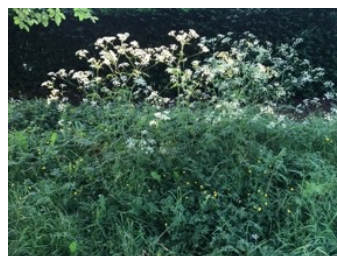


FRIENDS OF NEWLANDS PARK

CHAIR'S REPORT

April 2022 to June 2023



“A city can be transformed into a sustainable environment where nature and people can co-exist.”

Richard Weddle, on Glasgow's GALLANT project.

Introduction

Newlands Park, in common with many other parks in Glasgow and most across the UK, has reached a tipping point between neat, manicured, intensively maintained urban park — and ‘managed nature’, wildlife-friendly, biodiverse green space. This summer, more than ever, Glasgow City Council’s further pared-back mowing regime and wildflower meadows are winning plaudits *and* raising eyebrows. Of our Facebook commentators, several are enjoying the meadows and welcome the response to the climate crisis that they signify. A smaller number are somewhere between disappointed and angry.

What’s undeniable is that the June heatwave has shown us, with renewed focus, that it’s important to address the climate crisis but also that there is a need to carefully plan where to mow so that people can picnic happily, and kick balls on the flat areas, and move through the meadow grass areas on mown strips (between the tarmac paths).

We will now work with GCC to adjust the mowing regime, ensuring the balance of mown/ unmown still hits GCC’s targets but that the park serves its users practically.

The continued closure of the pond is a disappointment for all who use the park. A Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, we have been working with GCC NRS to resurface and re-open the western section of the path for 19 months now. I have tried hard each month to progress this but have failed to persuade GCC to deliver on it. I need our followers’ help now: in this next year I hope we will work collectively to push this to a conclusion. We have ordered a bench and an interpretative sign. We want to maintain and develop the planting in and around the water, together with GCC officers and charity Froglife. Let’s hope the work we’ve done so far hasn’t been in vain.

Glasgow City Council has biodiversity, net zero, and sustainability obligations. In my last annual report as Chair before I stand down, I’m hopeful that FoNP can, with our supporters and followers, become ever more aware of our responsibility as co-stewards of Newlands Park.

There is a serious — but enlightening — conversation ongoing between our volunteers and countryside rangers, biodiversity and horticulture officers at Glasgow City Council. But we and they need to be even more engaged. They need to be better resourced. We need to be in listening mode, recognise the council’s severely stretched finances, and lean into our opportunity to have Newlands Park play its part in the ongoing climate crisis response.

There are thoughtful projects to be developed: for children and teenagers; for the whole community; that enhance biodiversity, community cohesion, horticulture, health and wellbeing and the arts. But we need our supporters and followers to help us develop new initiatives. Join us. Or if you’re involved already, stay with us, because ... read on to see what we’ve achieved this year!

Julia Radcliffe, Chair, 2020-2023



Summary

The year at a glance:

	2022-2023
Horticulture and biodiversity activities	Invested £1,230 in plants, compost and conservation activities; received donations of plants and equipment. Butterfly transect developed. Bulbs and wildflowers planted.
Volunteering	19 regular volunteers & 1,461 hours of volunteering Apr '22 to Mar '23 (recorded monthly)
Litter collection	5 volunteers. 72 hours
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secured a £146,000 grant from LTA/Tennis Scotland. Tennis courts fully refurbished and opened. Tennis development hours — 209. • Negotiated with People Make Glasgow Communities and signed the Tennis court operator agreement with Glasgow Life. • Bought and built a shed.
Events and social benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resurrected the fête in September 2022. Participation by local and environmental organisations. • Open Evening at the Dandelion Café, 24 April. • Volunteers' summer lunch & Christmas dinner. • Pétanque, paused temporarily; to resume soon we hope. • 2023 fête planning underway for Saturday 2 September.
Facebook followers	971 at June 2023 (up from 742 this time last year)
Email followers	104
Social media	New (official) FoNP Facebook account; website; Instagram and twitter accounts.
Pond	A second year of November management/clearing of excess vegetation with conservation charity Froglife and seven volunteers – 20 hours worked.
Fundraising	<p>A GCC Area Partnership grant of £2,716 for the fête.</p> <p>A St. Nicholas Care Fund Grant of £795 allowed us to host refugees and asylum seekers at the fête.</p> <p>A Registers of Scotland grant of £1,212 helped us to commission The Village Storytelling Centre at the fête.</p> <p>Donations received: £967.15</p>





The Fête

Our first time organising the fête was an interesting learning experience! — A journey with several hurdles and challenges but ultimately a happy, successful afternoon. Post-pandemic, and with the cost of living crisis beginning to bite, our aim was to have people experience as much as possible for free.

Accordingly, the fête was made possible with funding from the GCC Area Partnership budget, enabling us to purchase a tent and pay for transport and equipment for the 29th Glasgow Scouts, who provided the PA system and the tea tent.

Free activities included the Steel sisters coaching on the tennis courts, pétanque taster sessions, The Village Storytelling Centre captivating families (funded by GCC and Registers of Scotland), Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Service, Busy Bee Dog Training, Sacha Mason McKenzie's Qi Gong sessions, and a Free Book Swap stall.

A further cultural offering was from 'Folks' Music' who brought along unusual musical instruments for people to try out.

Our other priority was to involve organisations with environmental remits and we were delighted to be able to involve Butterfly Conservation, South Lanarkshire Badger Group, Friends of Linn Park and Froglife, as well as having our own exhibit.

There was some retail therapy on offer from St. Margaret's Church Fairtrade and the 46th Glasgow Guides' tombola.

Fulfilling our aim to have the park be accessible to groups who wouldn't otherwise visit, we hosted a group of Ukranian, Afghan, Syrian and Lebanese language students, who came from the Ogilvie Centre with their teachers and the centre's inspirational Co-ordinator, Kevin Wyber. Their visit was made possible courtesy of funding from the St. Nicholas Care Fund.

Last year, Debbie Gill offered to help with the fête and proved to be in command of both the big picture *and* the detail. This year she is organising it and I hope many will get involved and help make it an even bigger success.

Newlands Park Community Tennis Centre

Improving the tennis courts has been one of our ambitions since November 2019.

In May 2022, People Make Glasgow Communities (PMGC) agreed our business plan was strong enough to warrant proceeding with a bid to have the courts transferred to community management.

We then created Newlands Park Community Tennis Centre CIC in autumn 2022, enabling the LTA, with funds from the UK Government's Parks Tennis scheme, to invest £146,000 in the courts. Our thanks to Kris Henderson at LTA for being our advocate; a trusted partner.

We have negotiated and agreed an operator licence with GCC. Thanks to George Frier for pro bono support in our negotiations.

Website, booking system, coaching resource, and signage are all complete. Liaison with active schools co-ordinators and community groups is a priority and our first coaching sessions are now scheduled.

We are working with groups and organisations supporting vulnerable children and adults to ensure the courts are an accessible amenity.

I write this the day after our Open Day on Saturday 17 June (shown below).

We have recorded 209 tennis development volunteer hours in the past 12 months.

The resulting infrastructure improvement is transformational. The potential health and social benefits are substantial. We look forward to the next chapter for tennis at Newlands Park.



“Adopt the pace of nature. Her secret is patience.”
Ralph Waldo Emerson

A Resilient, Multi-Skilled Resource

We are stronger than we were a year ago and we have accomplished a great deal.

- George Frier, Dave McLeod, Alan Melville and Iain MacBean built the shed.
- Sheilagh White has liaised with Friends of Queen's Park on rose bed maintenance and sustainability, and with GCC on the development of the pétanque court.
- Wednesday and Saturday gardening groups continue to meet weekly — and together we planted 3,450 wildflower plug plants and bulbs.
- Fiona Godsman has developed all the social media for Friends of Newlands Park *and* the Tennis Centre.
- Debbie Gill has liaised with Friends of Linn Park to develop a butterfly transect.
- Jamie MacDonald, Dave McLeod, Matthew Sheehan, Fiona Godsman and I have developed and delivered a Community Tennis Centre.
- Charlotte Dean and Sheilagh White have recorded our volunteer hours monthly.
- Gayle d'Souza, Sheilagh White, Michelle and Grace Flynn, Naomi Kean, Mindy Simpson, Marie Hand, Anne MacGregor, Iain MacBean, Margaret Miller, Sheila Bowyer and Colette Keaveney helped on the fête.
- Gary Linstead, Countryside Ranger at GCC has helped us drive forward biodiversity and pond projects.
- Iain MacBean, Frances Keane, Mary Moran, Sheilagh White, Alan Melville, Carolyn Manson, Debbie Gill, Jennifer Wales, Anne MacGregor, Margaret Miller, Sheila Bowyer, Sean Ferguson, Matthew Sheehan, Charlotte Dean, Dave McLeod, Barbara Tropp, George Frier, Debbie Gill, Marie Hand, Julie Layden, Morven Ramsay, Ellis Maxwell and Alex McLew have worked on gardening tasks and projects throughout the year.
- Ros Docherty and Dorothy Buchanan at Friends of Linn Park, and Friends of Queen's Park have generously given advice.

- Michael McNellis at Pollok Park has gifted us a redundant sign to re-use at the pond.
- Richard Weddle, who is an expert on many invertebrate groups and helps with the biological audit for the city, has provided us with a database of species recorded in Newlands Park (to which we are adding) and has led a group from the Glasgow Natural History Society on a field trip to the park.
- Glasgow Treelovers has donated three substantial rhododendron plants, an in-kind donation of £200. Thank you to Stephen Docherty.

Maintenance

People continue to say how well the park looks; how much they appreciate our work. Thank you. The park has a much-reduced maintenance programme compared to a few of years ago. We are doing our best to redress this. If you already help us as a volunteer/contributor, thank you; please continue. If you don't yet, then come and join us. Volunteering time, commitment and frequency is entirely flexible, from several hours a week to an hour once a year. Every little helps.

Glasgow City Council maintenance teams will be sent to cut the grass seven times this year, down from ten last. We don't have information about hedge trimming. That is the extent of current GCC maintenance.

Thank you to Derek Walls at GCC, who arranged machine-planting of 8,000 daffodil bulbs; and delivery (for us to plant) of 1,650 more, plus 1,800 wildflower plugs. Thanks to The Conservation Volunteers for helping our volunteers to plant narcissus tête à tête, crocus, snakeshead fritillary, muscaria, cyclamen, eranthis aconite, ox eye daisy, red campion, primrose, cowslip, cuckoo flower and ragged robin.

Our ability to purchase plants and pursue horticulture projects is due in part to last year's grant from the Mushroom Trust.



Communications

Thanks to Fiona Godsman who has worked *consistently and constantly* to develop our Facebook profile, Instagram and website — and those of the tennis centre. Followers: 971 at the time of writing and this number grows daily. We are always keen to receive appropriate, positive and relevant posts.

Friendsofnewlandspark@gmail.com

Facebook: friendsofnewlandspark (group page and own official page)

Instagram and Twitter: NewlandsParkG43

info@newlandsparktennis.org

Facebook, Instagram and twitter: newlandsparkctc

Fundraising

Mentioned in last year's report but *received and recorded* in this year's accounts, new grants include:

St. Nicholas Care Fund for the fête — £795

Registers of Scotland for the fête — £1,212

Glasgow City Council for the fête — £2,716

We have recently secured (and will record in the accounts for 2023-24):

GCC Parks and Open Spaces grant for the shed — £800

GCC Area Committee grant to Friends of Newlands Park, to cover the start-up costs for Newlands Park Community Tennis Centre (signage, court furniture) — £2,566

And we acknowledge here the LTA/UK government funding for NPCTC: £146,000.

In addition to these grants, our sister organisation, NPCTC, has secured a 'Glasgow European Capital of Sport 2023' grant of £750 to fund coaching for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups who might not otherwise consider the tennis courts to be accessible.

Donations

Generous and thoughtful followers have donated £967 cash, set up standing orders, and have given gardening equipment and plants. Thank you all.

Our current and future priority has not changed from last year: we need to encourage formal membership and regular donations. Greater focus on this activity is necessary. Donations can be made to the Treasurer, at

friendsofnewlandspark@gmail.com

We have closed our GoFundMe account. Look out for a new donations account coming soon.

Thank you to all our donors.

Summary Financial Report

At 5 April 2023:

Funds carried forward from last year	7,408.60
Funds received in year	5,685.15
Funds spent in year	7,367.02
Current balance	5,726.73

Income:

donations	967.15
Grants	4,718
Other receipts	-
Total Income	5,685.15

Expenditure:

Equipment	2,576.29
Environment and conservation	1,230.46
Sports and recreation facilities	25.54
Fête	3,399.83
Insurance	125.20
Volunteer expenses	9.70
Total Expenditure	7,367.02

Thanks to Iain Webster CA for his independent examination of our financial records.

Committee 2022-23

Julia Radcliffe, Chair and funding bids (standing down at AGM)

Dave McLeod, Vice Chair

Mary Moran, Secretary (standing down at AGM)

Frances Keane, Treasurer (resigned May 2023)

Iain MacBean

George Frier

Sheilagh White

Jamie MacDonald

Matthew Sheehan (co-opted May 2023)

Alan Melville (resigned October 2022)

Communications

Fiona Godsman

Fête Co-ordination 2022

Julia Radcliffe, Debbie Gill, John Archibald, 29th Scouts, Charlotte Dean, Jade Graham (Chair, NACC), Dave McLeod, Alan Melville, Barbara Tropp, Sheilagh White, Gayle d'Souza

In-kind support from

Iain Webster, CA

Williamwood Golf Club

Glasgow Treelovers

Funders

Glasgow City Council Area Partnership

The Mushroom Trust

The St. Nicholas Care Fund

Registers of Scotland

LTA for NPCTC