

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. We have very recently received a draft, which we will be commenting on.

Communications

- *Website:* www.braidburnvalleypark.org.uk: the site is actively managed and receives an average 500 visits each month, up from 420 last year, although visits peak significantly around Tea in the Park. The most popular pages this year were 'Home', 'Tea in the Park' and 'Dog Show' pages, 'How to get to Braidburn Valley Park' and 'Map of Braidburn Valley Park' were also popular. An email notification system allows individuals to sign up to receive regular updates about the Park.
- *Social media:* the Park has a Facebook page, with 156 'Likes' and a Twitter feed with 91 'Followers'. Both are regularly updated.
- *Newsletter (Valley Voice):* two editions of our newsletter, the *Valley Voice*, were printed and distributed to members. Both are also available on our website, as are all previous editions.
- *Notice boards:* the information within the static notice boards at the main entrances to the Park was regularly updated.

Presentation of Accounts

- Dianne Savage presented the accounts. At the end of the financial year (31/10/15) the Friends had an annual surplus of £1,646.85 and have £10,075.79 in the bank available to support its operations and projects.
- Ian Burnside was welcomed as the new Treasurer.
- Our membership was income slightly up on last year and the main source of income remains Tea in the Park.
- We have received a now received a grant for Green Dog Walking scheme which now has around £2,000 (joint venture with Hermitage of Braid).

Election of New Committee

- Keith Knight, Christine Johnstone and Barrie Wilkinson stepped down from the committee at the AGM, and Louise Maguire had retired during the year. All were thanked for their work.
- The rest of the committee were standing for re-election and this was accepted.
- Two new committee members had been proposed and were elected - Ian Burnside as Treasurer and Alan Silcock who has good links with other community groups.
- 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.

Up and coming events

- P7 from South Morningside Primary School are painting over the graffiti on the sub-station and carrying out other improvements to the park on 11th March.
- A bat ecologist will give an interesting presentation about bats in the park. It will be held in the Greenbank Church Halls on evening of 18th April – free to members or £5 to non-members to come along (and for this you can become a member!).
- Spring Clean for the Queen – 24th April.
- 29th April – Greenbank Scouts are continuing to maintain the Greenbank Scout path (to the east of the burn from the Greenbank Crescent entrance).
- 3rd September - Tea in the Park and Dog Show

AOB

Lindsay Walls discussed plans for the erection of an interpretation panel for the preserved Tram Shelter. There are also plans for an event to celebrate the trams – buses of different ages will travel the route of the last journey of the tram in 1956.