

Friends of Montgomery Street Park

Amended minutes from quarterly meeting, 3rd September 2009, 8:00 p.m., at 8 Montgomery Street.

In attendance: Julienne Thurrott, Chris Rankin, Christine Rigouleau, Tasca Shadix, Michael Davidson, Charlotte MacDonald, Geraldine Debard

Apologies: Suzanne Gibson, Lynn Grant, Rebecca Noonan-Heale

1. Minutes from previous meeting, the AGM on 22nd June, were adopted. Previous business left over from that meeting was discussed.
2. Committee Positions were discussed.

Julienne Thurrott stepped down as Chair of FoMSP because she no longer lives in the area and feels that a representative who lives in the neighbourhood would be more appropriate. However, she would like to remain active in the group and will now focus on being a Fundraising Manager for the group, as Charlie Henderson (who had previously volunteered) will not be able to fill this position.

In the meantime, Chris Rankin was co-opted from the Committee to serve as Chair until the next AGM, as provided for in the group's constitution, when the position will then be open for re-election.

This left Chris Rankin's previous role of Vice-Chair vacant. Michael Davidson volunteered to fill that role, but as he is not a Committee member, it was decided that we will formally nominate him for Vice-Chair and vote on it at the next quarterly general meeting, which will be well-publicized in advance. (We will also try to make it clearer that the general membership is welcome to attend; see further notes on that topic).

Action (Chris): Put voting for Vice-Chair on next meeting's agenda

Action (Chris): Announce the changes in leadership, as well as the minutes from this meeting and the dates for future meetings, (and other items listed below) in an email newsletter introducing yourself as the new Chair.

Action (Tasca): Announce the changes in leadership, as well as the next general Meeting, on the web site.

Action (Christine): Contact bank to change our address, advise them of leadership changes, and remove Joanna Goddard as a signatory.

It was also discussed that Geraldine Debard has been doing a great job as the group's liason with BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers), attending events on behalf of the group, renewing our BTCV membership at the same price as last year, (renewing our Events Insurance along with it), and obtaining a 19-page document listing grants and funding opportunities. It was agreed that this could be a great resource for Julienne as Fundraiser.

Geraldine has also registered to attend the Sustainable Communities Mentors Programme 5-6th November and hopes to attend.

Action: Julienne: Get BTCV document from Geraldine to explore funding opportunities.

Action (Geraldine): If you do attend the Mentors Programme, forward information to Tasca and Chris for the website and newsletter.

Charlotte MacDonald had agreed to take over the Membership Manager role, and reported that the membership database is now up and running, which is fantastic because now we can remind members that it's time to renew memberships!

Action (Charlie): Draft a "membership renewal" letter to send to members. Also, obtain from Geraldine the names of some email addresses which are bouncing?

3. Meetings were set for the coming year.

It was agreed that we would have a quarterly general meeting every three months, and of course more frequently for planning events, etc. We will also publicize the general meetings on the website and via emailed newsletters, making it clear that all are welcome to attend, and requesting that if anyone would like to attend, they should contact Tasca for venue information. This way we should be able to ensure that we have a suitable venue arranged, i.e. we'll know whether or not we can still meet in someone's living room. ☺

The general meetings for the upcoming year will be:

Wed. 2nd December, 2009

Wed. 3rd March 2010

Wed. 2nd June 2010

Action (Tasca): Put meeting dates on website, with contact info for those interested in attending.

4. Action Plan for Coming Year: There was a very productive session of planning some fun and exciting events for the coming year. Actions for these events are listed below. In summary, the events are:

26th September 2009: Fun Day in the Park (proposed by Suzanne)

Meeting with the Council (date to be arranged ASAP)

“Plant It” and “Paint It” events on Sat. 11th Oct. 2009 and Sat. 8th May 2010, respectively

Continued clean-ups

Fireworks event (?)

ACTIONS FOR 26th SEPTEMBER EVENT

In brief, this will be a fun day, proposed and to be organized by Suzanne Gibson.

Action (Tasca): Email Suzanne and let her know we agreed the Fun Day is a great idea and requesting that she begin organizing and draft a call for volunteers. (Note: done). Put event dates on the website. Put Suzanne’s call for volunteers on the web site.

Actions (Chris): Include Suzanne’s call for volunteers in the email newsletter. Invite MSP Shirley-Anne Sommerville (and any other relevant local officials) to attend this event and future events.

Actions (Christine): Apologize to Ambulance Association for not paying them sooner for last year’s event, make a donation and invite them for this year.

Actions (Chris): Contact Council (Stephen Cuthill is contact person?) to request they clean up dog fouling before the event. (Note: done).

ACTIONS FOR MEETING WITH COUNCIL

We decided it was time to meet with the council again about the status of funding for the park, now that we have received the consultation report from Esperanza and feel that we have reached the limit of what we can and should do in terms of community consultation. This would also be a good time to touch base with them about our upcoming events and get information about what is needed for those events.

Actions (Chris): Contact Council to set the date, and create our agenda for that meeting. Inform members who would like to attend.

Actions (Christine): Look into whether Montgomery Street Park is in the Capital Program/whether sums have been allocated to the park?

Actions (Julienne): Look into WREN (Waste Resources Environmental Network), which gives large grants for parks in proximity to landfills, as it was discussed that Montgomery Street fits the criteria, but we need Council support.

ACTIONS FOR 11th OCTOBER “PLANT IT!” AND 8th MAY “PAINT IT!” EVENTS

These will be a series of events to clean and brighten up the park, focusing on the play park area. October will be for (hopefully) installing some planters around the play park and planting bulbs, while the spring event will focus on painting playground equipment and possibly the substations.

Actions (Tasca, Chris): Publicize the “Paint It!” event on the website and email newsletter.

Action (Christine): Recruit volunteers for “Plant It!” during the 26th September event by planning a poster and volunteer sheet to display at the event.

Actions (Julienne): Ask Fabio about his graffiti artist friends possibly participating in “Paint It!” Look into grants for bulbs, seeds, planters. Give Tasca contact information for the person at Scottish Power responsible for the substations.

Actions (Charlie): See whether Dobby’s has funds or will donate materials for this type of community event.

Actions (Tasca): Explore getting kids from Leith Walk and Abbeyhill involved in both events, planting and also painting/decorating the substations.

Actions (Chris) During meeting with Council, find out from them what is required for both events, in terms of safety, materials, what we are allowed to do and how they can help us.

Action (?) Determine who is leading the events and when/whether planning meetings should be held.

ACTIONS FOR CONTINUED CLEAN-UPS

It was agreed that we should continue to have regular clean-ups and to join if possible with FoHCA's cleanup efforts, which (we think) are held on first Sundays of the month? Also discussed getting children from local schools involved.

Action (Tasca): Contact FoHCA about joining for clean-ups and get the dates sorted. Contact Leith Walk about getting students (Eco Club?) involved. Publicize clean-up dates on the website.

Action (Chris): Mention clean-up dates in email newsletter.

ACTIONS FOR FIREWORKS EVENT

This event is still in the speculative stage. We discussed that it might be nice to have a community event on a night when people are doing fireworks anyway and might otherwise avoid the park, feeling it was unsafe.

Actions (Julienne?): Ask Council about the feasibility of a fireworks event. Speak with a contact who does professional fireworks shows.

5. Report from Esperanza (Edinburgh and Lothian Greenspace Trust)

ELGT's draft report on the community consultation was circulated prior to the meeting. It was agreed that a useful addition to the report might be an executive summary at the beginning, as many people are unlikely to read the entire document. Michael Davidson volunteered to review the document and subsequently discuss this with Esperanza.

Action (Michael): Draft comments on the consultation report and send to the group for approval/suggestions, before forwarding comments to the ELGT.

6. Eventertania

It was discussed that we should notify the membership as to why this event did not take place.

Action (Tasca, Chris): Mention the reasons for the event cancellation on the website and in the email newsletter.

7. Miscellaneous Actions

Tasca: Collected a new phone contacts list and will send it around to the Committee. Will also contact Kate Tomlinson for a status update on the dog issue and to discuss dog grids, what to put on the notice board about dogs, and to ask whether Kate might volunteer to be a liason on this issue.

Julienne: Will contact Leith Neighborhood Partnership about the long-promised improvements to the football pitch.

(?) Contact pastor of Abbeyhill Baptist about future meetings there, and to discuss how their summer event in the park went.

Michael: Will clean up the police box, as it is currently graffitied again.

8. Miscellaneous Announcements

Tasca's husband may take a sabbatical to the States in the spring, leaving her Secretary post temporarily vacant. They will know within a week or two whether or not this is happening.