

AGM 26th February 2023

AGM standing business

The meeting was quorate. The 2022 minutes were accepted.

Apologies: Elizabeth and Angus Mackay, Lindsay Walls, Hugh Cowan, Susan Inch, Brian Smith, Alan Fleming

Margaret Walsh was reaffirmed as the Independent Examiner for the FoBVP's accounts.

The committee was reaffirmed for 2023, noting any specific roles:

- Paul Bailey - Chair
- Margaret Bruce – funding opportunities, assorted expertise
- Alastair Bruce – Membership
- Steve Ambler - Treasurer
- Claire Jellema - Tea in the Park coordinator
- Lucy Frankel – Facebook, minutes, dog show
- Alice Nelson - Valley Voice
- Alan Fleming - Tree warden
- Robin Harper - Burn
- Brian Smith - Volunteering
- Arthur Trew – new committee member

Local organisations' representatives on the Management Committee

- Brian Barron – Greenbank Church

Chair's report

The Chair thanked people who make things happen! 'Many people and organisations have given their time and expertise to benefit the park; he mentioned:'

- Alice Nelson for her excellent work on Valley Voice, and Lucy Frankel for the poster designs.
- Alan Fleming for his work planting tree whips and focusing on what is needed for our tree community.
- Robin Harper's maintenance of the burn
- Brian Smith has been coordinating volunteers.
- Arthur Trew has given us positive suggestions – eg new information plinth for the theatre, plus a committee meeting in the park itself.
- Alan Smith kindly made a number of bird boxes.
- Edinburgh & Lothian Greenspace Trust
- Conservation Volunteers
- Lloyds Bank

- Scouts and South Morningside Primary School pupils
- Brian Smith and Duke of Edinburgh volunteers / Fruit trees / Scything / Willow Arch
- Chris Rutterford & Andrew Swann for the brilliant mural
- Firrhill High art students who did the work painting the mural on panels
- Edinburgh u3a group (Dianne's garden)
- Doug Murray (graffiti)
- Richard (Duck Race / new cyclists signs going in in March 2023)
- Members who pick up litter and dog poo
- And swathes of anonymous community-minded volunteers e.g. Sunday litter picker
- Penny Barron (Fruit tree pruning)
- Scouts (painting the gas sub-station green)
- Andrew Swann (fixing an orienteering post)
- Macfit outdoor exercise classes every week

The Chair thanked members in general plus those who contribute > £5, and thanked members and public who comment positively about the park and suggest improvements.

The chair thanked the council for their significant input.

Pothole repair was done professionally.

Bin emptying was sporadic; in February 2023 six of the bins were replaced with extra-large ones, which now means no more overflowing waste bins.

A major achievement was the new mural by Chris Rutterford, opened in April 2022 by Daniel Johnson

For the first time the park was awarded a Grade A in the council's annual Parks Quality Assessment; previously we were always a B grade.

Clean ups were held in April and October 2022

Tree felling – old and diseased cherry trees were removed by contractors

Park Keeper's House was demolished in May 2022

Crossfit trainer – a bolt came loose and was repaired, but is broken again

Book library – a plastic box was donated but sadly then destroyed. Andrew Swann and Alan Smith are making a permanent wooden replacement which will be installed in March/April 2023.

Tea in the Park returned after a two year break due to Covid. The duck race and dog show were highlights!

SMPS children helped bagging up the grass from the scythed wildflower meadow.

The signs were installed on the bridges – looking very smart!

A photo of our park was used on the Park Quality Assessment report.

The new gabion on the Rowan Tree bridge is excellent. However the Council have stated the bridge needs to be replaced.

Finance

Steve Ambler, treasurer, presented the report.

A donation to Greenbank Parish Church mentioned in the report was queried, suggesting that it should be recorded as payment for use of the crypt; the committee will consider this.

Funding was gained from these groups:

- Council Community Grants
- AEB Charity
- Tesco
- Church Eco group

Membership report

Alastair Bruce, membership secretary, reported that we ended the year with the same number as we started: just over 200. We gained many members around the unveiling of the mural, but equivalent members were lost through attrition at renewal time.

Encouraging trends were noted – more are paying their subscriptions by standing order rather than cash, which is less admin and also makes it easier to repeat membership. Also, more email addresses are being given.

Do please encourage people to join the Friends – simple following the link on the website.

Tea in the Park

Clare Jellema reported that 2022 was smaller than previous years, refocusing on the purpose of the event. Low outgoings, no indoor contingency – instead a plan B date for an event in the park. Activities included beat the goalie, face painting, ice cream, a dog show... It was enjoyed greatly! For 2023 Clare will continue with the same low-key local approach.

Future projects

1. **Petanque court funding.** Following the demolition of the park keeper's house, the quotation for a proposed Petanque court from a specialist building firm was far higher than expected. Community Grant Fund has a maximum of £5,000. Applications to the council generally come out around twice a year, so the Friends can regroup around a new idea. It was suggested to approach a local non-speciality builder to see if a lower quote can be obtained.
2. **Path through wildflower meadow.** Alan Fleming is keen that a path should wind through the meadow for more to enjoy this area.
3. **Play equipment.** Whilst our park is not suitable for official play equipment, the Friends are keen to have some play-focused areas. Paul Bailey has walked around the park with the Council Play Officer, Alan Grevers, who was supportive.
4. **Burn work** – Robin requested some help moving rocks in the burn, putting stones in to shore up the 'orchestra pit'. The east bank is getting eroded.
5. **Fringe venue?** The park was suggested as a suitable venue for festival events. The committee will look into the practicalities.