



Friends of Corstorphine Hill

NEWSLETTER No. 32

May 2008

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Friends in Good Shape to Continue Hill Improvements

At the AGM the Chairman summarised the activities of the past year and indicated some of the likely events in the coming year.

Undoubtedly the most contentious issue is concerned with the effects the Zoo master plan could have on the area. As you will be aware the Council rejected the plan to change the status of land currently designated greenbelt to build houses inside the Zoo along the west perimeter.

The latest development is that there will be a local public enquiry to consider all objections to the City of Edinburgh Local Plan. The enquiry is expected to start in September 2008. Mr Richard Bowden B.Sc MPhil MRTPI and Mr Dan Jackman BA (Hons) MRTPI have been appointed as Inquiry Reporters.

The Friends have been in discussion with other organisations on this matter. The situation with regard to the enquiry, is that in the Corstorphine Hill part of the Enquiry, the assumption is that the Zoo will object to the Council Planning Committee's decision to delete the Zoo's housing proposal from the Local Plan. So the Council will be defending that decision and the Friends and other local bodies will be supporting the Council and, in effect, objecting to the Zoo's objection. The Friends have had two meetings with local Councillors and other local organisations - the Community Councils of Corstorphine, Drum Brae and Murrayfield and the Corstorphine Trust. We are planning to co-operate in producing written and oral evidence at the Public Enquiry setting out reasons for opposing the Zoo's proposals, while supporting better ways of funding and developing the Zoo.

Obviously there is a wide range of individual views on these issues, which people are completely free to express but the majority consensus in the five bodies is strongly against the Zoo's housing proposals along Kaimes Road and its proposals to take into the Zoo part of the open ground of the Hill Park near Corstorphine Road.

The next step is the official meeting on 15th May at 4.30 in the City Chambers when the Enquiry Reporters will explain the procedures for the Enquiry and answer questions about it. There will be no discussion about the merits of the various arguments. The Friends and the other four local bodies will take part in this meeting. After it, we will co-operate in composing our written and oral evidence to the Enquiry in September.

The accounts were approved and the meeting proceeded to the election of members. A number of the committee stood down having served three years but with the exception of Alan White, who because of other commitments retired, the others being willing to stand again were duly re-elected. We still expect to see Alan up at the garden. Roo who had been co-opted onto the committee was duly elected and Ian McGeachy was also elected onto the committee.

The team is now:-

Eddie Price	Chairman	Donald Gorrie	Secretary
Fred Davies	Treasurer	Martin Craven	Membership Secretary
Alister Hayes	Ian McGeachy		Les Hutcheon
Rohini Kharbanda	Eddie MacLennan		Cecilia McPherson
Gordon Swann			

A strong enthusiast team ready to pursue the objectives of the Friends.

Ranger's Report

Following the business of the AGM, Eddie introduced the ranger, David Kyles. David explained that since the first of April he had officially taken over from his predecessor and was responsible for Corstorphine Hill, the river Almond walkway (Cammo to Cramond) and Edinburgh's foreshore and coastal areas. David went on to update us on numerous activities, demonstrating his grasp of the current activities on the Hill in particular.

- Safety felling and the felling of Dutch elm diseased trees again took place late last year.
- Orientation panels and threshold signs now in place. There are still issues with the need for more space/points to put up notices and display information and every attempt is being made to remedy the problem.
- Picnic benches are in place; the Rangers are aware of concerns over the siting of 2 benches in particular and will look to address this in the coming weeks.
- Six seats are currently in storage and their location will be decided in consultation with the Friends.
- Some 30 bird boxes, 2 kestrel boxes and 12 bat boxes are available. The positioning of the boxes will be carried out in consultation with the appropriate experts.
- The Trees and Woodland Officer is aware that replacement of some of the recently planted trees as part of the woodland plan is required.
- Salmonberry and Invasives – Salmonberry cutbacks were meant to have been treated, but only some of the treatments have been carried out, however, the best method to tackle the problem is being investigated. Mapping of all Invasives will be carried out over the next 6-8 weeks.
- Path maintenance is required and budgeted. There is a need to scrape certain paths back, install more cross drains/culverts and unblock drainage ditches especially on the eastern side of the Hill.
- Funds should be available to replace a few Parkland Trees, alternatively the Council Biodiversity fund may be able to support this project.
- Clermiston Road fence, some sections have been removed and more require removal due to their unsightly dilapidated state. More planting up of the hedge with perhaps some sort of temporary fence/barrier to stop trampling of hedge and allow it to establish.
- On the Education front the Ranger Service has delivered outdoor learning programmes to local Primary Schools and has organised guided walks including badger walks.

As you can see David is being kept very busy.

Tower Open Dates

As usual the Friends will be opening the Tower on alternate Sunday afternoons from May till September to enable the splendid views from the top to be enjoyed.

The tower will be open from 2.00 pm till 4.00 pm on the following Sundays

11 May
25 May
8 June
22 June
6 July
20 July
3 August
17 August
31 August
14 September
21 September

Gordon Swann

In the Garden

Now that growth is well under way the garden is looking quite mature. The plan is essentially to continue to develop areas already started and to consolidate with some relocation of plants as we learn where the plants best suit their conditions. As always the regular team are delighted to have help, no matter for how short a time, to keep the garden looking smart. It provides a great sense of satisfaction.

The Corstorphine Sycamores are looking splendid at the moment.

Newsletter Deliverers

Thanks to all the newsletter deliverers and especially the response to my appeal for help in the Craigcrook area.

Martin

Summer Guided Walks Programme

The first **Bird Walk** lead by **Keith Donnelly** has already successfully taken place.

Here is the rest of the summer programme.

Saturday 14th June

Wildflower walk and introduction to the Plantlife Common Plants Survey Project by **Su Cooper** of Plantlife.

Meet in the **Walled Garden at 2pm** for a briefing on the Plant Survey, then a walk at about 3pm.

Sunday 27th July

Butterflies, Bees, and other beasties on Corstorphine Hill by **Gordon Swann**.

Meet at the **Walled Garden at 2pm**.

We should have nets etc. to catch some beasties so bring the kids to the hunt !

Sunday in August to be confirmed.

David Kyles the ranger for the Hill will lead a walk to look at the interesting and varied **Trees on Corstorphine Hill**.

Probably a Sunday afternoon at 2pm starting at the Walled Garden.

Sunday 21st September

The ever popular **Fungus Foray** led as last year by **David Adamson**.

Start at the **Kaimes Road car park at 2pm**.

Check at our stall at the Corstorphine fair, or keep an eye on notice boards and the web site for an update on the August walk.

Gordon Swann

FRIENDS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Many of you have already renewed your membership. For those who have not yet done so this year may we remind you of the importance to do so and keep our records up to date, therefore, when renewing please fill in the form below even if you have previously supplied the information and return the form along with your subscription to Eddie Price 25 Corstorphine Hill Avenue, Fred Davies 5 Saughtonhall Place, Martin Craven 42 Clermiston Road, or indeed through any member of the committee or your newsletter deliverer if you see them.

First name.....Surname.....(please print)

Address.....Postcode.....

E-mail (if applicable).....Tel. No.....

The fee is **£ 1.00 per member per year.** Donations are also welcome!

Corstorphine Fair

The Fair is on Saturday 7th June from 11.00 am till 4.00 pm. Make sure you visit the Friends' stall where you can learn what is keeping us busy and buy your copy of **The History of the Hill.**

Copies can be obtained from Fred Davies, 5 Saughtonhall Place Edinburgh EH12 5RH, Tel. 0131 337 9232, or ordered through any member of the committee. The cost is £ 5.00 each plus £1.50 postage and packaging (UK) £2.80 (overseas).

Why not get your copy at the fair and save on the postage. You could buy several copies in advance of Christmas and give them to friends who grew up in Corstorphine and who have since moved away.

Reading the book stirred memories in one Friend who wrote.

*"I played as a boy from the age of eight (1948) in "the woods", as one could in those days, and walked in them ever since. Age 15 I got interested in map-reading and maps in the school cadets (the only bit I **did** like!) I spent some of that summer holiday mapping in the woods. I still have the maps. They are more a souvenir value than anything else. They show enthusiasm rather than technique, style or erudition!"*

Friends of Corstorphine Hill

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