



Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links

NEWSLETTER 38

Autumn 2014

Convener's Comment

Meadows Mural

If you haven't yet seen the Meadows Mural, at the intersection of Middle Meadow Walk and North Meadow Walk, do have a look. We held a party to launch the work on 22 September: the weather was kind. There is a lot more information on our website: Rachel Woolf has written a splendid guide to the whole work. Warm thanks to everyone else who helped: the South Central Neighbourhood Partnership, Scottish Power, the Evening News, and James Gillespie's Primary School, who all contributed funding, Astrid Jaekel, our talented artist, and of course Rachel herself, who compiled the words. James Gillespie's P3 children also planted cotoneasters along the foot of the wall.

Events on the Meadows

Many thanks to all of you who supported our efforts to bring the Meadows into line with other Edinburgh parks and ensure that events are limited to only 15 days. Sadly, our pleas were ignored by the Transport and Environment Committee, meeting on 26th August. However, the situation will be reviewed in a year's time, so we are hopeful that common sense will eventually prevail.

Charitable Status

At our AGM our proposed new Constitution to conform with the requirements of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator was agreed by you all, so we are now proceeding with the necessary formalities, and hope to announce a successful outcome soon. We are delighted to welcome two new committee members: Nina Fedenczuk (Secretary) and Jennifer Thomson (Treasurer). We also thank Hamish McKenzie warmly for all he has done as Treasurer and Acting Secretary for so many years. Time to take a rest, Hamish!

Voluntary work

Have a look at the grass in front of the Pavilion, which our volunteers worked hard to restore. After a month it looked really good, but sadly, litter lorries driving over it have rather spoilt the effect. We trust it will recover soon, and we may need to do some remedial work. However, we are really delighted with the recent work we did with some P6 children from George Heriot's School. Four separate classes came along on four occasions, and we weeded the Sundial, and under the benches on Middle Meadow and Coronation Walk. We also planted grass seed on some more muddy patches along North Meadow Walk. The children were very enthusiastic, and further sessions are planned. Our grown-up sessions also continue on the last Saturday of every month: meet at the Pavilion at 10.00 a.m. New volunteers very welcome: just turn up!

Heather Goodare (Convener)

The next meeting of FOMBL will be on Tuesday 11 November at 7.30 p.m. at the German Church, 1 Chalmers Crescent. The speaker will be Dr Chris Wigglesworth, on the subject: 'The geology of the Meadows'. Chris is well known to many of you as a previous Convener of FOMBL, and indeed a founder member. There will also be an opportunity to raise other matters of interest to members. Refreshments precede the meeting. All are welcome.

Cycling on the Meadows

Our Membership Secretary, Alec Mann, is a keen cyclist, so we rely on him to keep us up to date with developments in cycling matters. I am only a retired cyclist, and my problem now is to try to persuade cyclists to obey the Highway Code: they have an inclination to ride on pavements and the wrong way down one-way streets.. In fact some of them ride all over the Meadows and Links on the grass, which is actually forbidden by the Park Rules: so if you see this happening, you might like to remind the offenders, if you feel inclined, that this is not OK! Here is Alec's latest report. (*Ed.*)

Cycle Routes from the Meadows

The City of Edinburgh Council are planning three improvements to cycle routes from the Meadows to other parts of the city. Two of them are part of the National Cycle Network, and a third connects it with King's Buildings. The intention is to reduce conflict between cyclists and motor traffic and make cycling through the area more suitable for families as part of the council's Active Travel Action Plan.

1. Meadows to the Innocent Railway Path

This connects North Meadow Walk with the Innocent Railway Path (leading to Duddingston and eastern Edinburgh) via Gifford Park, Rankeillor Street and Hermits Croft. It includes some sections of segregated cycleway on Buccleuch Street and St Leonards Street. Construction is expected to start in spring 2015.

2. Meadows to the Union Canal

This connects North Meadow Walk with the end of the Union Canal at Lochrin Basin, via Tarvit Street and Lochrin Place. Tarvit Street will be closed to through traffic, and segregated cycle lanes will be included in Brougham Place and Home Street. The initial designs were exhibited in October and an update will follow in December. The intention is to construct it in early 2016.

3. Marchmont to King's Buildings

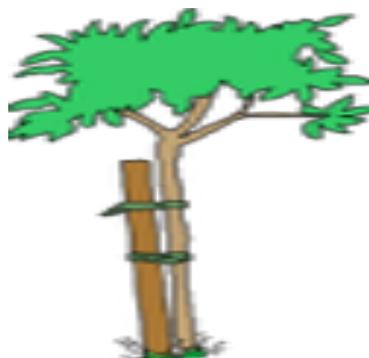
This route runs along Marchmont Road, Kilgraston Road and Blackford Avenue. It is not as bold as the other two plans, consisting of a few painted cycle lanes and some alterations to the junctions at Grange Loan and Oswald Road. In addition, there is a proposal to put 20mph speed limits on most streets in Edinburgh. They will apply to all the roads in the Meadows area, including Melville Drive and Bruntsfield Place. Details of these and other recent cycle projects in the area can be found on the Council website: <http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20135/> (cycling projects); <http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20153/> (20mph proposal).

Between February and May this year, the Council organised a Working Party on ways of resolving conflict between cyclists and pedestrians on the Meadows, particularly on the paths with heavy cycle use - North and Middle Meadow Walks, South Meadow Walk, Leamington Walk and Jawbone Walk. It recommended a number of improvements such as better signing, ways of slowing down cyclists at main junctions of paths, and discouraging cyclists from using narrow paths such as Jawbone Walk. None of the recommendations have yet appeared on the ground, or on the the Council website.

Alec Mann

STOP PRESS: Bike Marking – Middle Meadow Walk. 29th October between 3.00 pm and 6.00 pm. Some will be marked free on a first come, first served basis. Thereafter it will be £5.00.

Commemorative Tree



1) A tree to commemorate the founding of Friends of Parks (the Edinburgh-wide organisation linking up all the Friends groups such as our own) was planted on Bruntsfield Short Hole Golf Course, and this was reported in the first edition of Friends of the Meadows & Bruntsfield Links Newsletter dated Autumn 2001.

Before too many of those who were present on that occasion are no longer around, and as there is nothing to link this tree with that occasion, other than its Charles Rennie Mackintosh type guard, perhaps the time has come to consider having this tree identified.

2) Keeping in mind that digital photography did not exist or was very new in 2001, detailed here is the paragraph referring to this tree planting in 2001, together with the graphic used.

‘Meanwhile, a tree was planted on the edge of the Links near Wrights Houses by Cllr Steve Cardownie (CEC Leisure and Culture) and Dr Chris Wigglesworth (Secretary FM&BL), to commemorate the launch of the “Friends of Parks” initiative on the day of the heaviest snow fall of the winter, 26 February 2001.’

3) Recently on Bruntsfield Links the plaque shown above, which is situated on the pathway/grass of Leamington Walkway opposite the Student Residences, appeared on a tree, so obviously the Council are still prepared to permit such recognition. Is it therefore time for Friends of the Meadows & Bruntsfield Links and the Parks Department to consider arranging and financing a commemorative plaque to mark this occasion in 2001?

Audrey Simon

We’ll certainly put this item on our agenda for our next public meeting on 11 November. (Ed.)

Council Budget Proposals

If you are on email you will have received the helpful letter that I forwarded from John Kerr (chair of the Friends of Parks forum) drawing attention to the clauses in the Council’s Budget Proposals for saving money that affect the Parks. These were: reducing the grounds maintenance budget (which involved cutting the white lining of cricket pitches); not filling Parks staff vacancies; increasing allotment rents; reducing sports pitch maintenance; and stopping grass cutting in some locations. In addition I have noticed another: closing public conveniences outside the city centre. This last item I find particularly worrying, since we are constantly being told that the existing provision of toilets on the Meadows and Links is insufficient, particularly in the summer, when public urination results.

If you care about the maintenance of our Meadows, please take part in the public consultation. You will find this on the Edinburgh Council website at <http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/budget>. We also propose to send in a group response from Fombl. At our meeting on 11 November we hope you will join in to help us frame our reply.

Heather Goodare

Meadows Chamber Orchestra

The next concert will be outside the city centre, for a change, at Inverleith St Serf's Church, 280 Ferry Road, at 7.45 pm on Saturday 15 November. It includes two of the most popular works of all time, Mozart's 'Haffner' Symphony and Schubert's 'Unfinished'. Thomas Bowes will play the Brahms Violin Concerto, and the conductor is Peter Evans. Discounted tickets from 228 6998.

Trees on the Meadows

Two Forestry Service officers, Ian Morrison and Paul Naughton, recently met members of FOMBL committee on the Meadows to discuss some concerns of members of the public as well as FOMBL.

FELLING OF TREES

It is not always clear why some trees are felled, and it can be very distressing to see a beautiful healthy looking tree cut down. Ian and Paul took us to see some of these trees, and explained that a painstaking analysis is always made before removing any tree. For example, a sign of root infection can be fungus growing at the base of a tree. After further testing and consideration of the likely damage to property and people if the tree falls, a decision is made to remove the tree.

TREE DAMAGE

Many trees are damaged by humans. Mowing machines have caused huge damage to bark at the base of younger trees. Any construction work close to trees such as path formation or utility work can have a serious effect on tree roots systems. FOMBL agreed to carry out mulching at particularly vulnerable tree bases to prevent mowing machines getting too close the trunk.

DROUGHT

Newly planted trees can die in dry periods and require regular watering. There is a shortage of manpower and watering equipment. FOMBL agreed to look into funding for new watering vehicles.

Neil Roger

Useful contacts

Mike Shields Community Parks Officer Tel.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: 101 (costing a flat rate of 15p per call); emergency 999; or (anonymously) to Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111.

New Police Service of Scotland website is <http://www.scotland.police.uk>. New police 101 non-emergency number is now in use 24/7. This should reduce pressure on the 999 system, but do still ring 999 in emergency.

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

Forestry Service: email forestry.service@edinburgh.gov.uk. Tel. 0131 311 7079

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: Mohamed Demnati 0131 529 5204

FOMBL Committee members

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