



Friends of the Meadows

and Bruntsfield Links

N E W S L E T T E R 21
Spring 2009

A message from the former Convener

Dear Friends

With some reluctance I resigned as Convener at the end of last year, as I felt that I had been in the post too long, and there was some criticism of the way I was running meetings. I had been Convener since 2001, and all groups benefit from changes of Convener, so I felt that it was time for me to step down. (I have used the term 'Chairman' in the past, but according to our Constitution the position is that of 'Convener').

Looking back, I feel that in the last eight years, much has been achieved for the Meadows: tree replanting, the development of a café in the cricket pavilion, the Croquet Club and the Tennis Club in the two disused bowls pavilions, and the creation of a very successful Magnet playground.

However, the north side of the Meadows is being overdeveloped, and the portents do not look good, even though we have not yet seen the full extent of the new buildings, especially at the bottom of Chalmers Street. Continued vigilance is therefore necessary to prevent new developments that might spoil the edges of the Meadows and Links – in the short term, the proposal for Archers Hall need to be opposed and in 2012, the possible redevelopment of the Sick Children's Hospital will need to be considered critically.

The way the Council uses the Meadows, especially the Events Department, needs to be continually scrutinized, as there is a tendency to see the Meadows as a exploitable asset for the City rather than a large green space for the enjoyment of all, especially the people who live in the surrounding areas.

I wish my successor well, and thank all the Friends who have supported our activities since 2001.
PL Yap

The Spring Meeting of Friends of the Meadows & Bruntsfield Links will be held on Monday 16 February 2009 at 7.30 p.m. in the Orthodox Community of St Andrew, North Meadow Walk (by the tennis courts) Speakers will include Local Historian Graeme Cruikshank.
All are welcome.

Convener's Comment by Chris Wigglesworth

Our warm thanks to Peng Lee for his years of work as founder-convener of the Friends! We owe him a considerable debt of gratitude for his consistent advocacy for the interests of the thousands of ordinary users of this magnificent green space, and for his challenge to the City of Edinburgh Council to be good stewards of it. We are sorry that he felt it was time to step down, but appreciate his desire to have a break.

Until the AGM I've agreed to act as Convener, mainly to ensure continuity. This is especially important in relation the urgent need for a sustainable Council Meadows events policy. The latest news on this is that the Meadows/Bruntsfield Links Working Party of the South Central Neighbourhood Partnership is likely to be convened shortly by the Council Neighbourhood Manager, Susan Bruce. It will be asked to comment on a proposed city-wide Events Strategy, so far not seen, which is going to the Council Transport, Infrastructure and Environment Committee in February. Your Committee will watch this space closely! If you come across one of your councillors, or feel like writing, feel free to remind them of the Friends' concern. We are in favour of a few, short-duration special events that do not involve large marquees, long fences and lots of vehicles. We are especially concerned that the part of the East Meadows that was turned into an events quagmire is rehabilitated for recreational use.

I hope we can count on your support, as well as your attendance at the next meeting. Our Secretary, Hamish McKenzie, has drawn up the following 'Events Strategy', in consultation with Committee members. We look forward to hearing your comments.

FOMBL EVENTS STRATEGY

1. The strategy is based on a desire to maintain the Park in good condition in the long term, and to encourage its good and healthy use at all times.
2. Events that meet this aim are to be encouraged and would have our support, but not those which cause damage and loss of amenity.
3. Events therefore should only be allowed which reflect this aim, and in particular there should be no use of heavy vehicles, or equipment and structures requiring mechanical erection.
4. Furthermore, events that involve fenced-off areas and loss of public access should not last more than five days, including set-up and take-down times, and should only be held at least one month apart, and certainly not back to back.
5. Our greatest concern relates to the over-use of the area to the east of Middle Meadow Walk, particularly, but not exclusively, during the Festival.
6. At times there has been a considerable residential presence on the Meadows. We consider that there should be no over-night occupation.
7. In order to obtain these benefits, there should always be present a clear system of supervision and responsibility.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF FRIENDS OF THE MEADOWS

Members may like to have the following list of the achievements of Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links over the past few years, during the convenership of Peng Lee Yap. These achievements have been where the Friends have been prime movers, or particularly influential.

1. Re-instatement of historic railings at Leven Terrace and Lonsdale Terrace, supported by a WREN grant
2. Tree labels
3. Bird boxes
4. Vandal-proof indestructible seating
5. Magnet playground
6. The refurbishment of the Cricket Pavilion and installation of the Pavilion Café
7. Support for Meadows Croquet Club (the national centre for Scotland)
8. Extensive tree planting (i.e. consultation on which trees: using Section 75 monies)
9. Support for Bruntsfield Short Hole Golf Club
10. Fringe Sunday: 120,000 people come (11.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.) to see free shows
11. Improvements to lighting on the Meadows
12. Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links provide a source of community opinion that is easily accessible to the City of Edinburgh Council.

Students' Corner

The picture below of students around the snowman they had just built on Bruntsfield Links was taken on 2nd February 2009. Students too are concerned about the Meadows: you may like to look up the website **Facebook Save the Meadows**, apparently run by students: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=9436073628>.



From your Sciennes/Grange Community Police Newsletter



Beauty Spot Awareness

Edinburgh is a beautiful, scenic place to live in, and there are lots of well-known beauty spots to visit and enjoy the city's scenery first hand. Many of these areas have parking facilities, but unfortunately thieves have been taking advantage of this lately. In a number of cases, victims have arrived, parked their cars, placed valuables in the boot, and on returning found that their car has been broken into, while neighbouring cars with no valuables in the boot remain untouched. This would indicate that thieves may be observing from nearby and targeting only vehicles that are worth their while.

To reduce the chances of falling victim to this type of crime, we advise that you make sure you lock and secure your car whenever you leave it, and don't leave valuables on display. Car thieves often steal first and think about value later. Take your valuables with you or lock them in the boot prior to arriving at the destination where you intend to park up. Don't be tempted to hide things under the seats or leave them in the glove box.

Satellite Navigation systems are also highly sought after and we have found that some criminals are looking for the sucker mark that is left on the inside of your windscreen by the handset, then breaking in on the off chance that you've hidden the goods somewhere in the car.

TAKE YOUR SAT NAV UNIT WITH YOU.

Forthcoming event: Meadows Chamber Orchestra

Enclosed with this newsletter you will find a flyer for the MCO's next concert in the Queen's Hall on 22 February. This is a really exciting programme, with a particular appeal for young people. Discounted tickets available from Heather Goodare at the FOMBL meeting on 16 February.

Useful numbers

Mike Shields: Community Parks Officer 0131 529 5126

Community Beat Officer PC 4601 Yocksan Bell 0131 662 5022 (to report a crime: 0131 311 3131; emergency 999; or anonymously to Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111)

Anti-social behaviour (24/7): 0131 529 7050; Litter: rapid response 0808 100 33 66

Defective lamp-post lighting: note number and report to Clarence – 0800 23 23 23

Environmental Manager: David Doig – david.doig@edinburgh.gov.uk

The Summer Meeting of Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links will be held in June 2009 (provisional date Tuesday 9 June) at 7.30 p.m. in the Croquet Club Pavilion (adjacent to Leven Terrace). It will be the AGM, at which we shall elect a new Committee. Those willing to serve on the Committee should make themselves known to the Secretary, Hamish McKenzie, in advance of the meeting. Final details of the meeting will be given in the next newsletter.

Committee members (please address all correspondence to the Secretary)

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