

**Minutes of the Friends Of Pilrig Park (FoPP) Public Meeting
Macdonald Road Library, 14 April 2014**

Attendance

Sophie Brown, Chair
Emma Faragher, Secretary
Cllr Nick Gardner, Leith Walk ward (Labour)
Fiona Devlin, CEC Parks CCL
Jane Hay, Resident
Irene Sweeney, Resident & FoPP Committee Member
Sam Barron, Resident
Liz Ballantyne, Resident & FoPP Committee Member
Damien Sefton, Resident & FoPP Committee Member
Lorna Harper, Resident
Katherine Sced, Resident

Apologies

James Hunter, Environment Manager, CCL
Max Brown, Resident & FoPP Treasurer
Cllr Deidre Brock, Leith Walk ward (SNP)
Stephen Penman, Resident & FoPP Committee Member

1. Welcome, Introduction and Announcements

- Sophie Brown (SB) welcomed everyone to the meeting, the fourth public meeting of Friends of Pilrig Park (FoPP), and the first in 2014. FoPP holds 2 public meetings a year, and will hold additional public meetings if a need arises.

2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 21 October 2013

- The minute was proposed as an accurate record of the meeting on 21 October by Damien Sefton, seconded by Liz Ballantyne.

3. Review of 2013

SB advised that FoPP was set up a year ago with the agreed aim “to promote and improve Pilrig Park by working with the local community, local businesses, City of Edinburgh Council and other partners to make positive changes that benefit the park, the local environment and local communities; **to make Pilrig Park a great green space in the city for all to enjoy.**” As FoPP reaches the end of its first year, a review of activity to date is appropriate:

3.1 Bins and Benches – FoPP worked successfully with CEC in 2013. Bins in the park were all replaced in 2013; and six of seven benches replaced. FoPP is liaising with CEC on timing for the installation of the final bench.

3.2 Woodland areas – FoPP organised a series of Woodland Action Days in late 2013 and early 2014 with a focus on tidying one wooded area in the north of the park, opposite the smaller play park. This has been successful in engaging the local community and improving this wooded area. CEC forestry is currently working in the Community Woodland bordering Pilrig Street.

3.3 Access Points and safety: Progress was not made in 2013; at the last committee meeting in March 2014, the committee agreed this should be included in priorities for 2014.

3.4 Play parks: FoPP worked with CEC, and CEC was able to place two new pieces of equipment in the smaller play area at the south of the park in 2013. CEC has indicated it will continue maintenance of the wildflower meadow area in the larger play area in the north of the park – this was originally a University of Edinburgh project which has been completed.

3.5 Fundraising and networks: FoPP has been successful in securing £1000 Decides Funding for the 'Litterwise' project to be delivered in 2014. FoPP is currently setting up workshops with Pilmeny Development Project, Lorne Primary and Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce where anti-littering posters will be made. Posters will be in the park mid to late Summer 2014. Sam Barron congratulated FoPP on this achievement.

FoPP is also working with Citizen Curator, a local arts organisation which has secured Grow Wild Community Project funding to propagate and plant wildflowers in the park (www.growwilduk.com/community-project-funding).

4. Priority List 2014

This will state FoPP priorities and associated actions for 2014; the FoPP committee agreed it at their last meeting. FoPP will consult the local community via this public meeting and email.

The following points were discussed.

4.1 Litter

- Priority and actions agreed.
- Membership of the Keep Scotland Beautiful 'Its your Neighbourhood' communities scheme, which will support and recognise FoPP activity had been confirmed.

4.2 Entrances and Access

- Priority and actions agreed.
- Sam Barron volunteered to take responsibility for work on entrances in 2014. He circulated research and examples on entrance signage in other parks, both in Edinburgh and other cities. Examples included bilingual signage, environmental signage, and signage designed by local schools.
- It was noted that once a plan for entrances has been agreed potential sources of funding include Heritage Lottery Fund who have a scheme for parks.
- Action will include consultation with the local community; and consideration of ways signage at entrances can encourage positive behaviours in park spaces.
- Attendees indicated entrance points including the wide access point by allotments near the park and the entrance from Cambridge Gardens are areas of concern

- Sam Barron will start by carrying out a conditions survey of entrances to the park.

4.3 Paths

- Residents felt this priority should highlight paths and their condition. This recommendation will be noted in the priorities under access.
- The middle path, running the length of the park was identified by residents as of particular concern; along with muddy path from Cambridge Gardens.
- SB will include discussion of the paths as an agenda point in the next park walk around with CEC scheduled for 8 May.
- FD advised that she has raised the need for potholes in paths to be filled with colleagues at CEC; if possible she will request road inspectors to attend the next park walk around.
- SB advised that if required FoPP could recruit a local volunteer team to assist with pot hole filling work.
- Agreed FoPP consultation with the community in 2014 will include questions on paths.

4.4. Play Parks

- Priority and actions agreed.
- SB will email FoPP community members contact list to seek members of the community interested in volunteering time to work on this priority.

4.5 Wooded Areas

- Priority and actions agreed.
- SB advised that work from the 2013 plan is not quite complete – FoPP still plans to put up bird boxes etc.
- SB commented that plans for the wooded areas should consider on-going maintenance to areas worked on.
- Sam Barron asked if work to date on woodland, and litter has resulted in a reduction of litter in the park. SB advised that this has not been monitored to date, but that the amount of litter collected on the 2013 days was recorded. It will be possible to compare this with upcoming litter days in 2014 and consider whether a reduction indicates changes in littering behaviours.
- Irene Sweeny also noted that there may be an observable change in behaviour during the upcoming picnic and barbeque season.
- Irene Sweeney asked if there is potential to put something at the top of the hill in the recently cleared wooded area to encourage people to use it. Options discussed included a picnic bench or piece of art.

4.6 Community Consultation

- Priority and actions agreed.
- Sam Barron queried whether there is a way of quantifying or measuring changing community perceptions of the park.
- Consultation methods to include an online survey which will be promoted via Facebook and Twitter (linking with other local community organisations); via Broughton Spurtle; and at community at events scheduled in 2014.
- An alternative to the online survey will be offered to those who cannot access the internet (e.g. paper copy)

- Public meetings will also be used for consultation.

4.8 Community Projects and events

- Priority and actions agreed.
- SB outlined an offer from the manager at The Bonnington Bar to plan and manage a Summer Fete for FoPP in Pilrig Park. The event could be a fundraiser for FoPP and raise awareness of the group and/or a single issue. It would be run on a similar model to Meadows Festival (stalls, vans, performers) but on a smaller scale.
- SB asked attendees if this kind of event would be of interest; and they might attend. Responses were generally positive. IS suggested an event like this is a good way to get people into the park and raise awareness of FoPP; LS felt it may reach new people who are not aware of the park.
- NG felt this was particularly positive if the Bonnington contact will plan and manage the fete – this is a large piece of work.
- NG and FD advised that a public events licence application should be put in to CEC as matter of urgency – they have a 3-month turn around. To be a community event this may need to be a partnership application with FoPP leading.
- SB advised ‘Love Parks Week’ is 25 July – 3 August and this may be a good time to run the fete. FD advised FoPP could apply for £250 for advertising and promotion if the fete is run in Love Parks Week.

5. Treasurers Update

The Treasurer was not able to attend the meeting, and provided the following update via the Secretary:

- FoPP now has a bank account with TSB.
- Leith Central Community Council has made a contribution of £200 in support of start-up costs. £50 has been spent to date, with the remainder to be spent on insurance.
- FoPP was successful in securing £1000 from the Leith Decides scheme; this will be spent on the Litterwise project in 2014.
- Pilrig Residents Association had previously raised £2500 for capital spend within the park, and when the Association closed this money was offered to FoPP via Greener Leith. This was originally allocated in a ‘match-funding’ arrangement with CEC to purchase bins and benches in 2013; however CEC have advised they have been able to cover the full cost of this work. Therefore FoPP is able to spend this on other capital projects in the park.

6. ACOB

6.1 Capital spending for funds from Pilrig Residents Association

- Following the Treasurers Update the meeting agreed that match-funding should be raised e.g. from a grant or trust.
- A number of potential items were identified:
 - Entrance signage
 - Picnic benches
 - Barbeque facilities

- It was agreed that the community consultation planned for 2014 may inform a decision.

6.2 Barbequing in the park

- IS, LH and LB advised they feel barbeques are often damaging to Pilrig Park. They can cause increased levels of litter; and often damage grass in the park, for example leaving scorched patches in sports pitches.
- NG suggested that permanent barbeque facilities might address this issue by encouraging people to use designated areas. Attendees agreed an investment in permanent facilities might minimise damage in the long term.
- SB volunteered to raise the question of barbeques at the Edinburgh Friends of Parks Forum to gather feedback from other groups on how they manage barbequing in parks.

6.3 Music

- JH asked who can be contacted if people are playing music loudly in the park and causing a disturbance to residents.
- NG and FD advised that the noise team at CEC can be contacted.
- LB made the point that response should be appropriate to time and level of disturbance, if it was during the daytime it would maybe be more appropriate to ask people to turn the music down, if they do not respond then call the CEC noise team.

Date of Next Public Meeting

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

Upcoming Events

- Balfour's Botany Propagation Days – Sunday 27 April & Saturday 10 May, at 10.30.
- Litter Clear up Day – Saturday 17 May.
- Litterwise workshops for schools April – May, dates tbc.