

**Minutes of the Friends Of Pilrig Park (FoPP) Public Meeting  
Macdonald Road Library, 21 October 2013**

**Attendance**

Sophie Brown, Chair  
Emma Faragher, Secretary  
Cllr Nick Gardner, Leith Walk ward (Labour)  
Cllr Deidre Brock, Leith Walk ward (SNP)  
Jane Hay, Resident  
Irene Sweeney, Resident & FoPP Committee Member  
Chris Brown, Resident  
Celia Barron, Resident  
Sam Barron, Resident  
Ann Cohen, Resident  
Philip Martin, Resident  
Liz Ballantyne, Resident & FoPP Committee Member  
Stephen Penman, Resident & FoPP Committee Member  
Damien Sefton, Resident & FoPP Committee Member  
Max Brown, Resident & FoPP Committee Member  
Susan Mitchell, Resident  
Simon Mitchell, Resident

**Apologies**

James Hunter, Environment Manager, CCL  
Fiona Devlin, CEC Parks CCL  
Paul Hutton, CEC Environmental Services  
Maggie Chapman, Councillor, Scottish Green Group  
Tracy Macleod, Resident

**1. Welcome and introduction to meeting**

- Sophie Brown (SB) welcomed everyone to the meeting, the third public meeting of Friends of Pilrig Park (FoPP).

**2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 10 June 2013**

- The minute was proposed as an accurate record of the meeting on 10 June by Irene Sweeney, seconded by Liz Ballantyne.
- SB noted that the minute of this meeting, and all others can be found at the FoPP website([www.friendsofpilrigpark.org.uk](http://www.friendsofpilrigpark.org.uk)) once they have been approved.

**3. Update on FoPP activities**

SB gave an update on FoPP activities since the last public meeting:

- FoPP held their second Clean Up Day on 8 September. 20 volunteers cleared 25 bags of rubbish. Fewer large items were removed than at the first event, indicating an improvement since the first day. Clean Ups will be held quarterly; the next date will be announced when confirmed.

- SB gave a note of thanks to Contagious ([www.contagious.co.uk](http://www.contagious.co.uk)), a local design business who created a logo for FoPP free of charge.
- SB advised that the Friends Groups for Leith Central Ward continues to meet to share best practice and identify ways to work with CEC. They have been working on feedback on CEC Park Development Plans; this process is on-going and SB hopes to provide an update at the next meeting.
- There is a meeting of an Edinburgh-wide forum of parks groups on 22 October; SB will update FoPP on discussions.
- The FoPP committee met on 2 September to discuss next steps on current priority areas (Bins and Benches; Woodland Areas; Access and Safety):
  - Bins have now been replaced and additional bins installed. Seven benches have been ordered; and sites agreed.
  - Wooded Areas: see section 4 below.
  - Access and Safety: action to clear undergrowth from wooded areas will improve safety. SB advised that development of access points is on hold as FoPP has a number of other activities underway which mean the committee at full capacity. SB noted that volunteers to work on specific ideas/projects are always welcome!

#### **4. Woodland Clearance Day, 26 October, 10am.**

- Stephen Penman (SP) gave an update on development of plans for a woodland clearance day on Saturday 26 September. SP advised that this day will be a first step in a bigger job; and further dates will be arranged.
- Fiona Devlin of CEC and Paul Vine, CEC Forestry have approved plans for clearing of undergrowth in wooded areas to promote a safer environment and improve the environment for wildlife.
- Forestry Commission advice will be followed, undergrowth can be cleared but there are limitations regarding what can be done to trees, with Trimming permitted but not Felling. **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.
- People interested in attending should meet at the smaller playground at the north side of the park. CEC will provide some equipment, but SP encouraged participants to bring their own. The provisional area of activity is woodland near the school; this will be confirmed, based on the number of attendees.
- A risk assessment has been carried out, participants will be asked to sign a disclaimer saying they understand the nature of the work and will behave safely and a member of staff from CEC will be in attendance meaning the event will be covered by CEC insurance.
- One resident queried the reason that FoPP is holding a clearance day when such activity can be seen as core maintenance. SP and SB explained that the Friends of Parks Groups work with CEC to maintain parks; by working with CEC groups give residents a greater say in what goes on in their park.

- Resident Sam Barron also observed that community involvement in activities like this can improve perceived value and ownership of park spaces; and gives leverage when asking for help and funding to improve park spaces.
- Cllr Brock offered to work with FoPP and CEC towards ensuring the good work done in the clearing of undergrowth in Pilrig Park is maintained in the future. One option may be community service placements.

## **5. Small play park Improvements**

- SB advised that CEC have confirmed that they will be installing new equipment in the smaller play park at the north end of the park: a spooky pairs game and a Kijocka toddler play unit (jungle climbing wall, monkey pole and single slide). This equipment is awarded from the Fields Trust.
- SP queried plans for the long-term future of the small play park; would items be removed at the end of their lifespan? SB and Cllr Brock both advised this is not the case – some months ago the small play park had been on a list of playground to be removed at the end of their lifespan; however following a period of discussion it has been agreed this will not happen. The small play park is distinct from the larger park at the other side of the park because it is targeted to smaller children; and the opening of Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce increases footfall in the north side of the park.
- SB advised that the FoPP committee have also been discussing the improvement of the smaller play park. In the longer term they are considering funding for improved equipment and fencing; in the shorter-term smaller projects like bulb planting to improve the area are being considered.

## **6. £eith Decides**

- SB invited FoPP members to suggest ideas for a small community project they would like to see be undertaken in Pilrig Park for the 2013/14 round of £eith decides. SB will circulate further information by email to FoPP members.
- The project should broadly fit into one of the priorities for Leith's Local Community Plan 2011-14 and have a community project focus. The community's priorities are:
  - Reduce the amount of mess on our streets.
  - Make it easier and safer to walk, cycle and drive on our roads and streets.
  - Create an environment where people feel safe.
  - Provide opportunities for people to adopt healthier, more active lifestyles.
  - Provide opportunities for people to move into paid employment.

Further information can be found at:

[www.edinburghnp.org.uk/neighbourhood-partnerships/leith/about/£eith-decides/](http://www.edinburghnp.org.uk/neighbourhood-partnerships/leith/about/£eith-decides/)

## **7. Constitution**

- SB advised that following comments at the public meeting on 10 June, the constitution, which follows standard templates provided by CEC, SCVO and

other parks' groups, has been updated to include provision for local groups e.g. community and sport groups to join FoPP.

- The Constitution was proposed by Max Brown, seconded by Damien Sefton.
- The FoPP Constitution was formally adopted and signed.

## **7. Election of Post Holders**

The following post holders for the FoPP Committee were agreed:

- Sophie Brown was nominated as Chairperson of FoPP by Irene Sweeny, seconded by Susan Mitchell.
- Stephen Penman was nominated as Vice Chair by Sophie Brown, seconded by Liz Ballantyne.
- Emma Faragher was nominated as Secretary by xxxx?, seconded by Stephen Penman
- Max Brown was nominated as Treasurer by Emma Faragher, seconded Stephen Penman.

Posts will be held for one year, new nominations will be sought in Autumn 2014.

## **8. ACOB**

- A resident noted that the springs on the larger playpark gate have been broken for some time; SB and Cllr Brock/Cllr Gardner will query this with CEC.
- A resident noted that the bins/buckets for dog mess have not been emptied and are smelly; SB and Cllr Brock/Cllr Gardner will query this with CEC.
- SB advised that going forward the FoPP committee plans to hold two public meetings a year, in the spring and autumn. They also plan to hold 4 litter clean-up days a year; and on-going woodland undergrowth clearance activities. Upcoming dates will be agreed at the next committee meeting and circulated to FoPP members; announced on public notice boards in the park; and posted on the FoPP website/Facebook page.
- A resident asked what the formal process for arranging events in CEC parks is; there was an event in Pilrig Park as part of the Festival in August but neither residents or FoPP were aware of it. Cllrs Gardner and Brock advised there is a group which considers event applications and advised asking CEC what the process is – all agreed there is benefit in Friends' Groups being made aware of planned events in parks as they can support and promote them to residents. SB will raise this issue at the forums for Friends Groups.
- Damien Sefton queried whether Environmental Health officers had been active in the park following the litter Clean Up day in September, when areas had been identified which required deep cleaning. SP and SB both observed that this has not happened. Cllrs Brock and Gardner will query this with CEC.
- A resident queried the reporting process for antisocial behaviour in the park. SB advised that a list of contact numbers has now been displayed in the public notice boards; Cllr Brock advised that reporting issues to CEC means they are logged and CEC can assess potential areas of concern.

## **Date of Next Public Meeting**

- The date of the next public meeting will be circulated when a date is confirmed.