



***Parks Events Manifesto
The Meadows and Bruntsfield Links
DRAFT VERSION May 2009***

Chris Wigglesworth 26 June 2009 – discussed with the Friends Committee.

“Summer” photo on top sheet could be replaced with one showing the thousands out there on a hot day, but preferably without any BBQ smoke on it!

Background

The Meadows, with an area of 24.5 hectares, and Bruntsfield Links, 15.1 hectares, form one large green space with two contrasting parks, which for the purposes of this report are treated as one. Roughly 90% of the area is grass, with the other 10% wooded along Melville Drive, Whitehouse Loan, most paths, and around much of the edge. The City of Edinburgh Council’s Services for Communities Department manages the site, which is classified as a Premier Park in the Parks and Gardens Strategy.

The park provides an essential greenspace in the heart of the city, with a design which lends itself to a great range of sports and leisure activities. The layout of the park provides healthy and safe routes into the city along tree lined paths for residents of the south side of the city. The design provides large open spaces which can accommodate a range of activities, including sport, play, leisure activities, and other events.

Predominantly amenity rye grass mixes with a small wildflower area in the east end of the Meadows, the site benefits from trees such as Elm, Sycamore, Lime, Hornbeam, Cherry, Ash, Norway Maple, Whitebeam, and Willow; annual bedding on the perimeter of the site; areas of naturalised crocus and daffodils; a mixed shrub border adjacent to the cricket pavilion, and a holly hedge in front of the University residence at Leamington Walk.

The principal recreational uses are walking; running; cycling; dog exercising; picnicking; organised sports - cricket, short hole golf, croquet, bowls, tennis, children’s football; informal sports - football, rugby, kite flying, shinty, volleyball, frisbee; children’s play; and organised events – community, charity and commercial.

The Meadows and Bruntsfield Links have a rich and varied history and heritage. The Meadows was once the shallow South or Burgh Loch, providing the city with water for drinking, washing clothes and for brewing beer. From the mid 17th century the area

was gradually drained and later laid out as pleasure grounds with tree-lined walks and a summer house. The Meadows became the popular space they are today for sport, celebration, meeting or a stroll.

The Meadows & the Bruntsfield Links have distinct topographies. The Meadows, as a former shallow loch gradually drained in the last 200 years, is flat with heavy soil, much of it undergoing compaction. It is prone to water-logging, with small but increasing areas of standing water. The Links, lightly quarried for sandstone over two hundred years ago, form a north-sloping and undulating, mostly well-drained area, with thin soil-cover and very small rock outcrops at the south-western extremity on Bruntsfield Place.

Current infrastructure consists of a croquet lawn – National Croquet Association of Scotland; 16 tennis courts and a pavilion; 3 cricket squares and cricket pavilion; a jogging track – including the Sri Chimnoy Peace Mile measured mile; 3 play areas and a children friendly fenced area – “Tumblers Hollow”; and 3 public toilets (Magnet play area, Middle Meadow Walk, Bruntsfield). Significant features include the World Exhibition Monument – West Meadows; Monument East Meadows; Millennium Stone – Middle Meadow Walk; Pillars at either end of Melville Drive; Jawbone at Jawbone Walk; Water fountain at cricket pavilion; Chessboard at Bruntsfield Links; Historic short hole golf course and “starters hut”; and the “Kenneth Ryden” tree avenue.

Edinburgh Events Strategy

The city’s festivals and events offering is key to its image at home and abroad, to its capital city status, to the development of the City Region Brand and to the Destination Edinburgh Marketing Alliance (DEMA).

The Council’s Events Strategy states that “Edinburgh will continue to grow as one of the world’s finest events cities”. It aims to deliver a balanced portfolio of events over the next ten years or so to include established successful events, newly created or commissioned events and national or international events won for the city through bidding processes.

The events portfolio is intended to:

- generate significant economic benefit for the city region;
- help make the city lively throughout the year;
- reflect the civic and political status of Edinburgh as a capital city; and
- reinforce the Council's vision and aspirations, including the Edinburgh City Region Brand values.

The parks and greenspaces which are currently in the greatest demand for events are strategic sites such as Princes Street Gardens, the Meadows, Calton Hill and Holyrood Park. These are preferred by event organisers, including the Council itself as an event promoter or co-promoter, because they are located centrally, provide iconic backdrops for broadcast and filming and have high footfall or are close to areas of high footfall. It is essential that these venues reflect Edinburgh's position as capital city whilst ensuring no significant loss of greenspace for local residents# and continuing to accommodate local and community events.

and visitors

Quality Assessment & Management Plan

A quality assessment based on the Green Flag Award criteria was undertaken during the summer of 2008. The assessment looks at the park in terms of standard of maintenance, landscape features, problem areas, and positive features. The park has also been assessed on the level of community participation, safety, cleanliness, sustainability, and opportunities for healthy, active lifestyle. The Meadows score was rated as "Good" and Bruntsfield Links received a "High Fair" score. Subsequently, a draft Meadows & Bruntsfield Links Management Plan has been produced by the City of Edinburgh Council and representatives from Southside, Merchiston, Tollcross, and Marchmont & Sciennes Community Councils. It states that:

"On behalf of the people of Edinburgh, the City Council commits itself to looking after the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links for the benefit of citizens and visitors alike, both now and for the future. It will ensure that the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links continue to be a distinctive and attractive place of grass and trees, of paths and vistas, safe for all who frequent the area, for relaxation and recreation."

The following list of aims has been identified in the Management Plan

- Ensure that the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links are welcoming and accessible
- Ensure a healthy and safe environment
- Maintain the highest standards of horticulture, cleanliness, ground, building, and infrastructure maintenance
- Adopt environmental management principles and therefore reduce the impact of operations (including events)
- Promote biodiversity and the historic significance through appropriate management
- Develop community involvement
- Actively promote the park
- Provide a responsive, flexible and high quality management service

A series of actions have also been outlined; the most relevant of which are:

Aim 7: To promote the park				
Objective	Where and/or How	Year	Who	Cost
7.2 To promote the Meadows Festival as a major community event of the year	Early invitation, notification and publicity to all local community organisations from a well represented and supported committee	2010	NPM LEM	Grant funding
7.2 To provide regular information on maintenance, events, and works within the park	Use all possible relevant information and modern publicity opportunities	2009	N/Hood team	£5,000
Aim 8: To provide a responsive, flexible and high quality management service				
Objective	Where and/or How	Year	Who	Cost
8.2 To develop an events strategy for the Meadows	Establish Edinburgh Parks Events Manifesto for managing application and processes for events within the city parks including Meadows and Bruntsfield Links.	2009	Councillors/P&G	N/A

The Meadows & Bruntsfield Links was submitted for a 2009 Green Flag Award. It was judged during May 2009 and the results will be produced by Parks and Greenspace in October 2009.

Meadows & Bruntsfield Links Events Manifesto

The aim of this Manifesto is to establish a set of requirements unique to The Meadows and Bruntsfield Links which are intended to provide a framework on which a balanced and sustainable events programme can be achieved, whilst ensuring the quality of the land is maintained to the highest standard possible.

The suitability of an event will be scrutinised and tested against the following questions: **## order should be changed, environtl. Impact should be 2. etc**

- **1** Is the event suitable to take place on the Meadows?
- **6** What benefits (economic and otherwise) will the event provide?
- **5** Are the management arrangements satisfactory for this event?
- **4** Have previous events of this nature been managed satisfactorily by this organisation?
- **3** How might park conditions at that particular time of the year be impacted?
- **2** What is the environmental impact of the event?
- Would the event clash with any other?

It should however be recognised that the Council is keen to invest further in improving the quality of Edinburgh's parks network, including making them fit-for-purpose where they regularly host events and large scale activities. To this end, work is on-going to identify ways to increase the resilience of parks and other open spaces to ensure multiple park uses can be adequately accommodated.

Please note the Manifesto does not make reference to fees and bonds, which will form the basis of a further report to Committee.

Annual Review

A full review of events in the Meadows will be reported to stakeholders at the end of the calendar year. This will take the format of a report detailing what events occurred, when they occurred, a summary of any issues that may have arisen, the extent of any site impact and measures put in place **or proposed** to re-instate or repair the ground or park infrastructure.

The Manifesto uses eight key principles, the first five determine whether an event will be given permission, the following three are aimed at the successful management of an agreed event.

Determining Principles
<p>Principle 1: Control the total number of days of occupation for an event on any site.</p> <p>No event should occupy an area of the Meadows for longer than ten (10) days in total, including setting up and dismantling (breaking down) time.</p> <p>An event should only be allowed to set up when the ground conditions are suitable.</p> <p>No event should be allowed to set up which is likely to cause damage to a site.</p>

Principle 2: Schedule turf rest periods between events.

Background

Most? sites require around?? two weeks' recovery period between events (also dependent on reinstatement and weather). This will enable turf to adequately recover and for any small eroded areas to grass over. [Some key parks in other cities allow certain times of the year to be defined as rest periods.]

[[Measures proposed for events scheduled for 2009:

No events have been given permission to take up those areas which are showing significant wear and tear. Appropriate rest times following each event have been ensured.]]

Question

- **Do you agree that a turf rest period between events is appropriate?**

Yes, it is essential to have at least two (2) weeks on this clay soil without further heavy use. It is then also essential to take into account any recreational activities that normally take place on the area at that time of year, but which have been displaced, to resume as appropriate. It may require a far longer period than two weeks before any other event should be allowed to occupy the same area.

- **If so, what length of time would you consider appropriate? You may consider different lengths of time for different times of the year.**

***See previous comment.* From the start of May to the end of September, ie weeks 19 to 40, there should be a minimum of two weeks turf rest, before further heavy wear is risked.**

From the start of October to the end of April, ie weeks 41 to 52 & 1 to 18, no events should normally be allowed on the Meadows, or Bruntsfield Links.

Principle 3: Control the total number of 'Major Events' per year.

A "Major Event" on the Meadows should include any event involving large tents, marquees, pavilions and the like, with a total covered area of approx. 200 square metres or more, and/or security fencing, delivery and erection vehicles requiring available hard standing near the Meadows, other infrastructure such as overnight security accommodation. It should include any event with a "footprint" of 25% or more of the available green open space of the Meadows, excluding the tennis courts, playparks, and cricket squares.

The number of "Major Events" on the Meadows each year should be limited to a maximum of five (5), and only held between May and the end of September. An event should only be allowed to exceed 30% of the available open, green space in exceptional circumstances.

Two "Major Events" should not be allowed to take place at the same time on the Meadows.

Available hard standing and parking availability should also be taken into account when deciding if an event is appropriate. No additional hard standing should be created at the expense of existing turf areas.

Principle 4: Define the capacity of each event site and suggest appropriate types of uses for each venue.

Background

Areas 1, 2 & 3 on the Meadows each accommodate a cricket pitch, and Bruntsfield Links accommodates a public golf course. The cricket pitches are utilised between April and September during the day on Saturday and Sunday and in the evenings, Monday to Thursday; the summer golf course is open mid April to the end of September and the smaller winter course, October through to April. It would be desirable **###/is essential** that the primary function of these areas is protected as far as possible.

When considering the ability of the Meadows to host an event, it is also important to take into account areas of special ecological, landscape, architectural or historical significance.

[[Measures proposed for events scheduled for 2009:

The footprint of each event will be managed minimise impact to sporting fixtures. Only the Meadows Festival will impact on the cricket pitches; and the organisers have agreed to move the event eastwards to enable the use of pitch 1 for cricket fixtures. **]]**

Question

- **How do you think the areas in the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links are best used when there are potentially competing demands for their use?**

By giving preference to the normal, traditional recreational activities, and by keeping recently introduced commercial events to a minimum, as indicated above. There is a big difference between traditional, short-duration funfairs, like that in May, and the far longer, recently introduced “Fringe-related” funfair. This should be cut back to a week maximum, if it insists on being on the Meadows at all.

Principle 5: To set an appropriate limit for private events.

Background

The Meadows is an excellent setting for events beneficial to the city's image and economy. However, large events requiring an entrance fee or pre-paid booking fee tend to restrict public access. Recent and current events in the Meadows fall broadly within the following categories:

Public	Community	The Meadows Festival, Victorian Book Fair, The Alternative Olympics, The Royal Archers
Public/Private	Small Charity	Maggies Edinburgh Life Walk, Run For Relief in Burma, Meadows Marathon
Public/Private	Large Charity	The Moonwalk, The Great Bupa Run
Private	Commercial	Taste of Edinburgh, Urban Circus, Meadows Funfair

Question

- **Do you agree the way that the events above have been classified?**

It has the value of deciding priorities. For example, I think the community view would be to prefer a community event over a commercial one.

- **If not, how would you classify them?**

- **Do you agree that private events should be limited and, if so, how many do you think would be appropriate for the Meadows area within a year?**

Yes, private, especially fenced-off, events should be strictly limited to two per season. The other limits to size and duration should, of course, also be enforced.

Managing Principles

Principle 6: Control vehicle use and access.

Background

The majority of events require some vehicles on site, usually to set up and breakdown infrastructure or for security or health and safety reasons. This can have a significant impact on ground compaction, and erosion arises from vehicle movement and from vehicles parked on it for extended periods of time. Methods to mitigate this impact could be the issue of venue permits, the relocation of vehicles off site, and the issue of a clear access plan in advance of the event.

Measures proposed for events scheduled for 2009:

Vehicle Access

Only areas with direct vehicle access have been considered viable venues. Vehicle access during setup / breakdown of events will be from a single access point, either George Square or Melville Drive. This will ensure vehicles travel over the minimum area of ground. No vehicles will be permitted onto the sites from any other access point.

Once the set up of an event is complete no vehicle movement will be permitted onto the site with the exception of small, authorised vehicles which will cover servicing issues and disabled access. Boarding will be laid for vehicles when weather conditions require it.

Tracking

Additional tracking will be laid to prevent damage from vehicle movements during set up and breakdown and will be removed between these times to prevent excessive areas of grass from yellowing. Additional pedestrian tracking will also be required to protect the areas of grass at risk of heavy footfall.

Vehicles and Overnight Stays

Overnight caravans and vehicle numbers have been reduced and will be limited to the use of security, technical and "on call" staff only, in line with Health and Safety requirements. These must remain static for the duration of the event. Permits will be issued by CEC for the specific vehicles authorised. Additional vehicles or caravans are to be housed in an alternative site. Diesel

vehicles permitted on site will need to have drip trays in position to prevent leaks or spills onto the grass.

Deliveries

Delivery times will be restricted and all delivery vehicles will be required to park on hard standing areas with goods transferred to sites manually or using a small light vehicle.

Stewards will be required to staff these areas to ensure vehicles do not drive onto the grass. Access will be for emergency and servicing purposes only.

Performers

Performers will be accommodated off site and will be transported to the venue as required. A bus will drop passengers off on the hard standing area and they will walk, using the pedestrian tracking to the marquee areas. The bus will be parked in an alternative hard standing area between journeys.

Question

- **Do you have any comments on the range of measures proposed?**

The main point is that every single condition must be capable of effective monitoring and enforcement by available Council and partner staff, especially police. This has rarely been the case in recent years. No new hard standing should be formed at the expense of the turf areas. Breach of conditions should be penalised, recorded in detail, and taken note of in any subsequent applications by either the same applicants, or for similar activities. Environmental conditions for turf and trees should be compared with those used by other local authorities, eg Bath.

- **Would you wish to add any additional measures?**

Principle 7: To impose appropriate conditions on event activities and placement of infrastructure to be monitored and assessed.

Background

The creation of a checklist which makes a link between event activities and potential site damage will signal to organisers their responsibility for the venue, and encourage them to work toward reducing damage. The checklist could include appropriate measures, for example, the consideration of the park fabric such as grass, trees, monuments, walls and gateways, or minimising impact on wildlife and ecology. Guidelines should also be used to protect the landscape from temporary structures such as tents, fencing and staging.

Measures proposed for events scheduled for 2009:

Monitoring and Assessment

Regular site meetings will be held between event organisers and council officers during events to immediately address any issues that may arise. Park Rangers will be available during the day and in the evenings to ensure all restrictions are adhered to.

Review

A full review will be held upon completion of the events and will be reported directly to all stakeholders.

Question

- **Do you have any comments on the type of conditions appropriate when hosting events in the Meadows?**

To be effective, conditions must be publically available, for all persons using the Meadows. All event staff, both permanent and casual must be aware of them. An effective reporting system should be in place so that the public can alert the Council immediately, should any apparent problem come to notice.

The current problems with BBQs are highly relevant, in addition to the sorry tale of previous years' extensive failure to observe or enforce event conditions. Flyposting prevention, litter collection, recycling facilities, damage prevention – these are all on-going problems. The cumulative impact on the character and condition of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links is an important matter.

Principle 8: Contingency Plans to be put in place and form part of event lease agreements.

Background

Contingency plans will be required to be in place and, where possible, be included within the Lease agreement to protect the ground in circumstances such as extreme weather conditions (such as heavy and prolonged rainfall), particularly with regard to vehicle movements.

Question

- **What elements should be considered for inclusion in a contingency plan and lease agreement when considering use of the Meadows for hosting events?**

Event organisers must have their own contingency plans. The Council must reserve the right to stop any event immediately, on reasonable grounds, including adverse weather or ground conditions, as well as all public safety matters.

- **Do you have any additional comments that you would like to make with regard to the proposed manifesto?**

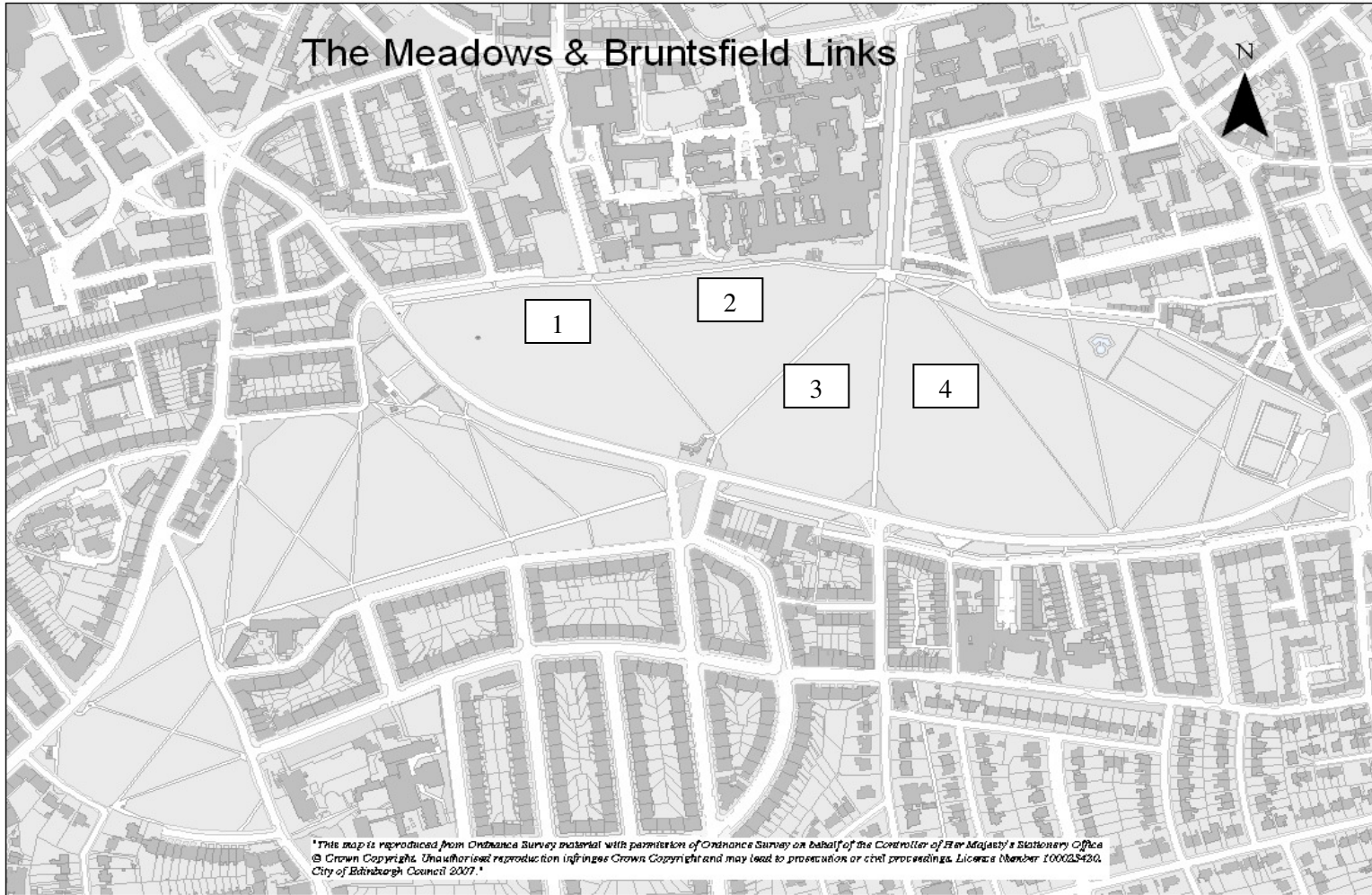
As indicated earlier, I think that the sections on what may be done in 2009 does not clarify matters.

Regarding Specialist Surfaces (ref 12 June presentation to Working Group), a whole series of issues would arise if this solution were to be adopted in future. Regardless of the outcome on this, major infrastructural work on the drainage and turf condition of all the Meadows is urgently needed. Introduction of an area with a special surface may well only add to existing problems.

Also, a Manifesto centred on Events is in danger of missing the point that events should be a minor aspect of the use and maintenance of this public green space. This draft Manifesto creates the impression that the fundamental recreational use of the area is peripheral to its concerns. This is seriously misleading. The true value of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links lies in their recreational and aesthetic heritage and importance in a commercially-dominated society!

Chris Wigglesworth 26 June 2009

The Meadows & Bruntsfield Links



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