



Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links

NEWSLETTER 32

Autumn 2012

Convener's Comment

Sadly, Linda Hendry, your Convener since last November, can no longer continue in this role as she plans to spend considerable chunks of her time in the USA during the coming year. So *faute de mieux* your committee has voted me into the position of Acting Convener. I shall do my best to fill the gap until someone younger and abler comes forward. We also need a new Secretary, to relieve Hamish McKenzie, who has been nobly acting as Secretary besides being Treasurer for many years.

The weather

The Big Issue during the past year has of course been the weather. After our mini-summer in March, when people were actually barbecuing on the golf greens (shock, horror!), we have had so much rain that events such as Taste of Edinburgh had to be cancelled – unfortunately not before their tents and structures had actually been set up. So they left behind a terrible mess, which is no doubt costing a fortune to put right, without anyone even benefiting from the event itself. Our Webmaster foresaw the problems and actually contacted Taste before the event alerting them to the weather forecasts, but they came anyway. This raises the question of whether or not the Council should be empowered to cancel events that are obviously not going to be viable before they are set up.

Events policy

Also, we think that a review of events policy needs to be put in hand before the next season, and those enterprises that would be better accommodated on hard standing should be directed elsewhere. You will have noticed the pools of standing water all over the Meadows and Links: what's to be done? Better drainage? In-filling with topsoil? Our previous Convener, Chris Wigglesworth, is a geologist who needs to be heard by those in the Council responsible for maintaining our precious green space. He also chairs MABLAG (Meadows and Bruntsfield Links Advisory Group), which includes members from all the local community councils as well as ourselves. We need to support his efforts to make sure that our precious Meadows don't get trashed again next summer.

Voluntary work

As for our own efforts to improve the environment, Richard Ellis has been organizing a number of work parties, which have given volunteers an opportunity to meet each other as well as do some useful work. Please see his note on page 3: all are welcome (and we do have fun!). Another FOMBL enterprise has been our project to improve the 'Barclay corner'. We are very lucky to have Neil Roger, who is an architect and also a committee member, working on this scheme *pro bono*. Overleaf you will find details of this, and how you can help.

Membership

Which brings me to my final appeal: we need more members to continue our work of preserving the Meadows, in the words of our Constitution, 'to conserve, enhance and improve the landscape, biodiversity and sustainable use of the area for the benefit of people and wildlife.' Perhaps each member could recruit one new member? Think about it!

Heather Goodare (Acting Convener and Newsletter Editor)



The Barclay Corner

Since we last reported on this project (in *Newsletter 29*), work has been proceeding apace. Neil Roger has been preparing draft designs, and has tackled some really tricky problems resulting from the conflicting interests of the different users of this well-trodden corner: pedestrians, golfers, pram-pushers, cyclists, and (of course) young people trying to find a quiet corner for a bit of a cuddle.

His current design can be found on our website, where you can also sign your support for the project, and add any constructive comments you may have. One of the more interesting was a suggestion that the corner could be made into a ‘hopscotch path’: probably not a popular idea!

As this newsletter goes to press we are about to meet with members of the Council staff to sort out a few details. Although the Council cannot fund the project, their help in achieving it is of course crucial, and we need to work together with them in close co-operation. We also need your support: in the form of signatures to the ‘petition’ that we are sending to WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental Network), to show that the community is in favour of our application for funding. You can do this via our website, or in person at our meeting on 22 October. We already have around 150 signatures. We are delighted to tell you that the Barclay Viewforth Church is enthusiastic about the idea, together with several Councillors and Ian Murray MP: we haven’t asked them all yet. Above you can see what the corner looks like now: certainly there is room for improvement!

The *Edinburgh Reporter* has interviewed us and published an article on their website, including live interviews with Neil Roger and your editor, which you may like to check out. Simply Google ‘Barclay Corner’, and follow the link. There you will also find a helpful comment from Cllr Sandy Howat (to whom many thanks), as follows:

I fully support FoMBL in looking to improve the public amenity and visual beauty of a special and sacred part of Edinburgh life: The Meadows. This corner is indeed looking ‘tired’ and their proposals are exciting. Community engagement on such a worthwhile project is crucial, both as it brings in much needed grant assistance and also because it allows the local people to ‘own’ their neighbourhood and cherish it going forward. I very much wish the Friends well and I would be delighted to offer any assistance that I could.

Volunteering: work parties on the Meadows

Work parties have been held on the Meadows on 15 June, 8 September and 6 October. Volunteers laboured hard to clear debris and litter from under the laurel bushes behind the Cricket Pavilion. Our work has been pleasantly interrupted by Amanda, who runs the café, for tea and to share her ideas to improve the local environment. She has plans to plant flowers, herbs and vegetables in this cleared area.

We have now cut back the bushes to reveal more of the Pavilion and to let the sunshine in. This should allow the wood to dry out and reduce littering and informal 'toileting'. We have cleared the rhones of accumulated debris and have re-painted the bare and graffitied areas. A full repaint has been promised by Edinburgh Leisure.

We have deliberately concentrated on the Pavilion, but increasingly work will need to be carried out in other areas of the Meadows and Links. The next date for volunteering is on 3rd November at 10.00 a.m.: please bring gloves and meet at the Pavilion. All are welcome. It would be helpful if you could let me know if you can come.

Richard Ellis Tel. 0131 447 4124 email: rellis.consultancy@virgin.net

Barbecues

A review of the Barbecue Pilot scheme was presented to the South Central Neighbourhood Partnership on 24 September 2012. While a survey of November 2011 suggested that 'it is an activity that the majority of people support being allowed', it was noted that 'this activity does cause a number of problems, including damage to the grass and increase in litter, and there are strong views amongst some local residents and Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links that barbecues should not be allowed in the park'.

At the Transport Infrastructure and Environment (TIE) committee meeting of 13 September one of our members, Audrey Simon, made an excellent presentation illustrating the damage and pollution caused by barbecues, and the nuisance caused by subsequent public urination, and Cllr Mark McInnes proposed that 'included in the Report to South Central Neighbourhood Partnership is an examination of the legal options open to the Council with regard to prohibiting barbecues on the Meadows'. Your committee met on 17 September and endorsed this proposal, and sent a memorandum to the South Central Neighbourhood Partnership accordingly. This was circulated to all attendees at the SCNP meeting on 24 September. A copy is on our website.

'Pilot scheme' a failure

The fact is, the Council is not able to police barbecues adequately, and on fine days the existing slabs cannot accommodate everyone who wishes to barbecue. If we wish to preserve the Meadows as an area for sport and other types of recreation, then barbecues conflict with this. We have to make a sensible decision that will not destroy the environment. Only the massive rainfall this year has prevented major problems related to barbecues – while of course causing others! (*Ed.*)

Forthcoming events

Meadows Chamber Orchestra

The second concert in the current (41st) season, will be on Saturday 24 November at 7.45 pm in Greyfriars Kirk. The conductor will be James Lowe, and the clarinet soloist Scott Lygate, in Gerald Finzi's clarinet concerto. The programme includes Mendelssohn's first symphony, and two short new pieces by young composers. Discounted tickets available from 0131 228 6998.

A special concert

Another exciting programme of chamber music, featuring wind players from the Meadows Chamber Orchestra together with Neil Black, a distinguished oboist, is on Saturday 3 November at 7.30 pm in Stockbridge Parish Church. The programme consists of Mozart's Serenade in B flat K 361 (the 'Gran Partita' for 12 wind instruments and double bass), together with Schubert's String Quartet in A minor D 804, 'Rosamunde'. Enquiries and advance bookings: tel. 0131 667 5618.

Next meeting of FOMBL: Monday 22 October at Summerhall , 7.30 p.m.

We are delighted to announce that local historian Graeme Cruickshank will be giving a talk about the exhibition in the Meadows of 1886. There will also be an opportunity to view the latest plan for the Barclay Corner and make any comments. The lecture will be in the Anatomy Lecture Theatre at Summerhall, which is at the east end of Melville Drive, on the corner of Hope Park Terrace and Causewayside. The building is the former Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies.

'THE SHOW IN THE MEADOWS' THE EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF 1886

An illustrated lecture by Graeme Cruickshank

The great exposition of Industry, Science, and Art, which occupied the western half of the Meadows for six months in the summer and autumn of 1886, was Scotland's first foray into what was one of the most inspired and inspiring fields of endeavour of the Victorian era.

Opened by a royal personage and visited by several more, it attracted the Prime Minister of this country and the heads of state of several others, but it was perhaps the reception that it received from the ordinary people who flocked to it which proved its greatest achievement. It was a huge popular and commercial success, and by the end of its run it had been visited by nearly two and three-quarter million people. There are still a number of relics of the event to be seen today.

The lecture will be repeated on 15th January 2013, in the Central Public Library. Details will be available from the Library nearer the time.

Farmers' Market for Bruntsfield

At our last meeting (AGM) Monica Faulkner made a presentation illustrating her proposal for a Farmers' Market. This has now been modified in view of planning objections, and the location has been changed to a different path on Bruntsfield Links. If you wish to keep up with the progress of this project, please contact monica@MarketTreeEvents.com; www.MarketTreeEvents.com or [facebook.com/TheMarketTreeEvents](https://www.facebook.com/TheMarketTreeEvents).

Useful contacts

Mike Shields Community Parks Officer 0131 529 5126; email: mike.shields@edinburgh.gov.uk

Police: Safer Neighbourhood Team. PC 4601 Yocksan Bell 0131 662 5022 or Sgt 4554 Peter Houston (same number). 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:** 0131 529 3030

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

David Doig Local Environment Manager (responsibility for roads, parks and green spaces): email david.doig@edinburgh.gov.uk Tel. 0131 529 5187

Complaints regarding Council vehicles driving on Links or Meadows:

Taskforce, Craigmillar Depot: 0131 664 8330; or Jim Monaghan on 07786 110 377

Graffiti: report to 0131 200 2000 or email operationdivide@lbp.pnn.police.uk

Kathy Evans: Local Community Safety Manager (tackling anti-social behaviour and joint working with the police) kathy.evans@edinburgh.gov.uk Tel. 0131 529 5106

Environmental Warden team leader: Mohammed Demnati 0131 529 5204

FOMBL Committee members

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