

Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organization (SCIO) SC045955, www.fombl.org.uk



Trustees' Annual Report 2019/20

FOMBL exists to represent local people in conserving and improving the Meadows and Links and liaise closely with the council and all of the many other local stakeholders to achieve this. Financial pressures mean that the council are increasingly planning to raise money through commercial licences at premium parks such as the Meadows and Links and we will continue to monitor and support or challenge all such proposals. Our position is generally that this invaluable public space should be protected and accessible by all.

Unfortunately, a number of events have had to be cancelled since March 2020 including our annual spring meeting and June AGM which was replaced by a virtual AGM. The planned AGM talk by Terry Levinthal of the Cockburn Association (“City for Sale? The Commodification of Edinburgh’s public spaces”) will hopefully be rescheduled. The Meadows Festival and the Fringe presence in August were also cancelled as were many smaller events. Prior to this we were very pleased to host Paul Lawrence, the Council’s Director of Place, at our 2019 AGM. Joanna Lindsay of Buglife came and gave a very interesting talk on wildflower planting at our October meeting.

It was with great sadness that we learned that longstanding FOMBL member, tireless local activist and former city councillor Chris Wigglesworth passed away in April this year. Chris wore many hats and was also a community councillor, church minister and campaigner for the cause of Palestine. Another much loved and much missed friend of the Meadows is our former Treasurer Robin Morris who passed away in 2018. We are in the process of organising a plaque to be installed on a reconditioned wooden bench to commemorate him.

Our **volunteer groups** have met regularly to accomplish all sorts of tasks including litter-picking, weeding, cleaning and tidying, graffiti removal and planting spring bulbs and other wildflowers. Additional wildflower areas adjacent to Leamington Walk and at South Links have been created with the help of Buglife as part of the John Muir pollinator way. It is hoped to seed these areas again in the spring. We are very grateful to all partners and volunteers plus the university students and school pupils who have all enthusiastically assisted FOMBL volunteers.

Members involved with the FOMBL **tree group** have spent significant time caring for trees especially younger caged trees. These trees need watering during dry spells and also need mulch spread around their bases. Repairs have

also been made to wire cages and rotten posts removed. Sadly the anticipated funds for new tree planting has been cut but we must thank Heather Goodare for her generosity in purchasing three new trees including a rather special oak (*Quercus x turnerii Pseudoturneri*). Three rowans which were donated and planted in 2018 on the south links are also thriving.

One trustee, Neil Roger, has responsibility for managing and supporting a number of **small projects**. To boost our funds, significant income is generated from festival events held in the Meadows every year. Unfortunately, because of covid-19 the £26,000 provided has been reduced. With no festival held this year, no funds will be available for 2021. The good news is that new play equipment has now been ordered for the West Links and East Meadows toddler's playgrounds. Funds may also be allocated to provide an information board at the Leamington Walk wildflower meadow but all other projects have sadly been shelved.

We are also still working closely with Edinburgh World Heritage and the council to manage and install a range of **information boards** to provide a "history trail" throughout the Meadows and Bruntsfield links. We will provide a proportion of funding from previous council grants as well as a donation from Edinburgh Futures Institute. The information boards will initially cover the Royal Infirmary, the Masons and Nelson Pillars and the Jawbone Arch.

The Jawbone arch has been missing and under repair for many years but FOMBL continue to monitor progress. Edinburgh World Heritage, who are managing the restoration, have reported that the work is now complete and installation is hoped to be completed early next year.

All of the trustees would like to thank all the members, volunteers and supporters who 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.

We are always looking for new members, volunteers and trustees to support our endeavours. Trustee meetings take place every two to three months. **FOMBL membership** is only £5 per year so please encourage your friends and neighbours to join up and don't forget to let us reclaim Gift Aid where possible.



Signed by Jim Orr, Convenor of FOMBL: