

# **Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links**

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organization (SCIO) SC045955, [www.fombl.org.uk](http://www.fombl.org.uk)



## Trustees' Annual Report 2018/19

In Trustee news, we were sad to lose Yusef Samari as a trustee and volunteer co-ordinator as his work took him elsewhere. However we were very pleased to gain two new trustees during the year with Maureen Parnell joining as a very enthusiastic new newsletter co-ordinator and Bridget Stevens now representing Merchiston Community Council. Another longstanding trustee and former chair, Heather Goodare, also stepped down during the year but continues to take a keen interest in developments. We are always looking for new trustees to support our endeavours. Trustee meetings take place every two months and are not onerous.

A number of volunteer work parties met on the Meadows and Links throughout the year. Their work has ranged from watering (and saving) young trees in the summer to litter picking, mulching and improving the area around the pavilion. Thousands of new bulbs and flowers have also been planted and the wildflower area expanded. A tree group has also been formed between trustees and volunteers. One partner, Buglife, deserve a special mention for clearing and planting. We're very grateful to all the volunteers (particularly Neil Roger, Allison Carr and Tim Duffy) for their hard work. The regular assistance from the various local school parties has also been very welcome. In addition FOMBL secretary Sarah Tolley has been widely praised for her work to highlight the need for disposable barbeques to be used sensibly and without damaging the grass. Finally, the inspirational Fernando of the Bamboo Belly at the top of Middle Meadow Walk deserves a special mention.

A number of events have occurred to commemorate notable people or places during the year. In June the council opened the Muriel Spark Walk. In October we unveiled a small plaque, and planted three rowans, to commemorate the enormous contribution of the above mentioned and muchloved Heather Goodare. In April a path in the west meadows was renamed the Maczek Walk with a very moving ceremony attended by the General's son and grand-daughter. The lovely tulip-filled tubs adjacent to the sign were funded from the Polish consulate. Finally, in May, a plaque was unveiled with our support on the site of the historical Golf Hall close to the Golf Tavern. The organiser, author Neil Laird, was the main speaker at our spring public meeting while we also welcomed Tommy Sheppard MP as our speaker at the autumn public meeting. At our AGM in June 2018 we were treated to a fascinating talk from William Hinchliffe from the Royal Botanic Gardens on the theme of Trees Need Advocates.

FOMBL have supported all sorts of projects during the year. Currently we are planning for a number of information boards or lecterns to be installed with one facing the Old Royal infirmary and another at the Nelson Pillars at the east end of Melville Drive. The former of these has been part-funded by the University of Edinburgh for which we are very grateful. We also work closely with the council to plan improvements. This has resulted in the installation of numerous items of additional gym equipment across the Meadows and Links as well as toddler and children's play equipment. Railings have also been erected at the Lonsdale entrance to the Meadows to maintain the grass, and a bird friendly enclave was planted near the tennis courts. It is important to note that funds which were formerly passed to, and spent by, FOMBL are generally now spent on our behalf by the council. This new arrangement works well and saves us VAT and labour. We are very grateful for the continuing support of council officer Mike Shields and his colleagues.

FOMBL also exists to represent local people in conserving the Meadows and Links and we liaise closely with the council and other groups when it comes to commercial and other events held on the park. The Underbelly contract for the Festival Fringe expires this year and we will take a close interest in the next tender exercise. The consensus of the trustees, and most of the public, appears to be that the Underbelly circus tents have been well received and that their staff have generally conducted themselves well. They also contributed significant funds each year towards the Meadows and Links in proportion to ticket sales. Throughout the year FOMBL monitor the other users of the Meadows such as the two fun fairs and the Meadows Festival. Council officers consult us regularly with regard to potential new, and ongoing, events. Financial pressures mean that the council are increasingly planning to raise money through commercial licences at premium parks such as the Meadows and Links. We will continue to monitor and, as appropriate, support or challenge all such proposals.

Finally I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of all FOMBL members and local residents, to thank all the trustees and volunteers who either support the work of FOMBL or who work away on their own or with other groups. There are too many such people to mention everyone individually, but by working together we are much more effective in maintaining, protecting and enhancing the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links for current and future generations. Well done everyone.

Signed by Jim Orr, Convenor of FOMBL

