

FoRP ANNUAL REPORT (FOR the year 2025-26), by Pete Gregson (acting chair) as presented at the AGM on Wed 21st October 2026 at Murrayfield Church Hall

- The sad loss of our Chairman Jim McDonaugh, in April of this year was tragic; he was chairing FoRP meetings right up to the end, which when it came, was frighteningly quick. His business skills made a huge difference to FoRP and helped us find a contractor who managed to work to our incredibly tight budget to get the toilet conversion to the café renovation completed. I honestly don't think we'd have managed to have got the job done without Jim, because he found a contractor to do the job, with all sorts of discounts (the contractor knocked £5,000 off the price in return for getting a plaque with his business name on the outside wall).
In addition, Jim oversaw the recruitment of a business to run the café and was inspired enough to find the one running another café in another park, namely the Dower House in St Margarets Park, Corstorphine, run by Euan and Sayana of DH Coffee Ltd. Although they had to give up the Dower House lease a few months ago, they are happily well-ensconced in our park.
But I take my hat off to Jim for negotiating the lease and bringing DH Coffee on board. Jim's background was in management consultancy, and it showed! I shall always remember his catchphrase "Is that your best price? Can you give me a better price?". This is business acumen that few of us could match. Several of us went to his funeral with flowers. I, Pete Gregson agreed to take the chair until the AGM.
- During the past year, the FoRP's Board of Trustees and its Management Committee ran a full schedule of meetings and all meetings were held online. I thank the Committee for its efforts. Two Committee members departed - Struan and Frank and we welcomed new members Dan Reid, Elaine Emerson and Sandy Finlayson to our fold
- Over the year we continued to explore the various suggestions that remained from the 2023 Survey alongside our key stakeholder: Edinburgh Council.
- One of the projects identified in the Consultation Survey, the public shelter near the café was deemed to be no longer necessary as there always seems to be seating space in the café even on the most inclement days. Also, the Council were unwilling to part-fund a facility which would be there to support a commercial enterprise
- We decided to roll three of the other projects in the Survey together under the loose title of a "fitness improvement scheme". We costed up the amenities for young people, or "Teen Area"; "an Outdoor Gym" with fitness equipment and a "Walking Track" [around the south-east wing of the park] and took it to the SRU in January as they were looking for community projects to support. Sadly, we heard in June that our bid for cash was unsuccessful.
- We are not giving up though; our goal is to raise the funds needed through [a] local crowdfunding, [b] our own resources (we'll put £15,000 in from our café income) and [c] the City of Edinburgh Tourist Visitor Levy (TVL) scheme. We will also approach trusts that disburse grants.
- For the "Walking Track", we settled on Ultitrec as the best option of surfacing for the new track after a visit to the Paths for All standing exhibition at Scotland's Rural College at Oatridge, near Broxburn in West Lothian. Here you can walk along different surfaces to help make a choice of what would be best for your area.
- In late August, the Murrayfield Community Council agreed to support the above plans for the park; this will be helpful when we come to seek funds from the TVL
- We have researched prices for the improvements, including installation and VAT; we selected equipment that the Council recommends and installs all over the city: the outdoor gym would cost £27,395; the teen area £25,198 and the path £15,960 (estimated) - to make a grand total of £68,553.
- We have been running a consultation with park users and other organisations primarily affected by the proposed park fitness equipment for their views on the project – there was some disquiet over the Council's preference on the locations for the new equipment, (which were at odds with our own). We held exhibitions in the retirement flats at Roseburn Court, Roseburn House and Murrayfield View to explain more about our proposed improvements- you can see the display here as well- please let us know what you think

- The provision of a new drinking water fountain/refilling station in the park, by the log bench- this project has been “put on the back burner” due to the high cost involved (c. £20,000); we had also hoped that Scottish Water might install the kind of fountain seen in Saughton park for around £5,000, but it seems that the water pipes in our park do not belong to Scottish Water, but to Edinburgh Council- so, it seems we are ineligible for support in that direction
- The Taskforce: our thanks go to Barbara Knowles, our volunteer Taskforce leader, ably assisted by Ann Anderson, Kim Rowse, Harriet Devlin and Jane Geddes for their work in maintaining the Park, especially during the summer months. This includes their work on maintaining our baby trees (with water, in particular- and mulching at their bases), trimming and replacing bits of the beech hedge around the playpark, maintaining the planter and tubs in the middle of the park with year-round flowering interest, for maintain the “reflection garden” by the old toddlers play park and for planting bulbs. Additional volunteers would be most welcome.
- The project of planting of tubs with herbs for communal use is progressing; the tubs have been purchased; our plan is to get the Roseburn Primary school pupils involved in planting them out
- Plant Recycling Scheme: following observations whereby a resident had stuck a temporary notice on the park railings indicating people could take the plants left below the notice to a good home, we purchased a more permanent sign which has now been sited near the log bench; people have both started leaving and taking plants for their homes and gardens
- The Armoury has been tidied up; the installation of hooks around the walls means both the old and the new garden tools now have a home
- We received a “wish list” from the children at Roseburn Primary School; one of the items they proposed was a “wee free library”. We were able to source one of these from Amazon for just £100 and it has now been constructed and is in place on the outside café wall; it is proving popular with book-lovers in the park.
- A resident suggested it would be nice to identify the various sorts of tree in the park, so we are in the process of preparing signage and are calling upon the Botanics for advice on how best to install these mini-signs
- The log bench continues to prove a valuable rest stop and focal point – it absorbs vast amount of preservative every few months with regular gluing back on of bits of bark that have fallen off. Its interior is largely infested with turkey-tail fungus which we fight an endless battle with, but we hope to get a few more years out of it yet. We discovered that the apple tree beside the log bench bore tasty desert apples (possibly “Laxton’s Superb”)
- A memorial bench was donated to the park after the Beechwood Bowling Club in Roseburn Street closed; the owners, Morag Hill and Vina Ingram, gave the bench, which was in her husband John Ingram’s name. The Council park rangers have now sited it, at the family’s request, on the east side of the park, with a view of the Pentlands, as favoured by John when he was alive.
- The Rosebean café has continued its role as a key part of the park fabric. Our thanks go to the management and staff of DH Coffee Ltd. This year we worked together with them to get the door latch fixed and the interior and the exterior of the building re-painted
- ForP Membership has risen by 5 members over the year and now stands at 319 and our financial position remains strong. The Management Committee is at full strength, but we always welcome help from any quarter to strengthen areas of expertise.
- Our new social media officer, Elaine Emerson, has made some great postings on our Facebook and Instagram pages, with a concomitant increase in traffic
- We also thank the staff and children at Roseburn Primary school for helping get 5,000 bulbs into the ground (daffodils and crocuses) around the park
- We have 4,000 more bulbs to get in the ground. Most are to replace the daffodils planted some years ago at the Roseburn Place entrance (that’s the eastern entrance, the one near the new play park). The originals have disappeared, so volunteers are needed to plant the replacements. We meet at the eastern park entrance on Sunday 25th October at 1:30pm, weather permitting. If you wish to volunteer, please let our Secretary, Barbara, know soonest