

02 March 2015

Attending – Liz Ballantyne; Sophie Brown (Chair); Max Brown (treasurer); Emma Faragher Smith (Secretary); Stephen Penman; Damian Sefton

Apologies – Irene Sweeney; Katie Wright.

Approval of December Minute

The December 2014 committee meeting minute was proposed by Damian Sefton and seconded by Stephen Penman.

Bird Boxes

Sophie Brown gave an update on a small project to install bird boxes around the park with RSPB. 10 Bird boxes were installed on 27 February with pupils from the local primary school. The RSPB will return to the park in May to check boxes are still secure and if they are being used. Sophie Brown has numbered the boxes ready for maintenance and reporting. Boxes will require annual cleaning, which FoPP will need to consider (TBC with support from RSPB who are recruiting a community officer for Edinburgh).

Action: *Sophie Brown, schedule bird box cleaning in early 2016 (with volunteers?)*

Living Landscapes Project

Committee members discussed draft proposals for developments in the park as part of The Edinburgh Living Landscape, a partnership project between the Scottish Wildlife Trust, City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust, GREENSURGE and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh to bring a transformational change to the city's urban environment.

Members agreed that proposals were positive, but there could be more consultation with community representatives like FoPP, who are developing ideas for woodland planting and management in the park. The committee also expressed concerns about some details of the Living Landscape plan and long-term maintenance of planting. It was agreed FoPP should request a discussion with the Project Manager.

Sophie Brown advised that the Edinburgh Friends of Parks Forum has requested an extraordinary meeting in order to discuss the Living Landscape project.

Actions:

- *Sophie Brown to arrange a meeting with the Project Manager, committee members will be invited.*
- *Sophie Brown to circulate details of the extraordinary meeting of the Friends of Parks Forum.*

Council Liaison

Sophie Brown advised that Park Rangers have now been given allocated responsibilities for particular parks. Pilrig has been allocated to Gerry **INSERT SURNAME**. The committee agreed this was positive as FoPP can work directly with him when planning activity.

Sophie Brown proposed arranging a walk around the park with Murray Black as previous meetings have been productive. It was agreed this would be a good opportunity to discuss installing picnic benches in the park (see December Committee Meeting Minute); training for Rangers in using a strimmer to support woodland tidy days and understory planting in the area of Woodland FoPP has recently been working on.

***Action:** Sophie Brown to arrange meeting and raise issues listed above in discussion.*

Tree Sculpture

The committee has previously discussed developing a tree sculpture; Sophie Brown has informally sought advice from a sculptor who advised the proposed trunk may be quite rotten, but there is potential for using less invasive processes e.g. relief carving of the trunk. Relief Carving can also be painted. Members agreed it this would still be a valuable project with a positive impact on the park environment. It was agreed funds would need to be raised for the project, but to make applications FoPP require costings from a sculptor, Sophie Brown will seek a quote for discussion by the committee.

***Action:** Sophie Brown to seek quotes for the work ready for a funding application to be made.*

Grow Wild Project

There was a £200 underspend in the Grow Wild project 'Balfours Botany', the organiser has offered this to support FoPPs work, but it must be spent on the Grow Wild objectives of planting. Committee Members discussed ideas. They agreed that considering the extensive plans for planting already proposed by Living Landscapes the most efficient idea is to raise this with Living Landscapes and offer it in support of an agreed area of planting, it would be a sign of goodwill and indicate our desire to work collaboratively with Living Landscapes.

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

Pilrig Association

Sophie Brown advised the committee that FoPP still has £2500 to be spent on capital costs inherited from the Pilrig Association. It had previously been allocated to match-fund installation of benches in 2013 and 14, but was not required for this purpose. Emma Faragher Smith reminded members that the committee had previously discussed this issue and agreed a list of ideas at the September 2014 meeting. It was agreed that the committee will review the list and make a decision at the next meeting.

Members raised some additional ideas: Tools for use at litter pick and woodland days and an A-Board with information about FoPP to use to promote our work to general park visitors during

events and activity days. Stephen Penman has a spare A-Board and offered to donate it, the committee agreed this would be re-purposed rather than buying a new one.

Actions:

- *Stephen Penman and Sophie Brown to discuss re-purposing A-Board*
- *Emma Faragher Smith to circulate list of past ideas for capital spend.*

Upcoming Events

Committee members agreed litter pick days continue to be valuable, but that attendance was variable. They agreed to trial an afternoon slot 2pm and compare attendance, however moving to an afternoon slot will be dependent on Ranger availability.

Committee members discussed plans for the next woodland clearing day in March. It was agreed that the day will focus on woodland near Pilrig house, and the meeting point will be the small play park. The date will be 21 March, this is 'Super Saturday' for the Six Nations, committee members decided to time the woodland clearing for the morning and consider whether it is feasible to make a link to the rugby.

The committee agreed that work over the winter has been effective, but that sycamore whips are growing quickly in cleared areas. If feasible FoPP will schedule an extra activity day in march to remove whips.

Action: *Sophie Brown to liaise with facebook and web volunteers to promote upcoming events.*

Volunteers and Attendance

Planning for upcoming events led to a wider discussion about falling attendance at volunteer days like litter picks and woodland clearance. There was general agreement that more promotion would be a benefit, particularly outside the park e.g. in local businesses. Emma Faragher Smith suggested that promotion should be more clear, explaining what the aims and objectives of an event were, and what volunteers are expected to do - people are more willing to volunteer if they have a clear idea of what they will be doing.

The committee agreed to re-draft posters for activity days so we can include information on:

- exactly what will be happening on that day
- what volunteers will be asked
- what they need to bring

Sophie Brown advised that she currently sends one message with a poster attached to combination of individuals and organisations engaged in conservation and volunteering but this was not effective in engaging organisations. Members agreed promotion of future events should have a more targeted approach. We should develop:

- One email template targeted to individuals asking them to volunteer and what will be involved.
- One email template to organisations, which has a poster for the event attached and asks them to support/promote the activity.

Discussion on volunteers at FoPP events led to a wider discussion around our messaging and promotion. In spring 2015 FoPP will be two years old, members agreed that this is a good opportunity to re-engage with the community tell a positive story about FoPP's achievements so far, telling a positive story about what why FoPP was set up and what it has achieved.

Damian Sefton advised his wife is a graphic designer and copywriter and is willing to volunteer time in support of this.

Actions:

- *Emma Faragher Smith and Sophie Brown to re-draft event posters*
- *Emma Faragher Smith and Sophie Brown to draft targeted templates for emails about events*
- *Emma Faragher Smith and Sophie Brown to draft a one-page document setting out what FoPP has achieved.*

Any Other Business:

1. Resignation of Secretary

Emma Faragher Smith advised she will be resigning as secretary, as she is moving to York in May 2015. This means there will not be a secretary in post at the April public meeting. Sophie Brown will ask for volunteers to join the committee as secretary when emailing FoPP members about the public meeting. In the meantime, Sophie Brown asked committee members to volunteer to take the April minute, no one volunteered.

Action: *Sophie Brown to promote the secretary position to FoPP members.*

2. Managing relationship with primary school

Katie Wright will be on maternity leave during 2015, members asked how relationships with the school will be managed. Sophie Brown advised Katie Wright can still act in a limited capacity, and that she has other contacts with the school that can be used in 2015.

Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was not agreed Sophie Brown will circulate details.