

Friends of Newlands Park AGM, 19th June 2023

(Minute Agreed at committee, 2 October 2023)

Present: Julia Radcliffe, Dave McLeod, Iain MacBean, Sheilagh White, Mary Moran, Matthew Sheehan, Jamie MacDonald

Attending: Barbara Tropp, Debbie Gill, Fiona Godsman, Cllr Sean Ferguson, Humera Ashraf, Alan Melville

Apologies: Charlotte Dean, Brian Rigby, George Frier, Frances Keane, Cllr Stephen Curran

Minutes of previous AGM: These minutes were agreed at the FoNP meeting in July 2022. One error was corrected – the funding for the tennis courts was not from ‘Tennis Scottish’ [sic], but from the Lawn Tennis Association.

Annual Report for 2022-23: The summary was discussed, covering horticulture, volunteering, litter, infrastructure, events, social media, the pond and fundraising.

Successes during the year include progress on the rose beds, obtaining a shed, continued strong support from volunteers, the completion of the tennis courts, the fete, the development of our social media, new grants and donations income.

It is hoped that a new pétanque court can be built; Sheilagh has been progressing this, together with Gary Linstead.

Fiona suggested putting more on FB about the work done by the volunteers; also asking for help from followers for specific projects.

Humera asked about links with local schools regarding story-telling, biodiversity and the tennis courts, especially regarding inclusion (addressed later in the meeting).

Treasurer’s Report: The 2022-23 annual accounts have been verified by Iain Webster CA. Frances Keane was thanked for her work as Treasurer over the past three years. Fiona was thanked for preparing the accounts for external verification. It was noted that the Notice Board generates income but that this hasn’t been expressed in the accounts and is currently shown as part of ‘donations’. In future, any income from the notice board will have a separate entry in the accounts. The possibility of a second notice board at the Kilmarnock Rd entrance was discussed, as those who use it as an entrance may not see the Notice Board at Lubnaig Road and vice versa.

Action: volunteer sought to progress obtaining and siting a second notice board.

Alan reported that the Deacon Blue package, from last year’s fete, had generated £100.

Iain Webster CA was thanked for verifying all the accounts on a pro bono basis.

Frequency of Meetings: It was agreed to move from monthly meetings to having four committee meetings per year. Any business that arises between meetings can be communicated to all committee members via email.

Election of the Committee: Five members of the committee continue in post. They are Dave McLeod, Iain MacBean, Sheilagh White, Jamie MacDonald and George Frier. Matthew Sheehan, who was co-opted at the May meeting, is standing.

Three members have stood down from the committee. They are: Julia Radcliffe, standing down as Chair; Frances Keane, standing down as Treasurer; Mary Moran, standing down as Secretary.

Julia wishes to be an ordinary member of the committee. The current five, plus Matthew Sheehan, plus Julia Radcliffe, were together proposed by Dave McLeod and seconded by Sheilagh White. Humera Ashraf offered to serve as an ordinary member. She was proposed by Julia and seconded by Jamie MacDonald.

Fiona Godsman offered to join the committee, taking over as Treasurer; proposed by Jamie MacDonald and seconded by Julia Radcliffe. This takes the committee to its full complement of nine members.

Debbie is willing to take notes during the temporary absence of a Secretary but does not wish to be on the committee or to be Secretary in a formal capacity.

Action: Committee members to continue recruitment of a secretary

No-one has offered to take on the Chair's position and it was decided to adopt rotation, with each committee member taking a turn, until someone can be found to fill the position in the orthodox way. On this basis, the current vice-chair, Dave McLeod, has offered to act as Chair for the first rotation, chairing the September meeting.

Minutes of May Meeting: The draft minutes from May's meeting had been circulated in advance and were agreed as accurate. Matters arising: two letters have been sent to McLaren's about purchasing extra plants (geranium and lavender). No reply has been received from either letter yet.

Action: Julia and Sheilagh to reconvene to decide how best to proceed.

Gardening/Maintenance/Biodiversity: The middle rose bed has few viable roses. It was agreed that it would be easier to remove these roses and grass over the bed. The bark from the middle bed will be transferred to the remaining two rose beds.

Action: As a special project, it could be put on FB to ask for help — on a set date (eg a specific Saturday morning). Wednesday gardeners to liaise with Fiona regarding this.

Julia has contacted local schools in the past, offering to make arrangements (to include GCC countryside rangers) for horticulture and biodiversity activities. To date, there have been no responses. Julia understands, from education work in previous roles, that the core curriculum is very demanding of teachers' time, but the offer is open.

Glasgow Treelovers' Society has donated three rhododendron bushes worth £200. There is £200 left of the original £400 promised two years ago. Julia has suggested to Stephen Docherty at Glasgow Treelovers that this can be used for shrubs for the Kilmarnock Road entrance.

Action: Julia to conclude this with Glasgow Treelovers.

The Butterfly transect has been registered with UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS). Debbie reported that one of the new volunteers is participating in the monitoring activities. The required commitment is to monitor the transect once a week between April and September, so it should be feasible to resource this with the volunteers who are already engaged with this activity. .

It was agreed that the purchase of the shed for the gardeners was a game-changer. Thanks were expressed for Kevin McCormick of GCC who progressed the grant for the shed.

Fete: This will take place on Saturday 2nd September. Debbie, who is organising it, reported that the 29th Scout group will put up tents, etc. again this year. Debbie has contacted other groups who helped last year. As for last year we will have a number of wildlife and conservations organisations participating in the event, to continue to promote our biodiversity aims. We are also very pleased that NPCTC will be involved in the fete – with activities on the newly refurbished tennis courts.

Action: Mary to follow up with her contact at Guide Dogs for the Blind to see whether they would like to attend the event and can bring along some Guide dogs as they did last year.

Communications: Fiona reported that the Park's website is up and running. Details of all activities being developed will be on the website.

There is now a FB page, in addition to the FB group. The page is for FoNP to post what's relevant. The Instagram account now has around 90 followers. The Twitter account is up and running.

Tennis Courts: Open Day on Saturday was a big success with excellent feedback about the courts. The courts are now in operation. 101 people have registered to be active members within the first 48 hours, and there have been quite a few bookings for the courts.

The Coaching Programme is still to be finalised, with a major emphasis on accessibility and inclusion. Jamie and Fiona will liaise about various tennis events so that they can be promoted on the website.

A formal opening will take place in August (exact date is to be confirmed). Judy Murray will open the courts officially.

Julia has contacted all the local schools, the Active Schools Co-ordinator, plus Abercorn School (a regular user of the courts in the past) and has offered free court time and the potential for coaching. The Active Schools Co-ordinator knows the courts are available for summer camps to use and we hope he will make arrangements over the holidays.

The Glasgow European Capital of Sport 2023 grant has been received by NPCTC and will be used for access level coaching. NPCTC is applying to Tennis for Free (LTA charity) for coaching support and equipment. NPCTC is working with the LTA in Scotland on Free Parks Tennis, another similar initiative to encourage 'activators' (like coaches but without qualifications — who can encourage and support parents and grandparents to teach children).

Pond: Funding for resurfacing the pond path was agreed in 2021 but there is still no sign of it progressing. George has agreed to take on the pond as a special project, following Julia's stepping back. He will now liaise with the Council and pursue. Cllr Ferguson has offered to help with this.

AOCB: Grass Cutting — Julia has written to Jack Devine about the mown/unmown grass, asking to meet with him on site to reconfigure areas of grass to be mown/left unmown. (No reply so far.) If the flat land to the west of the tennis courts can be mown, then it can be used for football. If the sunny, higher areas are mown, they can be used for picnics. To counterbalance this, more of the margins, especially below Beverley Road and at Calderwood Road (which are less sunny) can be left unmown. The unmown grass will be cut down annually.

Action: committee members to encourage Jack Devine to meet us on site.

We have previously agreed to make an annual donation to the Church for the use of the meeting rooms. It was agreed that Alan would drop off the £100 cash (from the Deacon Blue package, which he had just handed to Fiona) to the Church Secretary for the room hire (obtaining a receipt for it).

Sheilagh mentioned that when people donated to FoNP there was no formal acknowledgement of the donation. It was agreed that the donations could be put on FB as anonymous or with initials or with full names as the donor wishes.

Action: Fiona (new Treasurer) will ensure that donations are acknowledged and donors recognised as appropriate.

Meeting closed at 8.55pm, with presentations to Julia and Mary.

Thank you to Mary Moran for patiently taking minutes for the past three years.

Next meeting on 18th September 2023 at 7:30pm. [NB This meeting was postponed until Monday 2nd October 2023 at 7:30pm.]