

Friends of Beechwood Park (FoBP) (a sub-committee of Torbrex Community Council): **action report of meeting of 22nd July, 2008.**

(IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE : date of *next* meeting is now Thursday 21st August, 2008 at 7.30pm; and will this time again be in the Mayfield Centre.)

Present. Murray Dickie; Margaret Duff; Hugh Gillies; Wilson Jamieson; Hirek Kwiatkowski (Convener); Mary Kwiatkowski; Valerie Milligan; Bill Sim.

Apologies received. Katherine Kirsop; Ian Robertson; Evelyn Sim.

1. Report of meeting held on 21st May 2008 was accepted as an accurate record.
2. Matters arising from Report of 15th April.
 - a. **Links/communications with key personnel/agencies.**

Hirek Kwiatkowski reported on what had been a very positive and successful visit to the new Stirling High School on 15th July – which had been hosted by Trudi Togneri, who leads the school's Eco Club. The visit had included a very informative presentation by Trudi on the work of the Eco Club and other related ecological issues in the school, as well as important information for *FoBP* members on the constraints/regulations within which we will have to work with the school; then there was a chance to see round the very impressive facilities of the school. There was also a lengthy and very fruitful discussion, during which a number of ways of establishing an effective partnership between *FoBP* and the school had been explored, including, in the longer term: the possibility of involving school pupils in the hoped-for plan to provide a drafts/chess set in the Park; and the possibility of a small “market garden enterprise”. In the more immediate future, once the new session starts, it is hoped that two activities can be taken forward :

joint involvement of members of *FoBP* in a programme of “litter picks” with school pupils over the coming session;
an opportunity for members of *FoBP* to meet with some pupils of the school from the Eco Club/the Pupil Council – as appropriate – to elicit the views of pupils regarding Beechwood Park and its relationship to the school and pupils.

Hirek indicated that he had, on the evening of 15th July, e-mailed the very sincere thanks and appreciation of those who had enjoyed this first visit to the school: to Trudi herself; and he had copied the e-mail to the Headteacher, who had been so welcoming of the idea of a constructive link with *FoBP*.

Mary Kwiatkowski, with Murray Dickie, gave a summary of issues raised at a presentation to the Area Community Planning Forum on 29th May on the emerging “Open Spaces” strategy of Stirling Council. Key points of interest to FoBP were:

- this proposed and emerging strategy derives from a Scottish Government initiative which is intended to cover a very wide range and interpretation of “open spaces” (e.g. parks, allotments, cemeteries)

- the various agencies/departments which have different responsibilities for Beechwood Park were indicated (and *FoBP* have experience of communication difficulties between these)
- the Stirling Council strategy is still at a very early stage of development, and is using the Dundee City model as an exemplar of good practice
- the Council is now undertaking a comprehensive audit of its range of open spaces
- there appears to be a genuine wish by the Council to involve a range of agencies/groups/bodies in the formulation of this strategy – and therefore there would seem to be a role for *FoBP* in the consultation process that is currently underway to shape and articulate a strategy in relation to open spaces in the Council’s bailiwick.

Wilson Jamieson then reported on a very recent meeting attended by himself and Hirek with Les Goodfellow (Head of Roads, Transport and Streetscape) and Colin McNicol (current Acting Head of Streetscape) regarding the “Open Spaces” initiative and other strategic matters relating to Beechwood Park. Again, key points of interest** to *FoBP* were:

- Although part of the purpose of this meeting had been to inform Les and Colin about the role and work of our relatively new “*Friends*” group, they had indeed heard of *FoBP* and were genuinely interested in dialogue with us; and we had a very positive meeting for nearly one and a half hours
- Les gave a comprehensive and very informative explanation of the Scottish Government’s policies** and other key influences on the emerging Stirling Council strategy.
- There is a growing awareness of the need to have more cohesive strategic management of open spaces.
- As a precursor to appropriate rationalisation and a more effective management plan of open spaces, the Council is currently engaged in the process of gathering comprehensive and accurate information and views through audit and consultation procedures.
- Once again, it was stressed at this meeting that dialogue with groups such as *FoBP* is seen as valuable: in terms of the current consultation on open spaces, and likely future developments. (Hence, our own attempt to prepare a strategic “vision” of and plan for Beechwood Park is seen as a potentially helpful contribution to thinking.)
- A Draft Strategy has now been drawn up, and an 18 months + timescale is envisaged before final decision and implementation.
- It became clear in the meeting that the Play Services proposals and Consultation and outcome were not known to Les and Colin in any detail; so Wilson and Hirek provided some information to them.

(NB While it has been necessary to provide a very brief summary of this meeting here, Wilson has prepared a very comprehensive one-page outline of the main points, and also references to key policy documents. Anyone who wishes a copy of this should contact Wilson or Hirek.)**

- b. **Recruitment to FoBP**: Wilson indicated that he had circulated *FoBP* information/recruitment leaflets more widely, but Hugh Gilles indicated that, so far, there had been only one leaflet returned for membership. After some discussion, it was agreed that Murray's suggestion about exploring the possibility of some form of "corporate" membership for pupils of local schools and also possibly the scouts should be discussed further at the next meeting.
ACTION: Hirek to agenda issue of "corporate" membership to appropriate group for next meeting's agenda.
- c. **Response from Children's Services to Consultation**. Murray Dickie indicated that he had just received an e-mail from Colin Mackay of Children's Services which informed him that Children's Services were now in the process of reviewing their original proposals in light of the Consultation findings; and were also consulting with a range of Council Services in relation to a number of issues raised in the Consultation, and also the "planting" proposals of the Breathing Spaces lottery grant. Following all of this, revised proposals will be produced after this process.
- d. **Damage to trees in Park**. Hirek reported that in communications with Katherine Kirsop (community police) it had been established by relevant Council officials that the paint damage could be washed off; and therefore the Council did not intend to press a formal complaint. It was agreed that this would be an acceptable outcome.
ACTION. Hirek to check if paint has been removed from the damaged trees.
3. Hirek reported that the Community Council had been successfully awarded a "Breathing Spaces" Lottery grant of £10K- in which *FoBP* had been identified along with Children's Services - and which related to environmental enhancements for the play refurbishment proposals. In view of recent meetings and contacts established with Streetscape and Les Goodfellow, it was agreed that there should be some appropriate "oversight" by e.g. a small working group to plan and monitor how the grant should be spent in order to balance the overall ecological development of the Park with the plans for the play developments.
ACTION. Hirek to make appropriate contacts to establish an appropriate group.
4. here was continuing discussion of the draft "brainstorm" document issued at the previous meeting to think through a strategic overview for support to developments in the Park over the next few years. A number of issues were raised, including : the need for an additional area regarding "access" issues in the Park; and also a clear sense as to what initial priorities are being identified for attention (particularly in relation to where the Finding Group might focus funding activities first).
ACTION. **All members of FoBP are again asked to submit any further ideas to Hirek by Monday 11th August**; after which, Hirek to prepare a 3rd/final draft to be circulated with the final agenda for our scheduled August 21st meeting.
5. Under **AOB**, the following points were raised:-
Murray Dickie gave a brief report from the Community Council on proposed developments to:
deal with the deterioration of the hedges and boundary wall in Torbrex Lane near to the Park;

support further development and enhancement of the Scout Centre – including acquisition of more ground from the Park and use of eco-materials in phase 2 of development of the Centre.

In view of the fact that there has been no further communication or perceived action from the Council in relation to the requests from FoBP regarding additional litter and dog bins, it was agreed that the earlier contacts should be followed up.

ACTION. *Wilson to follow up on his earlier communication to Jim Fisher.*

Provisional agenda for meeting of 21st August :

*Strategic issues: further discussion of “brainstorm” exercise to elicit and prioritise issues to support Park development. **It is hoped that the 3rd draft of our document can be finalised; and confirmed as the first version of our strategic view, and initial “operational” priorities***

Recruitment to FoBP : further discussion regarding proposal to initiate “corporate” membership with schools/scouts

Possible “opening” event for re-furbishments in Beechwood Park : role of FoBP.

Meeting dates for rest of 2008 :

**Tues. 21st Oct.
Thurs. 20th Nov.**