

**Minutes of the Friends Of Pilrig Park (FoPP) Committee Meeting
Monday 2 September 2013**

Attendance

Sophie Brown, Chair (SB)
Max Brown (MB)
Emma Faragher, Secretary (EF)
Stephen Penman (SP)
Irene Sweeney (IS)
Lennie Sefton (LS)
Katie Wright (KW)

Apologies

Liz Ballantyne (LB)
Zoe Holman (ZH)

1. Welcome

SB welcomed everyone to the meeting. This was the second meeting of the Friends of Pilrig Park (FoPP) group's committee.

2. Approval of the Minutes of committee meeting 13th May

The minute of the committee meeting on 13 May was proposed Stephen Penman and seconded by Max Brown.

3. Updates

FoPP Public Meeting, 10 June

All members of the committee were at the last meeting so no update was given. Agreed that nominations for posts should be considered before the next public meeting to smooth the nomination process, see 'next steps' below.

Next Clear Up Day

The next Clear Up Day is on Sunday 8 September, SB will re-circulate information to committee members.

Bins and Benches

- CEC has replaced existing bins and installed three new ones.
- Sites for seven new benches have been agreed following a successful consultation with the local community led by SB. CEC has advised they will be installed within twelve weeks; IS will confirm this schedule at the Friends of Parks group meeting on 3 September.
- SP noted this is a success for the FoPP group – two improvements made to the park.

Friends of Parks Group (Leith Walk Ward)

SB gave an update:

- The group has sent a letter to CEC outlining the three priority areas for each of the parks represented on the group.

- There has been a suggestion that an Edinburgh-wide group should be set up; this would enable coordinated lobbying; resource sharing; networking; sharing good practice and advice. SB will keep FoPP updated on progress.

Trees & Undergrowth

SP Met with Ross Woodside of Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust, other members of FoPP and a representative from CEC for a walk around and discussion on how to manage wooded areas on the 13th June. He gave an update and circulated a copy of relevant email correspondence:

- Woodland can be considered as two distinct areas or types:
 - **The Community Woodland** was planted in a planned manner and had key objectives in its original funding; however the period of this funding has lapsed and since then it has been managed in the same way as other woodland in the park and has become overgrown. It has a variety of native species that encourage biodiversity. There is potential for this area to be reinstated and improved.
 - **Other wooded areas** have fewer species present. They are very overgrown; littered and unsafe so require urgent attention to reinstate them as usable areas of parkland.
- Undergrowth can be cleared but there are limitations regarding what can be done to trees. **Trimming** is restricted to the use of hand tools and in the case of the specific type of woodland in Pilrig Park is confined to the removal of trees with a trunk of less than 10cm in diameter at 1 meter above the ground (often referred to as diameter at breast height or dbh). Removal of trunks of more than 10cm dbh is classed as **Felling** and requires a licence.
- Activity is limited by time of year – trimming cannot take place when birds are nesting between April and September.
- Any activity would need to be confirmed with Fiona Devlin in advance so a team can be arranged to remove undergrowth cleared.

SP has also liaised with Fiona Devlin of CEC who is supportive of cutting back and improving the wooded areas. SB and MB suggested it would be beneficial to secure her written agreement and support.

Action SP: Continue to liaise with FD and request written confirmation FoPP can go ahead with undergrowth clearing.

Facebook, Twitter and Logo

KW gave an update:

- Both are running well; KW makes regular updates and has linked the group to other local groups and organisations e.g. the football team that plays in the park; Out of the Blue Drill Hall; Greener Leith.
 - KW circulated a copy of the designs for the FoPP logo; all agreed it is very good, with a clean style. KW advised that the designer has suggested FoPP get a rubber stamp of the logo. This is a cheap and eco-friendly way to create headed paper, poster paper etc.
 - SB and LS asked for electronic copies also for use on posters, and the web.
- Action KW:** send copy of style/design sheets and logo to LS.

Action LS: upload logos to secure area of the FoPP website for committee members to access and use.

4. Next Steps

Funding for Small Play Park

- SB proposed a sub-group who can focus on proposals and fundraising for the renewal of the small play park. There are a number of people in the FoPP membership with interest and relevant expertise. This proposal was agreed.
- The committee noted there is potential to include parts of the cleared woodland into the fenced park area and to create an innovative play area.
- KW suggested that parents from Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce may have relevant expertise and be willing to mentor the sub-group.

Trees and Undergrowth

- SP proposed that:
 - A plan to reinstate the Community Woodland should be developed separately to the rest of the woodland.
 - Other areas to be reinstated to usable, but well-managed woodland park areas; the first step being a series of trimming days organised by FoPP. SP has divided this woodland into 4 areas for action.

The Committee agreed this proposal.

- SB suggested that building bat boxes, and other items that encourage wildlife in to the areas, would be a good addition to the proposed clearance activity. The committee agreed this suggestion.
- It was agreed that the plan for the community woodland area should use the managed woodland in RBGE as a model.
- The committee agreed that activity on trimming days will be dependent on turn out; and that a phased approach should be taken:
 1. Shrub clearing - clearing general undergrowth.
 2. Tree trimming, stage 1 – identifying branches under 10cm diameter for trimming.
 3. Tree trimming, stage 2 – removing identified branches.
 4. Installing bat boxes and other items to encourage wildlife.
- SP will identify a series of 4-5 dates for undergrowth clearance and advice CEC of plans.
- Expert advice on the days would be a benefit, if a suitable individual or body can be identified.
- Agreed to request the presence of a Community Safety team member and/or a sharps box from CEC - it is likely sharps will be found.
- SB suggested that SP could seek advice from Friends of Cramond and River Almond Walkways; they are experienced in clearing undergrowth.
- There is a tool bank at Macdonald Road Library; options for people to bring their own tools and FoPP to borrow tools from other groups to be investigated.
- Photos of undergrowth to be taken at the upcoming Clear Up Day in September and used to promote the clearing days/ report plans.
- Agreed that as improvements are made they will be photographed and recorded on Facebook.

- Dates to be promoted at FoPP public meeting and on Facebook.
- Public Liability Insurance (PLI) will need to be arranged, see ACOB below.
- Participants to sign a disclaimer they are aware of risk to selves and their property and agree to photos of day being used on social media/PR.
Action SP: SP will lead on planning and organising undergrowth clearing days; noting suggestions and discussions recorded in this minute.
Action KW: to record process of undergrowth clearance on Facebook.
Action MB/SB: Confirm PLI arrangements when in place.

Dog Day

- SB reported that Fiona Devlin at CEC has arranged a day for dog owners in the park on 15 September. SB offered to have a FoPP stall and/or support CEC if required.
Action SB: Follow up with Fiona Devlin.

Bulb Planting Day

- SB advised that CEC can dig holes and provide bulbs for community bulb planting days. She proposed doing this with pupils from Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce in the Autumn.
- KW agreed this would be a good idea, and that there are a number of classes who might participate. To ensure a good turn out, the activity should take place during the school day; a significant percentage of pupils travel to school from other parts of the city. KW offered to take this event forward.
Action SB: Forward information and contact details to KW to action.

Public Art in Park

- SB was recently contacted by a business that links artists who specialise in art in public spaces with communities and groups; who offered to work with FoPP.
- Agreed that FoPP does not have capacity to take on a large public art project at this stage; but that his details should be logged for future.
- Agreed there is lots of potential to include art in the park; especially if small scale ephemeral projects, for example is there a local artist who can help build art from cleared branches – this would both add value to events; and might also increase interest from local press.

Membership of LCCC

- SB proposed that FoPP becomes a member of Leith Central Community Council; she advised this would require one committee member to attend a meeting each month.
- The Committee agreed FoPP should join LCCC
Action SB/EF: Complete and sign membership papers.

Posts

- SP is willing to be Vice Chair for FoPP; this will be proposed at the upcoming public meeting in October.
- MB is willing to be Acting Treasurer until a replacement is found; nominations for this post will be sought.

5. Update on Formal Adoption of Constitution

SB advised that the changes to the draft Constitution suggested at the public meeting on 10 June have been made; it is ready for adoption at the upcoming public meeting on 21 October.

6. ACOB

Bikes and safety

IS raised an issue for the FoPP committee to consider; some bike users in the park ride very fast on the pathways; which can be dangerous for pedestrians. MB and LS noted there are national initiatives about bike safety. LS is a bike user and has seen speed restrictions painted on paths in other parks.

Action all: consider possible actions FoPP could take for discussion at next meeting.

Action IS: Raise the issue of bike safety at the Friend of Parks meeting, 3 Sept.

Public Liability Insurance (PLI)

- Committee agreed that if FoPP starts running public activities more regularly, Public Liability Insurance needs to be arranged as a matter of urgency.
- FoPP currently has an arrangement with Greener Leith for Clean Up days; which are run in partnership and are covered by GL's PLI; but this is not a formal, long-term option.
- Options are to formalise this arrangement; seek advice on whether CEC can cover PLI for upcoming events; seek cover via an umbrella body e.g. Voluntary Conservation Scotland; or buy our own. Options are limited because FoPP does not have funds.

Action SB/MB: Investigate options and action; starting with potential to formalise arrangement with Greener Leith.

Official Boundaries of the Park

SP asked if CEC has confirmed the official boundary of the park; SB advised that CEC has sent some maps; but the exact boundaries are not clear, and this is exacerbated by the fact some pathways are not classed as parkland.

Action: SB to circulate maps received to date.

Community Forums

- SB reported that the Community Safety Forum recently identified 6 priorities and one is drug-use in Pilrig Park.
- SB advised committee members can attend this, and other relevant forums e.g. Clean Leith Forum.

Wish List for Fopp

A number of ideas were discussed that could become a 'wish list' for future FoPP activity and/or a bank of ideas to be used if suitable opportunities arise, including:

- Public Art (see above).
- Reinstating an entrance from Junction Street.
- Improving area that was railway embankment and land, e.g. creation of artist huts.
- Involvement in Leith Festival in 2014.
- Crops in the Park i.e. disused area made into community garden for produce.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Public Meeting, Monday 21 October 2013, MacDonald Road Library.