

# **Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links**

## **AGM 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2011: Convener's Report**

Over the year since the last AGM we have held two general meetings in addition to the AGM. On 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2010, at the Gilles Centre, Graeme Cruickshank gave the third, concluding part of his interesting History of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links. There was also discussion of current issues, especially Barbecues and plans for leaf collection on the following weekends, as proposed by the NP Parks Officer (we had suggested earlier dates). These did not take place owing to early and heavy snowfall.

On Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2011, at the King's Hall, South Clerk Street, two representatives of the City of Edinburgh Council, Paul Vine and Steven Webley, spoke and answered questions about the trees of the Meadows and Links, with plenty of Friends' participation. Doubts about memorial tree policy were clarified in correspondence later from the Director of Parks and Greenspace, who stated that normally they would not be permitted.

The Committee has met three times and kept in regular contact through emails from the Convener, Secretary and Newsletter Editor. The Council Neighbourhood Partnership Advisory Group (MABLAG), chaired by the Convener, for Tollcross Community Council, with our Secretary representing FoMBL, and two other FoMBL members representing Community Councils, has met four times. The South Central Neighbourhood Council discussed the Meadows and Links on 8<sup>th</sup> November as a major item.

The main topics of concern this year have been the Council policy, in particular in the South Central Neighbourhood Partnership, on tree planting and management, especially over blossom trees, barbecue damage and the Council trial scheme, the state of the grass, events policy, the need for better toilet facilities, the need for recycling and better litter removal, the Jawbones restoration, and the park ranger cover at weekends, especially for the short-hole golf course.

In general, the lack of adequate Council resources to maintain, let alone improve, the deteriorating state of the Meadows, and the lack of effective prior consultation or discussion of community concerns, has made it a difficult year. Councillor Alison Johnstone has been a great help over all the above issues. Councillors Marilynne Maclaren and Cameron Rose have taken up specific items. We are grateful for their support, and for that of other councillors and officials. It is my strong opinion that, as a Premier Park, the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links should be more directly the concern of the Parks and Greenspace Department, with better planning, finance and management.

I thank the Committee, especially Hamish Mackenzie, our Secretary/Treasurer, and Heather Goodare for the excellent Newsletters, and for the interest of members. I wish the new committee well as they continue to work for the future of this wonderful gift of Nature to the people of Edinburgh and our visitors – the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links!

*Chris Wigglesworth*

23<sup>rd</sup> June 2011