



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

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organization (SCIO) SC045955

## **NEWSLETTER 57**

**Spring 2021**

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### **Spring Crocuses in the Meadows**



Bulbs planted by Parks staff with help from FoMBL volunteers

Top photo by Sunshine on Leaf (@Sunshine on leaf) twitter and bottom photo by Alastair Philp

### **FoMBL Secretary Required!**

Ideal for someone who cares about maintaining this important green space. The work involves taking minutes at meetings (every two months), updating the online archive, sending Mailchimp notices, helping organise meetings etc. Currently, all our meetings are online.

## **Projects 1. Renovation of FoMBL teak bench at South Links**



Neil Roger and Bridget Stevens obtained quotes to renovate the teak bench at the confluence of footpaths leading onto Bruntsfield Terrace at South Links. We successfully applied for a grant from the City's South East Locality Community Grants Fund and after removal of the bench to the joiner's workshop it will hopefully be reinstated by mid April.

A large donation from Heather Goodare will contribute to and enable the completion of this work. FoMBL would like to thank her for her generosity.

In addition Bridget Stevens of Merchiston Community Council organised and funded a plaque to be fixed to the bench commemorating Robin Morris. Robin, who died in 2018, was a member of Merchiston Community Council for fifteen years including its Chair for four. He also served FoMBL as treasurer and committee member for many years.

It is hoped that the bench will provide a comfortable resting place for park users of all ages for many more years in its rejuvenated state.

## **Projects 2. Playgrounds**

Neil Roger has been working with Alan Grevers (the sole council official who manages all playgrounds in Edinburgh) to provide additional equipment for all three playgrounds.

A new trampoline and see-saw will be installed by the end of March/start of April at the Links playground and the East Meadows toddlers' playground. These are funded by 2019 events money.

A new Archimedes screw and water pump will be installed at East playground some time later in the year depending on funding. Neil is considering applying to the Tesco bags fund to pay for new play equipment at South Links.

## **Projects 3. Table Tennis Tables at East Meadows**



Table tennis can be played by all ages and at all levels, is sociable and fun, and fosters inclusion and a healthy lifestyle. A similar project in Inverleith Park has proved a huge success in getting people active and engaging in outdoor recreation. COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of safe outdoor recreation, something table tennis facilitates. It also helps strengthen community engagement while getting members of any ability or age active and outdoors. This has knock-on benefits for the mental well-being of people residing in the area.

A group of FoMBL members worked with James McGinley to apply for grant money for two table tennis tables to be sited between the East Meadows playpark and Hope Park Crescent. The application to the community fund was successful and a further application to Baillie Gifford is pending. Planning permission is required and could take some time.

## **Projects 4. Edinburgh World Heritage Interpretation Project**

Edinburgh World Heritage and Neil Roger have been working on an interpretation project for the Meadows. This involves gathering stories relating to the Meadows over time including description of buildings, monuments and the historic landscape. This will result in the erection of high quality interpretation boards which will have a unified design tailored to the park.

A workshop attended by a group of FoMBL members and interested local residents was held last month to discuss the first stages of this proposal. The next stage will be the appointment of professional designers and board/lectern manufacturers.

Funding by FoMBL and EWH is in place for the first batch of boards.

### **Tree Group**



One of the trees with new posts and mesh

The tree group has continued to work throughout the last few months (strict social distancing in groups of two) every Friday. FoMBL acquired a trolley, new tools and posts to assist in this work.

So far over 20 young trees have had remedial work carried out to prevent long term damage. This includes replacement of rotten posts, mesh protection, clearing out bases of weeds and rubbish, removal of dead trees and cutting back dead/damaged branches. There are still many trees to be worked on but it is hoped this work can continue throughout the year. The lead volunteers are Benet Haughton and Martin Howorth who both have considerable expertise in tree work.

*Below* - the new trolley to carry tools and posts etc.

### **Saturday Work Parties**

*run by Alison Carr*

We have had a steadily increasing number of volunteers helping in the morning of the last Saturday of each month. This has enabled us to do more on the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links. It is largely thanks to the volunteers that these areas are looking as good as they do in the Spring sunshine. The volunteers have cleaned graffiti, picked up a great deal of rubbish, widened the cycle path where turf has encroached onto it, freshened up the noticeboards where possible, reported and had removed fly-tipped rubbish and tidied up the area surrounding the Cricket Pavilion. Future plans include all of the above as well as some re-seeding of trampled grassy areas due to footfall and vehicles.

An ongoing issue is overflowing bins. So many bulky coffee cups are getting disposed of and if only they were crushed there might be less of a problem.

Alison has cleared out planters and refreshed with new plants. Along with Neil Roger she has helped to maintain the rope and posts which protect the wildflower meadow at the Links.

A big thank you to all the volunteers who have made a difference, and to Mike Shields of Edinburgh Council who has been unfailingly supportive.



## New Trustee for FoMBL - Martin Howorth



I moved with my family to Edinburgh just over 18 months ago from North Wales. I took early retirement from a job as a Parks Manager looking after a number of parks, cemeteries, allotments and other green spaces. Having lived in North Wales for over 40 years it's been very exciting to move to another country. We have enjoyed living in Edinburgh even though much of it has been lockdown restricted. We live on Marchmont Crescent very close to the Meadows and I see the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links most days, so can appreciate its huge value as open space. All open space changes and develops over time and I feel the Meadows would benefit from greater biodiversity through planting of shrubs and trees to form an understorey in suitable areas. This could be achieved without changing the character and open aspect. We also need more trees, many of the trees are mature and a new generation of trees is needed to help combat climate change and its pollution. I am also a keen gardener and work on the Meadows Community Garden – come and join us on a Saturday morning. ...

### Grow and Learn

At the community garden, we are delighted to have extended our orchard. We have planted four more apple trees and two pears. Two plums have been added to our borders. We look forward to a beautiful show of blossom in the spring! This project will improve biodiversity and support pollinators. Keep an eye on our wildflower plot too, as it will be stirring soon.

Flyer - [www.greeningourstreet.btck.co.uk](http://www.greeningourstreet.btck.co.uk)



## New Trees donated by Heather Goodare



Left - Photo of *Magnolia grandiflora* *Gallissoniere* (Evergreen Southern Magnolia) at Glengyle Terrace – this is a very hardy evergreen clone that can achieve a mature height of approximately 10m. It was one of three trees kindly donated by Heather Goodare and planted in November 2020.

The other trees are *Quercus x turnerii Pseudoturneri* (Turner's oak) and *Crataegus x prunifolia Splendens* (Broad-leaved cockspur thorn).

The flowers are on another similar tree.

Neil Roger

## The Story of the Unicorns



The two unicorns were carved by sculptor Handyside Ritchie, using Binny freestone, to surmount the pillars (or gatepiers) which had been designed and built earlier by George Smith, the architect and designer of the entrance. The pillars were funded by public subscription, but the Council agreed to pay Ritchie £55 for the unicorns when this money ran out. This marked the opening of the eastern half of the Meadows to the public, free of charge, in 1849. They are located at the entrance to Middle Meadow Walk (although they are actually on Teviot Place).

The Meadows had been leased out to a succession of men to effect drainage, which took over two centuries to complete! The eastern half was ready for public access by the middle of the 19th century, while the western half was still rather swampy.

The unicorns were originally put up to prevent vehicular traffic from accessing Middle Meadow Walk (following the renovations). Prior to the Council's purchase the whole area had been privately leased and trespassing heavily discouraged, used for grazing sheep and cattle, and drying washing; although citizens could wander along the Walk and enjoy the open space from there.

*Thanks to Sarah Tolley and Graeme Cruickshank for interesting input: source City Archives,*

## Become a PAL!

*(Article written by Bridget Stevens for a local magazine)*

During the various forms of lockdown over recent months, one thing has been constant. The number of people discovering, using and enjoying their local parks for all sorts of reasons – exercise, relaxation, fresh air, appreciation of nature – has increased significantly. Award-winning crime writer Ian Rankin, who now lives not far from the Meadows, has been posting pictures of his daily walks there and The Friends of the Meadows & Bruntsfield Links (FoMBL) have been organising their teams of volunteers to do whatever seasonal work might be required. This includes the picking-up of litter. Greater use of The Meadows by more and more local residents, which is widely welcomed, has unfortunately led to increased amounts of unsightly litter being left behind. Any readers interested in helping to reduce this are encouraged to get in touch with or to register with People Against Litter (PAL). PAL, set up and run by local resident Francesca Saunders, is a group of people founded in Edinburgh who are committed to trying to reduce this problem. Francesca writes: “We have a simple aim: each ‘member’ picks up at least one piece of litter per week and asks another person to do the same. There are no fees, meetings or group clean-ups, just an individual’s commitment to pick up at least one piece of litter per week, and if possible get one other person to do the same. If you would like to become a PAL, please have a look at our website <https://www.peopleagainstlitter.org/> or email Francesca Saunders using the email address below. Please state how you heard about PAL. Unless future prospective PALs join through the site or email, they cannot be counted in. It really is as simple as that! You’ll find lots more information on the PAL website but if you have any further questions or queries please contact PAL Founder Francesca Saunders. Email: [fs.pal@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:fs.pal@blueyonder.co.uk).”

## **Membership price increase**

The new membership fee for Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links will be £8.00, although students and young people will still pay £5.00. It is possible to pay online by credit card. Remember to gift aid your payment if you are a taxpayer. Corporate membership will go up from £10 to £15.

## **Forthcoming Events**

Volunteers are always needed for work in the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links on the last Saturday of the month - the nature of the work depending on the season. We meet at the Cricket Pavilion at 10.00am, and any necessary tools can be provided.

## **Useful Contacts**

**Mike Shields**, Parks and Greenspace Officer South East Tel. 0131 529 5126; email: mike.shields@edinburgh.gov.uk.

**Police:** To report a crime: 101 (costing a flat rate of 15p per call); emergency 999; or (anonymously) to Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111.

**Police Service of Scotland website** is <http://www.scotland.police.uk>.

**Anti-social behaviour (Edinburgh Council):** Tel. 0131 529 7050;

**Environmental services** 0131 200 2000;

**South Office:** 0131 529 5051 **Litter:** 0131 608 1100

**Defective lamp-post lighting:** note number and notify on the City of Edinburgh Council website

**Forestry Service:** email: forestry.service@edinburgh.gov.uk. Tel. 0131 311 7079

**Road repairs and development:** Alan Dunlop, Senior Transport Team Leader: Tel. 0131 529 3719; email: alan.dunlop@edinburgh.gov.uk

**Task Force Manager** (responsible for street cleaning and grounds maintenance) Rab Farquhar: email: rab.farquhar@edinburgh.gov.uk. Tel. 0131 664 8330 for recycling.

**Graffiti:** report to 0131 200 2000 or Police 101 if persistent

**Family and household support service manager** (tackling anti-social behaviour and joint working with the police) email: kathy.evans@edinburgh.gov.uk, Tel. 0131 529 5106

**Environmental Warden team leader: Paul Baxter** Tel. 0131 529 5204; or 608 1100

**People Against Litter (PAL):** *please contact* <http://www.peopleagainstlitter.org/>

### ***FoMBL Trustees***

**Convener:** Jim Orr, email: convener@fombl.org.uk

**Secretary:** email: secretary@fombl.org.uk.

**Treasurer:** email: fombltreas@fombl.org.uk

**Membership Secretary:** Alec Mann, email: membership@fombl.org.uk.

**Project Manager:** Neil Roger

**Newsletter Editor:** Maureen Parnell, email: newsletter@fombl.org.uk

Martin Howorth, email: howorthmartin2@gmail.com

**Tollcross Community Council:** Iain Black, **Southside CC:** Joan Carter, Kaaren Haughton, **Merchiston CC:** Bridget Stevens, **Marchmont and Sciennes CC:** Alison Service

### ***Other FoMBL Contacts:***

**Webmaster:** Philip McDowell. **Website:** [www.fombl.org.uk](http://www.fombl.org.uk)

**Volunteer Co-ordinator:** Alison Carr. email: volunteer@fombl.org.uk

