



Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links

N E W S L E T T E R 18
Spring 2008

Message from the Chairman

One of our long-term concerns has been a worry about attempts to develop the Meadows. A few years ago, when there was a proposal for a Skateboard Park on the Meadows, we asked the National Playing Fields Association, as the Custodians of the Meadows (following designation as a Millennium Park) if they would support our objections to the proposed concreting over of an area of the Meadows. We were surprised to hear that since the proposed area only involved less than 5 per cent of the area of the Meadows, the NFPA would not be objecting to the proposal. In the end, the Skateboard Park Proposal on the Meadows was not submitted to the Council, but we felt that we could at least oppose it using the Legislation over the last two centuries that prevented new buildings on the Meadows.

More recently, we had heard that a proposal was being considered to change the extensive Legislation protecting the Meadows from development, as the Council wanted to redevelop the Ross Bandstand in Princes Street Gardens, and since the same legislation also covered the Meadows, they were proposing to amend the Legislation covering Princes Street Gardens, the Meadows, and Calton Hill Gardens.

We were therefore delighted to receive confirmation from Councillor Paul Godzik that the proposal was last considered by Council on 23 August 2007, when a Report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services.

The recommendations of that Report were:

- (1) To instruct the Council Solicitor to pursue a Bill which would be limited to exempting from the effect of Section 22 of the 1991 Confirmation Act the development for which planning consent would eventually be granted for a redevelopment of the Ross Bandstand.
- (2) To note the progress being made by the Parliamentary Agents towards a draft Bill encompassing the wide-ranging amendments requested.

As can be seen from the above decision, the Council has detached the proposed re-development of the Ross Bandstand from the general protection of other parks such as the Meadows, Leith Links and Calton Hill. The latter Parks are under no current threat of change to their status.

This is good news indeed, but we must remain vigilant, as the Meadows is such a tempting site for re-development, even proposals taking up less than 5 per cent of its area!

P L Yap

NEXT MEETING OF FRIENDS OF THE MEADOWS & BRUNTSFIELD LINKS

Monday 18 February 7.30 p.m. in the Staff Room, James Gillespie's High School, Lauderdale Street, EH9 1DD. *Do you have a complaint about events on the Meadows? Do you have any views about cycling on the Meadows? If so, come along and let us have your views. All are welcome.* Council officials from the Events and Parks Department and a representative from SPOKES will be present. Further details from P L Yap (0131 229 0948, weekends or evenings).

Cycling on walkways

FOMBL *Newsletter No. 17* highlighted the continuing problem of cyclists using walkways on the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links. I agree with all that the Editor had to say about this problem, which has been with us for many years. Dozens of uncaring cyclists (mostly students) are guilty of transgressing the rules every day – that is, there are hundreds of violations every week, with an annual total well into five figures.

Sticking to the rules

Enforcement of the regulations (which the City Council declines to do) would be unpopular with many cyclists, but it is difficult to see a viable alternative. Splitting wide footpaths for dual use works quite well on the flat part of Middle Meadow Walk (though the cycle lane is too often invaded by unobservant pedestrians) and also on Leamington Walk, but most other footpaths across the Meadows and the Links are too narrow to accommodate two-way cycling safely. I reckon that also applies to Jawbone Walk, the scene of the worst and most constant abuses. Building more cycle tracks is one possible solution, but do we really want to increase the ‘spider’s web’ effect on our valued green spaces?

It would be better to divert north-bound cyclists from crossing Melville Drive at the bottom of Leamington Walk, and redirecting them along Middle Meadow Walk, where the cycling half is sadly under-used compared with the density of illegal cyclists on Jawbone Walk. Clearly the message NO CYCLING painted in yellow letters two feet high is no deterrent, so I would advocate the following:

1. Place a chicane at the bottom of Leamington Walk where the current painted prohibition is situated;
2. Restore the chicane on the opposite side of Melville Drive. (The Council’s reason for its removal – to allow easier access for grass-cutting equipment – is clearly a nonsense, and as monument warden for the Jawbones, I would strongly oppose such a practice);
3. Restore the painted prohibition on Jawbone Walk where it is met by the narrow walkway from George Square (this is now all but invisible);
4. Place a similar prohibition at the other end of this narrow walkway;
5. Restore the prohibition signage adjacent to the Jawbones (why was this removed?);
6. Put up similar signage at either end of all the walkways on the Meadows and the Links;
7. Landscape the walkways in a fashion that would make them unattractive to cyclists.

Cycling should be encouraged as being environmentally friendly, but not when it becomes unfriendly to pedestrians, in an increasingly violent fashion. Graeme Cruickshank

Editor’s Note

SPOKES, the Lothian Cycle Campaign, would certainly agree that cyclists should behave in a considerate manner at all times. Their recent Bulletin is enclosed, and readers should note the prominence of the ‘Considerate Cycling Campaign’: see pp 1 and 2. At the same time there may well be a case for opening up some more walkways on the Meadows and Links for dual use. There will be a full discussion about cycling at the next meeting of FOMBL, with a representative from SPOKES with whom we hope to have a constructive dialogue. If you are concerned about cycling on the Meadows, whether as cyclist or pedestrian, come along and join in.

PS I wondered what exactly Graeme meant by a ‘chicane’. The dictionaries all say it is a trick or artifice, as in bridge, but I think he means ‘barrier’.

Heather Goodare

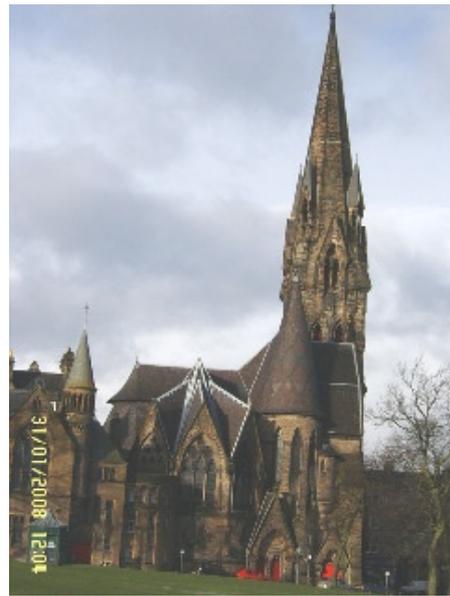
A RELOCATED MEDICAL PRACTICE

Dr Linda MacCallum wishes us to ask for feedback on her plans for a medical practice on the site of the former Yoga Club in Meadow Place. She apologizes for the state of the front of the building and the damage to the grass caused by contractors’ vehicles, which has caused some distress. Come to the next meeting and let us have your views.

Admiring the Barclay Church

By Brian Murdoch

My proposal is that the Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links asks the City of Edinburgh Council to work to improve the views of the Barclay Church, situated on Bruntsfield Place about 200 metres south of Tollcross.



As a visual spectacle, Edinburgh has many facets, not the least of which is the architecture of notable buildings throughout the whole city. On of the city's landmark buildings is the Barclay Church, built by the architect F T Pilkington in 1864 at the age of 32. It is a building of extraordinary character, unconventional and highly original in its use of a very difficult site. One of the most colourful short descriptions of this architectural gem comes from Charles McKean's illustrated architectural guide to Edinburgh:

. . .Pilkington's greatest achievement. Using stone as most people would use plasticine, he composed this muscular, almost pagan, exuberant composition, with its curiously Germanic details.

It has also been described as 'powerful Ruskinian Gothic'. Pilkington's use of stone is remarkable, and that detail is best observed from just a few yards away. The roof forms are just as striking, but these cannot be observed from close to – you have to be able to step back quite a distance to be able to see one of this church's most distinctive features.

Many, in fact most of our great buildings suffer from not being viewable from any great distance. They are hemmed in by other buildings and we very seldom have the luxury of being able to look at these buildings from anything but close to – unable to really appreciate their overall form or see them from a more empathetic perspective.

The Barclay Church can be viewed to some extent (apart from the inevitable street furniture) from a few metres south of the Tollcross Co-op and from near the eastern end of Gillespie Crescent, albeit with a foreground of huge rubbish bins. But the most open view is from the Links, and it is here that we could all work towards revealing this building to its best advantage.

I propose that FOMBL considers the above comments with a view to asking the Council to consult appropriately in the context of the following possible steps:

- That CEC declares a policy of improving the sight lines of the Barclay Church.
- That it transplants the trees established in the last few years on the Links near the church so that the view of the building from the Links is not further obstructed in future as these young trees grow.
- That when the mature trees south of the corner of Wrights Houses and Glengyle Terrace fall down or are removed, they are not replaced.
- Though not within the remit of FOMBL, CEC might consider at the same time relocating as much street furniture as possible away from the sight lines of the building.
- Relocating the rubbish bins in Gillespie Crescent a few metres to the west.

Our new CBO

Our new Community Beat Officer for the Meadows is PC 5801 Lindsey Thomson, who can be contacted on 0131 662 5022. For emergencies dial 999, or to report a crime, dial 0131 311 3131. Lindsey hopes to attend our next meeting.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS IN AND AROUND THE MEADOWS

The Meadows Marathon

The Meadows Marathon will be returning to the Meadows for the second time in March 2008 following the success of last year's event, which raised £10,000 for sports relief - one of the largest ever recorded student donations to the charity.

Organised by a team of student volunteers, the Meadows Marathon is setting its sights higher this year, aiming to attract 1,000 competitors and raise as much as £100,000 for a number of local charities including Waverley Care and The Sick Kids Friends Foundation.

The event, which will take place on 2nd March 2008, comprises a half marathon as well as a 5km fun run. The organizers are planning to bring a festival atmosphere to the Meadows, with entertainment, food and maybe a famous face or two.

The marathon has secured sponsorship for the 2008 event from Quartermile, Edinburgh's prestigious £450m redevelopment of the former Royal Infirmary, which borders the Meadows. Drawing on this support, the organizers hope to reach their ambitious target, as well as creating an exciting event for the whole community to enjoy.

Joe Pike, spokesman for the Meadows Marathon, commented: 'We're working hard to build on last year's success by setting ambitious fundraising targets and involving local charities in the event. It's a fantastic opportunity to showcase Edinburgh's green spaces and it would be impossible to find a more perfect location for an event that aims to unite the local community for good causes.'

The Meadows Chamber Orchestra

'Music performed with zeal, passion and a smile' – *The Scotsman*

The next MCO concert is in their usual venue of the Queen's Hall, on Sunday 9th March at 7.45 p.m. The programme is as follows:

J.S. Bach: Keyboard Concerto in A, BWV 1055: soloist and conductor **Peter Evans**

Peter Evans, the Orchestra's Principal Conductor and one of Scotland's most distinguished pianists, directs this beautiful and lesser-known Bach concerto from the keyboard.

Jonathan Pitkin: World première of 'Mesh', in which simple melodic ideas gradually gather more and more momentum, giving rise to towering interlocking harmonies as each episode spills over into the next. . Works by Jonathan Pitkin have been commissioned and performed by several major ensembles.

Franz Schubert: Symphony no. 9 in C (D944)

Finally, Schubert's great C major Symphony rounds off an exciting evening.

Tickets (£10, concessions £8, students £4, children £1) from the Queen's Hall Box Office

Tel. 0131 668 2019, discounted from members of the orchestra (local contact Heather Goodare 228 6998), or at the door.

The Summer Meeting of Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links
will be held on Monday 18 June at 7.30 p.m. in Peter's Yard Bakery,
Quartermile (near Middle Meadow Walk).

Committee members (please address all correspondence to the Secretary)

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Meadows Short Life Working Group

Update for South/Central Neighbourhood Partnership

14 January 2008

The Neighbourhood Partnership decided at its first meeting to re-establish the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links Short Life Working Group to address concerns raised about the impact of events on the condition of the Meadows and to review the park management arrangements.

The Working Group has met on two occasions – on 15 November 2007 and 10 January 2008. Members are taken from Council officials, Tollcross, Southside and Marchmont/Sciennes Community Councils, Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links Group, EUSA, police and Elected Members.

At its first meeting the group considered presentations on the condition of the Meadows and on events in Edinburgh. There followed a lively discussion where a number of issues were raised and actions suggested. These were collated and discussed in more detail at the second meeting.

Key actions being progressed in relation to events on the Meadows:

- Consideration of additional conditions being applied to public entertainment licensing and site leases for events on the Meadows where appropriate
- Improved enforcement of licensing conditions through EPOG and TAC
- Review of fee and bond arrangements across all parks to take place, increased charges this year for the Meadows
- Increased grasscrete areas
- Review of access arrangements for events
- Joined up Events Planning Organisers Group (EPOG) meetings for Taste and Moonwalk events
- Improved communication arrangements with community groups about events, including appropriate consultation arrangements during the application and planning stages, and conditions of licence and lease when the event is in progress
- Following a motion from Cllr McLaren to the Council on 20 December 2007, it has been agreed that a report will be prepared by the Directors of Services for Communities, Corporate Services and City Development to respond to the concerns of local groups in relation to events on the Meadows.

Key actions being progressed in relation to other issues on Meadows/Bruntsfield Links:

- Consideration is being given to improving public toilet facilities, including portable toilets during smaller events
- Review of waste management arrangements in the park including recycling facilities
- Action on flyposting
- Action on under age drinking and youth disorder
- Maintenance of railings and lampposts
- Development of a management plan for the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links using the criteria/principles of the green flag award scheme
- Cycling in the park
- Maintenance of monuments
- Increased traffic (cycle and pedestrian) on Middle Meadow Walk

Dates of the next meetings: 6 March 2008 at 2pm and 8 May 2008 at 2pm

Susan Bruce
14 January 2008

Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links

Notes of meeting on 12 November 2007

at the Meadows Croquet Club Pavilion, 7.30 p.m.

[For full minutes please see the FOMBL website]

Present: Fifty members were present, and in attendance were Cllrs Paul Godzik, Alison Johnstone, Marilynne McLaren; Susan Bruce (CEC Services for Communities); David Jamieson, Head of Parks and Green Spaces (first part of meeting); and Mike Shields (Community Parks Officer).

- 1. The Chairman,** Peng Lee Yap, welcomed members and especially the CEC councillors who were able to attend.

2.1 Damage to the Meadows

There was a lively discussion about the state of the Meadows after the three major events, the Moonwalk, the Festival Funfair, and the Ladyboys of Bangkok, had caused extensive damage during the summer of 2007. Although the weather had been exceptionally wet, which meant that recovery of the ground after these events had been extremely problematic, it was pointed out that in 2004 the weather had actually been wetter. However, in 2007 a further dry period meant that the ground, already deeply rutted by heavy vehicles, became rock hard, so that the grass could not re-grow.

The consensus was that large events should be restrained from erecting huge structures that needed cranes to put them up, which obviously added to the weight on the ground and the resulting damage. There was a need for some overview of the whole situation so as to minimize damage. Susan Bruce drew attention to the recently established Neighbourhood Partnerships: there was to be a meeting on 15 November of the Short Life Working Party on the Meadows [*see overleaf*]. The Chairman, Peng Lee Yap, would be attending this meeting and would bring the concerns of FOMBL members to their attention.

2.2. Cycling on the Meadows

The article in the current newsletter raised issues that FOMBL should discuss. Cllr Johnstone said that the Council was proposing to develop a Core Paths plan for Edinburgh (see www.edinburghcorepaths.org), which was available for public comments on Edinburgh.corepaths@naturalcapital.co.uk, or tel. 0131 220 6121. FOMBL should discuss any proposals with SPOKES. There was a feeling among some members that the paths should be desegregated, and that joint use by cyclists and pedestrians would encourage mutual respect. Attention was drawn to the new 'Bike Polite' leaflet designed by SPOKES, which noted that while cycling in Edinburgh was increasing, so were the number of complaints about inconsiderate cyclists.

2.1 Flyposting

This had become a serious problem, especially during the Festival, and it was suggested that the events using flyposting should be fined, and/or delicensed.

2.4 Car parking on the Meadows

Mike Shields was working on the problem of unauthorized parking on the Meadows, caused mainly by parents of children taking part in sporting activities. CBC Lindsey Thomson should also be asked to ensure compliance.

2.5 Graffiti

The Pavilion Café was frequently defaced, and the proprietor regularly painted out graffiti. It was noted however that graffiti remained on Council property: though there had been recent arrests of graffiti vandals.

3. Further points

The lack of toilet facilities on the Meadows was discussed: the Cricket Pavilion and Café could not provide public facilities and there was urgent need for a review of this matter. Various possibilities were considered, including composting toilets.

Tree planting strategy, improving the views of the Barclay Church [*see article in Newsletter 18*], 'desire lines', and the Meadows Festival, were among the further topics that were raised. Heather Goodare mentioned that the copy deadline for the next issue of the Newsletter was the end of January 2008.