

**Minutes of the Friends Of Pilrig Park (FoPP) Public Meeting  
Macdonald Road Library, 13 October 2014**

**Attendance**

Sophie Brown, Chair  
Emma Faragher, Secretary  
Roberto Colasuonno, Resident  
Fiona Devlin, CEC Parks CCL  
Jane Hay, Resident  
Lorna Fergusson, Resident  
Irene Sweeney, Resident & FoPP Committee Member  
Liz Ballantyne, Resident & FoPP Committee Member  
Damien Sefton, Resident & FoPP Committee Member  
Katie Wight, Resident & FoPP Committee Member  
Charlotte Enscombe, Resident & Greener Leith Representative  
Norma Swanson, Resident  
Clive Morrison, Resident  
Justine Taylor, Resident

**Apologies**

Max Brown, Resident & FoPP Treasurer  
Cllr Deidre Brock, Leith Walk ward (SNP)  
Cllr Nick Gardner, Leith Walk ward (Labour)  
Stephen Penman, Resident & FoPP Committee Member

**1. Welcome, Introduction and Announcements**

- Sophie Brown (SB) welcomed everyone to the meeting, the fifth public meeting of Friends of Pilrig Park (FoPP), and the second in 2015. FoPP holds 2 public meetings a year, and will hold additional public meetings if a need arises.
- SB explained that the format of the meeting would be slightly different to usual and most of the time would be spent in open discussion gathering community views on the park.

**2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 14 April 2014**

- The minute was proposed as an accurate record of the meeting on 14 April October by Liz Ballantyne , seconded by Damien Sefton.

**3. Park Discussion**

- 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 part of FoPP’s activity in 2014-15 it aims to gather community views on the park, as a first step FoPP invited facilitated discussion around three key questions at the meeting:
  - How often you use the park and what for?
  - What do you want to do in the park that you can’t do now?

- What do you want from the park?
- The meeting split into small discussion groups for half an hour. Groups then reported their opinions on the questions to the meeting. Discussion is recorded in a separate report which is attached to this minute [Appendix 1].
- SB advised future planned activity includes surveys to gather wider community views, and FoPP will seek volunteers to help.

#### **4. Annual General Meeting**

##### **4.1 Chairs Report**

- SB gave the chair person's report which is attached to this minute [Appendix 2]
- Fiona Devlin responded to the report to advise that CEC is due to deliver the last bench to the park. Residents advised some benches were loose, FD will investigate.

##### **4.2 Treasurers Report**

- In the Treasurers' absence, FoPP committee member Damien Sefton gave the report. [Appendix 3]

##### **4.3 Committee Membership**

The following committee membership for 2014-15 was agreed at the meeting

- Sophie Brown was proposed as FoPP Chair by Emma Faragher, seconded by Katie Wight.
- Stephen Penman was proposed as a committee member by Sophie Brown, seconded by Liz Ballantyne
- Emma Faragher Smith was proposed as secretary by Katie Wight, seconded by Damien Sefton
- Max Brown was proposed as Treasurer by Katie Wight, seconded by Liz Ballantyne
- Damien Sefton was proposed as a committee member by Emma Faragher Smith, seconded by Sophie Brown
- Katie Wight was proposed as a committee member by Sophie Brown, seconded by Liz Ballantyne
- Irene Sweeney was proposed as a committee member by Emma Faragher Smith, seconded by Sophie Brown
- Liz Ballantyne was proposed as a committee member by Sophie Brown, Seconded by Emma Faragher Smith.

#### **5. ACOB**

##### **5.1 Clearance Day**

- SB reminded attendees that there is a woodland clearance day in the park on Saturday 25 October and encouraged people to help, the meeting point is the small playground

### **5.2 Removal of Ash Tree**

- LB raised the recent removal of a large ash tree in the park and proposed that the trunk which has remains offers opportunity for a project for FoPP.
- It was agreed that FoPP should explore opportunity to create a tree sculpture with CEC.

### **5.3 Fencing in Park**

- A resident expressed concern at the untidy temporary fencing that has appeared against walls in areas of the park.
- FD and SB explained that this part of a city wide survey following a wall collapse at Liberton High School which resulted in the death of a pupil. The temporary fencing is in areas that have been identified as in need of stabilisation work and is only temporary.

### **5.4 Syringes**

- LB raised on-going concerns at syringes found in the park.
- SB advised that she continues to share community concerns at meetings with CEC and the concern will be minuted for the record. SB reminded the meeting that FoPP continues to take action at appropriate for a friends group but that drugs are a significant social issue which cannot be tackled by a Friend of Parks Group alone.

### **Date of Next Public Meeting**

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

Signed:

Date:

Signed:

Date:

## **Appendix 1: Responses to Group Discussion**

### **Friends Of Pilrig Park**

#### **Group Discussion at Public Meeting: three questions about the park**

##### **How often you use the park and what for?**

- 3x a week – transit and bird watching
- Everyday on way to work / with children at weekend
- Daily dog walk
- Bird watching
- Sitting in the sun
- Once a month – cycle on way to work
- Everyday for dog walking
- Everyday with children in play areas
- Everyday for access to property
- Monthly – cycling, walking, barbque
- Fortnightly – running
- Twice a day – dog walking
- Between Fortnightly and Monthly – picnics/ walk with friends and family/cut through to venues in Leith
- 5/6 days a week – commuting to work/nursery & using playgrounds
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##### **What do you want to do in the park that you can't do now?**

- Path to springfield needs improving
- Mobile café
- Better bird friendly areas
- Would like more benches at balfour st end
- Pat around giant poplar by balfour place/Pilrig park school
- Unable to get a seat on a bench – could do with more and possibly picnic tables
- Improving paths so you can walk safely there as have been some accidents
- Improving paths
- Cycling- poor path surfaces reduces ability to use it
- Safety – not nice to use at night
- To go in woodland- and for dogs to go in woodland
- 6 days a week- walking through, using play parks, cycling through
- To walk through the park after dark and feel safe
- To cycle smoothly through the park
- To walk through safely after dark
- Events and community activities- more reason to come
- Explore woodland areas safely
- Community garden
- Adult gym/sports classes
- To know where all the entrances and paths will take me
- Walk through the park after dark without feeling scared (entrance at school particularly bad)
- Playpark (esp small) cleaner, free of glass and needles.

## What do you want from the park?

- To be a Safe and Health environment
- Could do with more lighting – not safe and very dark
- Café / coffee
- Increase use of park e.g. more promotion of commuter routes through the park / connect to Edinburgh Cycle Network
- Pedestrian signage of routes (e.g. commuter routes above)
- Signage promoting positive behaviour (like old park rules boards)
- Signage making role of cycle lane clear, and positive behaviour around pedestrians, dogs, cyclists e.g. follow approach taken on canal paths in Edinburgh – speed limits and dual use signs with good etiquette advice e.g. ring bell to warn pedestrians; keep dogs under control on cycle path areas. (were some differences of opinion between pedestrians and cyclists)
- Organise star gazing nights or bat watching (night time positive activity)
- Clean and sage
- Encourage biodiversity
- Open and safe space for recreation, but also a haven for wildlife
- Improve Biodiversity
- Signage from Leith Walk
- Improve cycle connections through park
- Get a connection between Pilrig Street and Balfour place (path?)
- Safe Environment
- Feel safe in play park areas (glass and needles)
- For park to have a real sense of community meeting place
- Coffee
- To feel like a well cared for place
- Good axis from Leith Walk down Balfour Street to Pilrig House
- A community space
- A safe space
- A learning resource for school – nature and wildlife
- Picnic/ meeting place
- To buy coffee
- To learn about Pilrig parks heritage
- More support of biodiversity

## Appendix 2: Chairs Report

2013/14 was the first full year as a constituted group for the Friends of Pilrig Park. We have worked with CEC, and other local groups and organisations to look to improve the park:

- Successfully lobbied CEC to have extra bins and benches put in the park
- After a walk round with CEC they agreed to resurface the Cambridge Gardens path and filled potholes at the Pilrig Street entrance (ongoing discussions about the other paths)
- 2 pieces of extra equipment in the small playpark
- Ran 7 litter pick and clearance days
- Cleared the wooded area to the north of the park bordering the newly opened Gaelic School
- Held an Easter Egg hunt with the Pilmeny Development Project
- Awarded £1000 through Leith Decides and worked with a local artist, Lorne Primary, Taobh na Pairce and Pilmeny Development Project to deliver a series of anti-litter posters. These are now up in the play parks.
- Developed a priorities list for the park (signed off at the last public meeting).
- New website created for the group.
- Supported Citizen Curator to deliver the Balfours Botany project - this has resulted in over 900 native Scottish bluebells planted behind the small playpark, expert horticultural advice for FoPP and the very lovely steel tree tags produced by Andrea Geille, which are now hanging from 4 of the trees along the central path in the park.

I would like to pass on my thanks to the Committee and all the members for the hard work and support over the past 12 months.

Sophie Brown  
Chair, Friends of Pilrig Park

### **Appendix 3: Treasurers Report**

Apologies for being unable to attend.

- A treasurer's bank account was set up with TSB shortly after the 2013 AGM.
- Over the year we have received funds from three organisations totalling £3,754.67
- Leith Central Community Council gave us £200 to put towards our running costs
- Edinburgh City Council gave us £1,000, through Leith Decides, for the Litterwise project
- The now defunct Pilrig Residents Association gave us £2,554.67 for capital projects within the park.
- We have spent a total of £961.60;
- £47 on running costs so far, and we intend to purchase insurance with the rest of the money from the LCCC.
- We spent £914.60 on the Litterwise project. We are sending a report to Edinburgh City Council detailing what we have done, and noting the underspend of £85.40.
- We had agreed to match fund the Council with the money from the Pilrig Residents Association for the new benches, but in the end CEC covered the full cost.
- All of the above means that we have a balance of £2793.07, the vast majority of which must be spent on capital projects.

I am happy to go through the accounts with any members at any time.