



Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organization (SCIO) SC045955

NEWSLETTER 45 Spring 2017

Convener's Comment

New projects for the Meadows

Our really good news is that we have made great progress in the last few months with our 'wish list' of projects in the Meadows, for which we have managed to secure funding from the City of Edinburgh Council. You may know that we campaigned for some time for the Meadows to receive some of the revenue gained from the large events that take place during the Festival Fringe each year, and finally our persistence has been rewarded: David Jamieson, Head of Parks, Greenspace and Cemeteries, has secured us £17,000 to spend on Meadows projects; we have also had a gift of three rowan trees from Sara Stevenson.

Neil Roger, one of our Trustees, has worked very hard securing estimates for the various items that we are planning, which include information boards on our Heritage Trail (the Sundial, the Masons' Pillars, the Nelson Pillars, the Helen Acqueroff Memorial Fountain, and the old Royal Infirmary), items of toddlers' play equipment, and apparatus on an Exercise Trail, the first example of which (an exercise bike) is already in place, near the tennis courts. We also gained a grant for the Sundial board from the South Central Neighbourhood Partnership. Keep a lookout for these boards as they go up over the coming year, and let us have your stories about how they are being used. Photos welcome.

Jawbones

Sadly our precious Jawbones are still not in place, though they are promised soon. Unfortunately, the City of Edinburgh Council and Edinburgh World Heritage tell us: 'Just as the conservation treatment was completed, the specialist conservator went into liquidation. This had a number of serious implications especially as there are very few suitably experienced specialists who have the expertise for such a unique conservation project, and for this reason, the procurement process to organise another consultant to take over took many months. In addition, the conserved jawbones had to be immediately removed, but we were very lucky to find a cost-free location in which to store them.' In the meantime work on the adjoining paths has caused some inconvenience. We still don't have a date for completion of the work: we can only hope that it will be soon.

Archers Walk

As many of you know, Graeme Cruickshank has been doing a lot of work on the naming of paths, and we have finally achieved the first of these: 'Archers Walk'. This is the path that the Archers use when they parade from Archers' Hall to the Meadows every year. We are delighted to announce that our next Public Meeting will be held in Archers' Hall on 6th March (7.30-9.30 pm), and will be addressed by the Secretary of the Royal Company of Archers, Lt-Col. [Richard Callander OBE TD](#). We look forward to this.

Heather Goodare, Convener

Bug hotels: what are they?

Often overlooked in urban landscapes, insects and other invertebrates are vital for our green spaces—they're the invisible workers who pollinate plants, feed animals, and clean up whatever's left. However, our bugs are under threat, as the green spaces that provide them with food and shelter are engulfed by growing cities. To protect our beasties—and the viability of our parks, gardens, and farms—we need to fill part of the gap that's left when their habitat is ruined.

Planting pollinator-friendly plants, carried out locally by the Edinburgh Student Housing Co-operative and Greening our Street, is a popular solution to feed some species, but doesn't address the whole problem. While most of us appreciate the flowers that support many insects, the dead wood and leaf litter which other animals rely on is less charismatic. The sad fact is that what many of us consider unsightly green waste is a haven for our wildlife.

Using natural materials

One solution is to designate areas of suitable habitat to support local invertebrates. This can be as simple as letting grass grow a bit longer, or as elaborate as the beautifully designed 'bug hotels' used in some gardens. Bug hotels are man-made structures, which copy the natural habitat of insects and other invertebrates. They normally use natural materials but are neater and less likely to be disturbed by passers-by than wild habitats. They can easily be created from recycled kitchen or garden waste, and make wonderful projects for children and adults of all ages.

Making a bug hotel

Making a bug hotel has two main steps: first you make or find a hollow structure, then you fill it with some kind of bug bedding. The structure and its filling can be varied to target different invertebrates depending on where you are, what's endangered in your area, and who you want buzzing, crawling, or sliding round your garden.

For the structure, you want anything that will hold your filling in place, not fill with rainwater, and allow bugs in and out. Stacks of old shipping pallets or wooden boxes make fantastic frames for bug hotels, and can provide a huge variety of habitats in a small area. Flowerpots make a great base for smaller hotels, and can even be left upside-down and unfilled to house bumblebees. Plastic drinks bottles or tin cans can also be a simple way to start, though make sure they're placed or cut in a way that lets rainwater drain away. Cardboard boxes can also make a good temporary solution, particularly under shelter or in drier weather. The type of structure you choose can limit the size and placement of your habitat, all of which helps select the species you'll find inside it.

Filling your hotel

The filling of your hotel is what mostly decides who comes to stay: your goal is to provide something similar to their natural habitat. Wood is a great material as there are many species of beetle and fungi that depend on it, but it is routinely cleared from almost all urban areas. Small holes (2–8 mm) can also be drilled into, but not through, the wood to provide burrows for solitary bees, who pollinate many of our plants but can't live in hives like their famous cousins. Bundles of bamboo or reeds can also work for solitary bees and other burrowers, so keep an eye out for plugs of mud or leaves over the holes as this means your hotel has some residents. Dead leaves, including straw and hay, offer burrowing and feeding opportunities for hundreds of species, including butterflies and aphid-controlling ladybirds. Bark, egg boxes, and cardboard also make useful habitat for many species, particularly lacewings, which eat loads of common pests.

Hotels are best placed near flowerbeds and other food sources, and in warm parts of the garden, such as south-facing walls. A simple way to start out is with bamboo or reeds tied or stuffed in a can or cut bottle and hung from tree, or a drinks bottle full of dead grass, leaves, and twigs. Either of these can really help support your local bugs, and keep our urban green spaces healthy. We are planning to start a bug hotel on the southern Links shortly. Come along to our next working party and find out more! **Joe Boyle, Volunteer Co-ordinator**

[We are very sorry to lose our joint Volunteer Co-ordinator, Tammy Rudduck, owing to clashing work commitments. Anyone who would like to help Joe will be most welcome: email volunteer@fombl.org.uk.]

Seven-spotted ladybird. © Wikimedia Commons



Community payback scheme

We have more excellent news to report. Quite by chance at a healthcare meeting your Convener happened to come across someone with a contact in the Community Payback Scheme, and followed it up. This resulted in a meeting between members of your committee and William Birse, who is Community Payback Work Manager in Edinburgh. Apparently teams of about five people come along and work under a supervisor from 9 a.m. to 3.00 p.m., with a break at lunchtime.

They will be doing much the same kind of work as our own volunteers: path edging, leaf gathering, tree feathering, rail painting etc., and as you all know, there is never any shortage of this work. This seems to us a really worthwhile kind of occupation for such people, and we hope very much that it will help them in their own rehabilitation and reintegration into the community, besides helping them to learn new skills. We shall welcome them warmly. So if you see small groups of people wearing tabards and working away, do give them a word of greeting. (Ed.)

Edinburgh is the greenest . . .

According to a recent study, Edinburgh is allegedly the greenest city in the whole of the UK, with 49.2 per cent of the city area classed as 'green' (*Edinburgh Evening News* 7.01.2017), though this figure is disputed as other cities don't include their green belts. The Meadows and Bruntsfield Links form a large part of this area: together they constitute three times the size of Princes Street Gardens.

Forthcoming Events

South Centra£ Decides: Saturday 4 February 2017 at Southside Community Centre, 117 Nicholson Street. This is a market-stall event: an opportunity to find out what projects are seeking local funding, and to vote for the ones you like best, among them a new proposal for a community allotment project in the Meadows which needs raised beds to enable people of all ages to garden, put forward by our own Secretary, Sarah Tolley (of 'Greening our Street'). Last year Fernando's Bamboobelly Garden was successful, so we are hoping for success this year too: do go along and vote!

University Challenge: probably Monday 6 February 8 pm BBC2. The Edinburgh University team will be led by our very own Joe Boyle (alias Volunteer Co-ordinator). Their last contest with the Open University ended with a nail-biting tie-break: they are a really good team! Check the date and time.

The Edinburgh Partnership invites you to discuss: 'Community Planning for People and Planet'. Help set the environmental priorities for the South East Edinburgh Locality Improvement Plan 2017-22. Wednesday 8 February, 6-8 pm, City Chambers.

Meadows Chamber Orchestra: Saturday 11 February 2017, 7.45 pm Inverleith St Serf's Church, Ferry Road, EH5 3NP. Peter Evans conducts and Philip Higham is the cello soloist in Saint-Saëns' Cello Concerto No. 1. Other works are Shostakovich's Chamber Symphony, Dvorák's Waldesruhe, and Mozart's Prague Symphony.

Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust: Sustain.ED - Edinburgh University Students Association tree-planting event (Green Festival) in Middle Meadow Walk and North Meadow Walk of three new trees (1 x Liquidambar styraciflua 'Worplesdon', 1 x Quercus acutissima, and 1 x Tilia tomentosa 'Petiolaris'). Members of the public are welcome to take saplings home (500 of them!). 11 a.m.-3.00 p.m. Thursday 16 February.

Meadows Marathon: 5 March 2017; Gung Ho 2017: 11-13 April 2017; Army Reserve in the Park: 4-5 May 2017; Meadows Festival Fun Fair 30 May-1 June 2017.

Next FOMBL public meeting: Monday 6th March, in Archers' Hall, Buccleuch Street, 7.30-9.30 p.m., to include a talk by Lt-Col. Richard Callander, OBE, TD, Secretary of the Royal Company of Archers, on the Archers' history. All welcome.

Useful Contacts

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

Police: 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>.

Anti-social behaviour (24/7): Tel. 0131 529 7050; **Litter:** 0131 529 3030

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

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

Road repairs and development: Alan Dunlop, Area Roads Manager: Tel. 0131 529 3719; email alan.dunlop@edinburgh.gov.uk

Complaints regarding Council vehicles driving on Links or Meadows: Tel. 0131 529 3030

Task Force Manager (responsible for street cleaning and grounds maintenance) Rab Farquhar: Tel. 0131664 8330; email rab.farquhar@edinburgh.gov.uk

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) email: kathy.evans@edinburgh.gov.uk Tel. 0131 529 5106

Environmental Warden team leader: Mohamed Demnati Tel. 0131 529 5204

People Against Litter (PAL): please contact <http://www.peopleagainstlitter.org/>

FOMBL Trustees

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