

Apologies – Emma Faragher Smith

Survey of park uses

This has not progressed since the last committee meeting as other priorities have taken precedent. Committee members reaffirmed that a mix of methods to speak to park users would be preferable and that we should look to develop a 'survey monkey' to send out to the members contact list. Members felt that speaking to other parks within the Leith ward might be beneficial.

Action: SB to speak to Montgomery Street Park about their consultation methods

Litterwise

The final report has been completed and submitted to the council. Members agreed that there was less litter in the park and that more council workers had been in evidence cleaning and checking the Park. There was general comment that the football team supporters left quite a bit of mess after their games at the weekend and that we should ask the organisers for their support in ensuring that this was cleaned up after the games.

SB advised that the park had been successful in receiving a certificate from Keep Scotland Beautiful, thanks to the work of EF, and we should seek to publicise this.

Action: SB to e-mail football team organisers to ask that they clear litter after games

Action: LS to put a notification on the website about the Keep Scotland Beautiful certificate.

Paths

SB advised that the Council have agreed to make repairs to the path at the Balfour Street entrance as this had now become quite hazardous. The Council advised that this may well have to wait until spring as the path repair teams were currently on 'gritter duty'.

Picnic benches

There was general agreement that the Park could benefit from some picnic benches near the small play park.

Action: SB to raise the possibility of picnic bench installation with the council

Sports

The Committee had an open discussion about how to promote more sports within the park and the availability of funding for putting in facilities. Members suggested that Tennis courts by the Cambridge Gardens entrance, outdoor table tennis facilities or a 'skate park' in the large play park might all be options that could attract funding. There was a cautionary note that chasing this

funding might distract from the other priorities that we have already identified and that any facilities on this scale will need to be consulted upon.

Action: SB to speak to George IV Park about the sports facilities that have been funded there

Action: MB to investigate Commonwealth legacy funding.

Wildflowers

There was general agreement that the park could sustain more wildflower areas than it currently does and that the existing wildflower meadow was situated in the wrong place. As previously identified the small triangle of grass alongside the community woodland would be a perfect spot and the area in front of the 'rhododendron wood' would be an ideal site.

Action: SB to investigate options for planting additional areas of wildflower meadow.

Entrances

There was agreement amongst the committee members that the entrances still needed improvement and this should be a continued focus. KW advised that whilst Gaelic funding was available, it was limited in scope, signage at the entrance next to the Gaelic might be a possibility.

Action: KW to speak to the Gaelic Development Officer to see if there was any possibility of a Gaelic entrance sign by Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pairce.

Council Walkabout

SB updated the committee on the latest council walkabout. The walkabout took place in the torrential rain so it was a rather brief affair though a number of council officers did attend. The 'chap from forestry' advised that they did not do general woodland clearance due to lack of resources but focussed on dangerous and diseased trees. They did confirm that they would remove some of the sycamores in the woodland areas next to Pilrig House as these were overshadowing the adjacent housing.

The council advised, contrary to previous advice, that a chipper could be provided on a Saturday for clearance days and that it was fine to leave felled wood piled up, rather than having to clear the lot into cages. This new approach from the council was welcomed by members as it should significantly increase the pace at which we can clear the identified woodland areas.

SB expressed some frustration that council officers still had no clear plan for the woodland in the park despite having been sent the Pilrig Park plan produced by the Friends of and their own draft priority plan for the park. Members echoed the frustration felt by the chair at the lack of progress and ownership by the council, though it was recognised that there had been some additional activity by the council since the Friends of group began. Members agreed that it was key to keep the pressure up on the council to provide an acceptable level of maintenance within the park and produce an action plan.

Woodland clearances

There was general enthusiasm for the progress that has been made on the woodland clearances and agreement that we should ensure that the cleared areas are maintained by the council. Members suggested that it would be good if an area that bordered onto the Gaelic school could be fenced off for their use, to allow the pupils better access to nature. There was no clear agreement about how this might be taken forward by the committee or confidence that the council would be able to facilitate this.

Members agreed that the next clearance day should focus on the thin strip of woodland adjacent to Pilrig Street where a number of self seeded sycamores have grown up. The committee were agreed that this would only be possible if the council conducted a 'deep clean' of the area first given previous experiences of clearing this woodland area.

Action: KW to raise the idea with the outdoor group at the School

Action: SB to ask the council to deep clean this area of the woodland in advance of the clearance day on 17th January.

Friends group

SB advised that the library had been booked for next year's public meetings and that the events calendar for 2015 was almost complete

Action: SB to circulate the events calendar when complete

Next Meeting

SB advised that the next committee meeting would be held at the Bonnington Bar at 7.30pm on 2 March 2015.