

# Valley Voice

For all the



Friends of

**Braidburn Valley Park**

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## Come to our AGM

All are welcome on **Sunday 23rd February from 2pm** at Greenbank Parish Church.

Come for a cuppa, a biscuit and updates on park activities!



We especially want to meet anyone who can help organise **Tea in the Park**, our annual family fun day, dog show and duck race in late summer.

## 3rd best park (out of 144!)

Each year the Parks Department assesses the quality of each of their 144 parks. We are delighted to be rated the **third best park in Edinburgh** behind Easter Craiglockhart and Starbank Park.

This is group effort, with huge thanks to the **Parks Department, our Friends, plus all our volunteers** - it's wonderful to see everyone's hard work recognised.

This is an improvement: we were 4th last year and 16th in 2018. We also received our Green Flag Award for the 18th consecutive year!





## Bug hotel

Have you noticed a structure in the wildflower meadow, towards the bottom of the slope? It's our **new pollinator palace** - now open for creepy-crawly clients!

### Can you add to it?

Our minibeast guests appreciate **dry leaves, straw** or **bundles of twigs**. In fact, anything **natural** that they can crawl into or between to hide. Please push any suitable material well into any gap. You're creating new bug hotel bedrooms!

### Grand Designs

Several Friends donated materials from their DIY projects. We anchored it in place using recycled tree stakes from elsewhere in the park. Thanks to the Council for providing a selection of old pallets for the basic structure, and for the slates that we used as 'foundations' and 'rain run off diverters'.

### Protecting pollinators

Bug hotels are a fun and creative way to **encourage biodiversity**. We're providing shelter and nesting sites to native and migratory solitary insects. These tiny creatures are crucial - most plants depend on pollinators.

**Can you create one at home too?**

The greater the variety and quantity of infill, the more stars our hotel gets on the bugs' equivalent of TripAdvisor!



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Facebook: Braidburn Valley Park's Friends



## Burn, baby, burn

### The Conservation Volunteers shore up the Braid burn's banks

Thanks to Council funding, we are benefiting from this group's expertise and craftsmanship. They are using traditional willow-weaving to protect our banks from erosion near the south end of the park.

Rather than use stone gabions, they weave willow round stakes – called '**spiling**'.

Nearby they have been **coppicing** an area of hazel trees – a conservation technique involving good use of materials and promotion of new growth.



### We are grateful to many volunteer groups:

- Duke of Edinburgh volunteers who cleared paths weekly in 2024
- Kaimes School who you'll see helping out in 2025
- The Dirty Weekenders, an energetic Edinburgh University group who have been removing some turf (right) to prep the ground for wildflower planting in March

Fancy some fresh air with a purpose?

Contact us on [Volunteering@braidburnvalleypark.org.uk](mailto:Volunteering@braidburnvalleypark.org.uk)



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## Scything, composting

Local volunteers scythe our wildflower meadow. To make the most of these cuttings and more, we have bought four more **compost bins**. We've already assembled one of them by the Greenbank entrance - with three more to follow!

The grass is pretty long in places. We will get priority when Council cutting starts again in April.

## It's a blooming shrubbery

The perennials in our new shrubbery outside the Greenbank entrance are thriving (nepeta, geums, scabious) - but so were the weeds (sticky willow, nipplewort). The council's **Inch Nursery** gave us another 8 plants and we bought a large selection of bulbs including some unusual ones like puschkinia (right) and ipheion. Roll on, springtime!



## What we do

**Becoming a Friend means paying £3-5 a year** - it's like making it official that you love our park. And that's it!

- A dozen committee members meet four times a year to decide on projects.
- Interested individuals and groups volunteer their time to help weed, water, litter pick or run events. Fun but optional!

## Friends' fiver fee freeze

Hello to 2024's 14 new members, who bring us to 216 Friends in total. Please recruit friends and neighbours!

- We appreciate standing orders instead of cash or cheque - the admin is easier for us and you.
- Please consider **paying a little more** than £3-5 - these rates haven't changed since the Friends formed over 20 years ago!

See *What your friends do* on our website to learn how your money is used.

We now only have 16 members we can't reach by email. If that's you, please email **membership@braidburnvalleypark.org.uk** to say hi. Thanks for saving paper and trees! Most subs renew in January - thanks if you've already paid.