



Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links

NEWSLETTER 15 **Spring 2007**

Talking about Trees

A message from Iain Park (Parks Manager)

We recently held a site meeting with the developers acting on behalf of Edinburgh University regarding the elm trees on the boundary of their property. There are three elm trees that will have their root plates affected by essential works to underpin buildings.

After our site meeting it was noted that these trees could not be saved, as they would be destabilized by the works. We have taken the decision to permit them to fell the trees and replace them with three semi-mature trees to preserve the long-term future of the tree lines. The University will put out notices explaining the works in advance of the felling, which is scheduled for mid-January. More information will be available from Mike Shields, Tel. 0131 672 1581.

As many of you may be aware, the area surrounding the Middle Meadow Walk is currently being developed by two private developers. The tree line running down Middle Meadow Walk makes a vital contribution to the amenity of the city and represents an iconic view for both visitors and residents. Over a number of years the local authority has been liaising with the developers to improve and enhance this feature as part of their commitment to the tree stock throughout the city. A tree survey was undertaken of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links before developers started work on their sites. As a result of this survey, funding was put aside by the developers to enable the implementation of a phased felling and enrichment tree management programme to be carried out by the local authority.

Phase 1, implemented during 02/03, of this programme involved the removal of 23 trees identified in the survey as unsafe and the planting of 70 semi-mature rootballed trees along Melville Drive. Phase 2 (03/04) followed this up with the removal of a further 17 poor quality or diseased trees with a further 83 rootballed trees being planted in East Bruntsfield Links and Middle Meadow Walk. Phase 3 was carried out in 04/05 and involved the removal of one tree, with 16 trees being planted in West Bruntsfield Links.

To date, then, the management programme has involved planting 168 trees. A further replacement programme is planned for season 07/08 as part of the final developer contribution. In the interim period agreed works on contractor compounds have caused the stability and long-term future of some trees to be compromised. The council negotiated with the developers for them to fund the removal and replacement of eight trees on the boundary of Middle Meadow Walk, together with the relocation of two semi-mature rootballed trees. The trees that had to be removed will be replaced by heavy standards from a selection already utilized on the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links, including Ash, Oak, Horse Chestnut and Lime.

The contractor will also provide an after-care service to ensure their establishment or replacement if they fail. These arrangements have been put in place to ensure the long-term future of the tree cover in these locations, to sustain the asset for this century and beyond. Parks officers will continue to monitor the tree and development works at this venue and others across the city to ensure council policies are being complied with and that further partnership funding opportunities can be secured.

Meeting Report

Friends of Parks Networking Seminar: 6 December 2006 in the City Chambers

Edinburgh parks include 1600 hectares of land: 141 separate parks of varying size and use, 150 play areas and 350,000 mature trees! Looking after an estate this big is always going to be a massive undertaking. Experience over recent years has been that parks have not always kept up with the latest improvements happening elsewhere. This may well have been a consequence of Compulsory Competitive Tendering, which seems to have eroded the training budgets in particular. What characterised this 'networking seminar', organised and introduced by Stephanie-Anne Harris, Head of Parks for the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC), was the number and variety of ideas that came thick and fast from the Friends of Parks groups around the city.

Great City Parks

Not a single Edinburgh park made it into the recently published work *Great City Parks* by the American academic Alan Tait. With this in mind, Keith Logie, the Strategic Projects Officer for Parks, introduced the new CEC Public Parks and Gardens Strategy. This aims to guide the development of Edinburgh's parks to ensure that they become worthy of our city. In terms of vision for the future, that means being worthy of international comparison, as well as being accessible for all, having a diversity of use, being environmentally rich, and meeting the needs of the people who use them.

The way forward

Wide-ranging discussions in smaller groups of those attending brought up many suggestions about the way forward for Friends groups and the support they might expect from the Council and from each other. There were calls for meetings such as this one to be made regular, and for some website-based gathering of information and ideas to be put in place. Ideas covered in these ways could range from the use of compost, through fundraising and information gathering, to insurance of events organised by Friends of Parks groups.

Funding

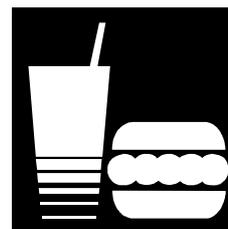
CEC has agreed to a budget of £5.6 million, mostly to be spent over the next two years, for the city's parks and other green spaces. This money is already earmarked for particular uses. They also hope that up to another 7.5 million from other funding agencies will be raised. Attracting other funds for parks is an area that the council is keen to involve Friends of Parks groups in. There are already models for this, not least from FOMBL itself. One particular lever to help with applying for funds could be the 'Green Flag Award' scheme, a quality framework for parks already on the scene in England and Wales and expected to be extended to Scotland in the near future. It may even go international.

Given the variety of ideas generated by this meeting it is clear that they could not all be applied to any particular park. Indeed the parks themselves are so very varied that classification of them is a difficult undertaking. This does seem to be a time of change and improvement for Edinburgh's parks, and the role of Friends of Parks groups in this will continue to be very important.

TIM PUNTIS

THE PAVILION CAFÉ in the Meadows

This popular venue will open again on 1st February after the winter break. It will be open Thursday to Sunday from 9.30 a.m. until dusk during February, and from April it will be open seven days a week, early till late. The Café serves fresh hot and cold vegetarian food, teas, coffee, smoothies, and a selection of tasty cakes. Remember: 10% discount for FOMBL members!



Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links

Do you care about the environment?
Are you interested in local history?
Would you like to know more about the trees in the Meadows?
Would you like to visit some local historic buildings?
Do you want to improve the local facilities for sport and leisure?

If so, why not join us?

FOMBL: MEMBERSHIP FORM 2007-8

Name:

Address:

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Telephone: Email:

I enclose annual subscription of £..... (£3 individuals, £10 organizations)
Send to: Mrs Josephine Scott (Membership Secretary), 8 Salisbury Heights,
31 Salisbury Road, EH16 5AA (enclosing cheque and sae)

Police report

PC 3484-A Bruce Burt at Howdenhall Police Station (Tel. 0131 658 5235) keeps a log of crimes in the area. If you would like to be on his email list for his regular newsletter, give him a ring, or email bruce.burt@lbp.pnn.police.uk. The number to use when reporting a crime is: 0131 658 5235. Of particular concern in one of his recent reports was the following:

At 16.00 hrs on the 27th November in Middle Meadow Walk a 12-year-old male was charged with numerous road traffic offences after he was caught driving a motorbike in Middle Meadow Walk.

We have all seen cyclists ignoring cycle paths on the Meadows, and sometimes behaving in a hazardous manner, though on the whole people ride sensibly. Children out on their own sometimes need a gentle reminder of the rules: perhaps they will then grow up into considerate adults. It takes rather more nerve to remind adults – though your editor does . . . especially when she sees cyclists careering the wrong way down Glengyle Terrace after dark without lights!

Future events (we are always happy to publicize events in and around the Meadows)

THE MEADOWS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA <http://www.meadowsorchestra.org.uk>

This orchestra has performed regularly in Edinburgh and the surrounding area for more than 30 years, and has built a reputation for consistently high standards of performance. Its usual venue is the Queen’s Hall, on the eastern fringe of the Meadows. The next concert will however be at Stockbridge Parish Church, Saxe-Coburg Street, on Sunday 18 March 2007, at 7.45 p.m. Don’t miss it!

Felix Mendelssohn **Capriccio Brillante in B minor, Op. 22**
W.A. Mozart **Violin Concerto No 5 in A, K219**
Richard Strauss **Suite: Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, Op. 60**

PETER EVANS conductor EUN-JOO YOON piano ULRIKE FENNER violin

Tickets from the Queen’s Hall Box Office (668 2019) or members of the orchestra, or Heather Goodare (228 6998): £9.00 (concessions £7.00, students £3.50, children £1.00)

**Spring meeting of the Friends:
7.30 pm on Monday 5th February
at the Barclay Church, Chalmers Hall**
(use last side entrance facing Links, up the hill).

**Programme to include a tour of the building,
& a short presentation from Councillor Chris
Wigglesworth on ‘Licensing and Planning’.**

Provisional date for Summer meeting:
Monday 18 June (to be confirmed).

The photograph shows Barclay Church and
Glengyle Terrace from Bruntsfield Links, with
Edinburgh Castle in the background, taken
in February 2005 (with snow on the ground)

For over 140 years Barclay Church, built as a Free Church but now a parish church of the Church of Scotland serving the Tollcross area, has been a dominant feature of the city skyline. It is known as the Barclay Church after Mary Barclay, whose legacy of £10,000 paid for its building. At the time it was built it stood well outside Edinburgh proper, on the main road to London.

Perhaps enthusiasm for the enterprise gained momentum from the existence of the Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church in the area. The erection of Barclay Church was a project of ecclesiastical competition, and the church was erected to rescue the population of Tollcross and Fountainbridge from ‘papistical ideas’ and ‘romish influence’. A Georgian house was demolished to make way for the church, which was designed by Frederick Thomas Pilkington. Its 250-foot high steeple was the tallest in Edinburgh at the time, and even now is second only to that of St Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral.

In the words of Piloti of *Private Eye*, ‘Pilkington was the greatest and most original genius of the Gothic revival in Scotland. His greatest masterpiece is the Barclay Church . . . whose walls of textured stone bristle and bulge to enclose an astonishing galleried, theatre-like interior.’ The church was first opened for worship on 29 December 1864.

Committee members (please address all correspondence to the Secretary)

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Please see centre-page insert for the minutes of a recent meeting of the City of Edinburgh Council Meadows and Bruntsfield Links short-life Working Group, attended by Peng Lee Yap and Hamish McKenzie.