



Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links

NEWSLETTER 29

Autumn 2011

Editor's Comment

At the moment we have no official Convener, but we hope to be able to elect one at our forthcoming meeting on 29 November. This meeting will be chaired by Linda Hendry, who has indicated her willingness to stand as Convener. So just for this once, I will endeavour to fill the introductory slot.

Alternative Business Models

We have a number of contentious issues to face this month. Our main challenge is to influence in whatever way we consider best the proposal from Edinburgh City Council to 'outsource' Park services (i.e. privatize, or give the contract to the company Enterprise). It is not immediately clear what this might involve, but a circular from Council officers reads as follows:

The Council, like all UK public sector bodies, is facing economic challenges. We must achieve at least £90m of efficiency savings by 2013/14 while continuing to deliver our current services . . . We're doing this through a major Council programme called 'Alternative Business Models'. We're looking at two possible approaches: asking a specialist partner to work with us to improve and deliver your services on the Council's behalf; [or] making improvements to how we deliver your services from inside the Council itself. . . We're looking at improvements and efficiencies in a number of areas, including . . . how we manage parks and green spaces.

So there we have it: either the Council improves services (on a reduced budget), or services are outsourced. What should we do to economize and make the best use of the resources we have? At their meeting on 27 October the Council failed to reach a conclusion, so they are still open to influence. You may like to contact your local Councillors with your views. But hurry: the decision will be made very soon.

One suggestion would be: charge events organizers an economic rent, and make sure that any damage to the ground is swiftly and properly made good afterwards, at the expense of the event, not the Council. Another would be: engage volunteers to do some of the work that at the moment is the responsibility of Council staff. (See Leaf Collection, page 2 below.)

There is a meeting of two **Neighbourhood Partnerships**, the South Central and Gilmerton and Liberton, on **Monday 21 November at 7.00 p.m.** at the Business Centre, City Chambers, to discuss the Alternative Business Models proposal. You may like to put it in your diary. Also for your diary is our next public meeting, which will be in the upper room of the **Golf Tavern at 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday 29 November**. We have no speaker, so that Friends may use the occasion to bring to the attention of the Committee any matters on which they would like action.

At our forthcoming meeting, we may like to look at the fundamental question: '**What are the Meadows and Links for?**' Are they to provide green 'lungs' for the City, absorbing carbon dioxide? Are they to give space for wild life – squirrels, hedgehogs and birds? Are they for sporting activities – golf, cricket, football, tennis, croquet? Are they for picnics and barbecues? Are they for commercial events during the Festival season? Or are they for community events like the Meadows Festival? If there is a clash between these various interests, who wins? Let us have your views!

Heather Goodare (Editor)



Cameron Cook, a student from California, on an undergraduate exchange in biochemistry for one term only, practises his tightrope walking

New activities on the Links

With the coming of autumn, come also new groups of students with new interests. Here are some examples of activities not seen before on Bruntsfield Links. Interestingly enough, the first one (attaching a rope . . . to any tree) is prohibited by the current Park Rules, but not mentioned in the proposed new ones.

Revised Park Rules

Among current public consultations is one about the revised Management Rules for parks. The current rules are still displayed on notice boards in the Meadows and Links, and among them are those prohibiting both barbecues and drinking alcohol. No doubt in recognition of the futility of trying to ban either of these common activities, drinking alcohol is omitted from the revised rules altogether, and the rule on barbecues reads as follows:

The following Acts are prohibited

- 6.1 Lighting barbecues in areas or in a manner likely to burn or scorch the ground or cause danger or nuisance to other park users or neighbouring residents.
- 6.2 Failing to remove litter associated with BBQs and picnics.

The problem is: who is going to police these activities? Council officials were extremely thin on the ground during the barbecue season, and not to be seen during the hours when barbecues were common – i.e. 6.00 to 9.00 p.m. How can this policy work?

This is one of the topics that we shall no doubt discuss at our next meeting. In the meantime, you may like to check out both old and new rules on the Council website, and have your say. You will find a link through the STV website, as follows: <http://local.stv.tv/edinburgh-south-east/news/26091-robert-aldridge-have-your-say-on-new-parks-rules>.

Meadows Festival Association

The Meadows Festival Association is the community organization that runs the Meadows Festival. They are a charity, and all work at the Festival is done by volunteers. If you would like to get involved in the work of the Association please contact Linda Hendry: Linda@anamika.freeserve.co.uk. There is a small membership subscription.

Leaf collection: two FOMBL fun days!

Saturday 19 November from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

Sunday 27 November from 12.00 to 3.30 p.m.

Meet at the Cricket Pavilion: tools provided, but wear sensible shoes and gloves.

Please email Richard Ellis if you intend to come: rellis.consultancy@virgin.net



These young people were playing a Swedish game called 'Kubb'.

Transition Edinburgh South

We are pleased to welcome this contribution from a neighbouring organization

Living better for less starts in the community. So, if you want to reduce your bills as well as your carbon footprint, start talking to your neighbours and contact Transition Edinburgh South. TES is a community organization with a worldwide network. We gather the resources needed to support local sustainability and community resilience. Here are a few ways TES is helping make South Edinburgh greener.

- **Carbon Conversations** gets residents together to work through practical ways of cutting their carbon. From local food to light bulbs and greener travel, this informal six-week programme gets down to the everyday challenges of climate defence.
- **Community Mapping** ensures you get what you need to live sustainably. Volunteers gather responses from friends, colleagues, family and neighbours. Over 500 surveys will give South Edinburgh residents, TES, and government both local and national a better idea of the community's collective needs, ideas and aspirations.
- **TES' Singing Group and Discussion Forum** encourages an ongoing dialogue on sustainability issues at home and in the community. You can participate in one or the other or both, and no prior singing experience is required.

These are only a few of the projects we have under way in the Bruntsfield area; our community engagement offers a wide range of activities driven by local volunteers and friends. Please contact us to find out how we can help you and your neighbours make your community a nicer place to live in. TES is always on the lookout for volunteers as well. If you'd like some experience in energy efficiency education, solar panel technology, administration, PR and campaign strategy, or just want to improve your singing voice, have a look on our volunteer opportunities page. **Sarah Stewart**

Contact: Transition Edinburgh South: Lauren Bruce, Community Engagement Officer
lauren@transitionedinburghsouth.org.uk 0131-650-4064 www.transitionedinburghsouth.org.uk

Barclay Church Corner makeover

Neil Roger has prepared a design for improvement of the corner of Bruntsfield Links adjoining Barclay Terrace and Glengyle Terrace (n.b. near the Golf Tavern), which is now at the stage of being costed. This corner, which has degenerated in recent years with a desire line that has obliterated the grass, and concrete bollards that are frequently knocked over, really needs urgent attention. Neil's designs and specifications (already approved by your Committee) will be available at the meeting on 29 November, and we should be glad of your comments, and any suggestions for sources of funding.

What happened to the elm trees?

'Furniture from timber with unsurpassed provenance'

You may recall way back that the City of Edinburgh Council donated six elms, which were being felled in the Meadows/Links, to the Scottish Furniture Makers. [See Newsletter 26.] This process has just borne its first fruits, and some of your members may have visited the recent exhibition of furniture made from the elm wood at Dovecote Studios. The most recent posts on my blog (<http://www.chrisholmesblog.wordpress.com>)

give an indication of what has been happening over the year.

Chris Holmes

Forthcoming events

The Autumn meeting of FOMBL will be on Tuesday 29 November at 7.30 p.m. at the Golf Tavern: please bring your ideas and questions. The Spring meeting of FOMBL will be on Monday 19 March at 7.30 p.m. Further details will be available in the Spring newsletter.

Meadows Chamber Orchestra

The current season marks the 40th anniversary of the founding of this well-loved local orchestra. The second autumn concert will be on Saturday 26 November 2011, in Greyfriars Kirk, conducted by Robin Page, featuring Prokofiev's second violin concerto, Sibelius' Suite *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Schumann's Symphony no. 3 (Rhenish) and a new work, a competition-winner by Gregor Forbes, 'Les Soldes du Printemps'. For more detailed information, please have a look at the website: www.meadowsorchestra.org.uk. Discounted tickets (£1 off) from Heather Goodare (address below).

Alternative Business Models

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A windy day on the Meadows: artist Jennifer Thomson

You may have admired Jennifer Thomson's attractive cards, one of which depicts 'a windy day on the Meadows'. She invites members to the launch of her new exhibition of prints and paintings at Blackwell's Bookstore, 53-62 South Bridge, on 17 November, 7-9 p.m.: glass of wine included! The exhibition continues afterwards for the following month, until 16 December.

Useful contacts

Mike Shields Community Parks Officer 0131 529 5126; email: mike.shields@edinburgh.gov.uk

Police: Safer Neighbourhood Team. PC 4601 Yocksan Bell 0131 662 5022 or Sgt 4554 Peter Houston (same number). To report a crime: 0131 311 3131; emergency 999; or (anonymously) to Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111.

Anti-social behaviour (24/7): 0131 529 7050; **Litter:** 0131 529 3030

Defective lamp-post lighting: note number and ring Clarence – 0800 23 23 23

David Doig Local Environment Manager: email david.doig@edinburgh.gov.uk Tel. 0131 529 3711

Complaints regarding Council vehicles driving on Links or Meadows:

Taskforce, Craigmillar Depot: 0131 664 8330

Graffiti Robert Davidson: email: robert.davidson@edinburgh.gov.uk

VACANCY FOR SECRETARY TO FRIENDS OF THE MEADOWS

Hamish McKenzie has been loyally acting as Secretary to FOMBL for the past eight years. Although he is happy to continue as Treasurer, he would like to step down as Secretary. The duties consist mainly in receiving emails of interest to the group and forwarding them as necessary, generally keeping the interests of FOMBL to the fore in local administrative bodies, and where necessary representing the group at, and arranging meetings. Please note that we have a Membership Secretary, and also a Minutes Secretary, so these duties are taken care of. This is a good position for anyone with a laptop and a bit of enthusiasm for the aims of the organization. If you are interested, please contact Hamish (details below).

FOMBL Committee members

Convener: vacant

Treasurer and Acting Secretary: Hamish McKenzie, 7 Bruntsfield Terrace, EH10 4EX Tel.0131 229 6055.

Email: hamish@bruntsfield7.freeseve.co.uk

Membership Secretary: Mrs Sabine Murdoch, 1 Greenhill Gardens, EH10 4BN Tel. 0131 229 4793.

Minutes Secretary: Elizabeth Jogee

Committee: Andy Devenport, Richard Ellis, Linda Hendry, Neil Roger.

Newsletter Editor: Heather Goodare, 3 Glengyle Terrace, EH3 9LL Tel. 228 6998. hm.goodare@virgin.net

Webmaster: Philip McDowell

Website: <http://www.fombl.org.uk>