

**Friends of Linn Park  
AGM Annual Report  
02.10.19**

<b>Signed By</b>	(two of three)
<b>Chair</b>	
<b>Treasurer</b>	
<b>Secretary</b>	

### **Set-Up and Management**

The current group was formally constituted on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017. The group's first AGM was held on 12.09.18.

Adult Membership = **91** Junior Membership = **186** (includes project participants)

The key aim of the group is to protect, improve and promote the green space of Linn Park Local Nature Reserve (LNR). We are very lucky to retain a wide range of interests and skills within the membership. This has enabled us to target and successfully deliver a diverse range of projects/activities throughout the year.

We hold monthly meetings and manage an active events and volunteering schedule throughout the year. We continue to receive support at these meetings and in much of our volunteer work by Gary Linstead, Countryside Ranger and by Alison Grieg, Senior Countryside Ranger. The Committee wishes to formally acknowledge the strength of the working relationship that exists and thank these staff for their expertise in supporting our group's work.

Membership is open to all and costs a one-off payment of £1. Junior membership costs nothing and is open to all under 14. Members receive a FoLP button badge

We maintain a website, FriendsOfLinnPark.com, an active Facebook Page (Love Linn Park) and Twitter Account (@lovelinnpark). We have also developed an Action Plan and progress against the different elements of that are summarised as an addendum to this report.

### **Events**

We have held over 24 volunteer days and events in the park. These have included path improvement works, wild-flower planting, tree planting, litter picking, wildlife days, a 'gala day' and walking events. Most days included some fundraising and volunteers took time to explain to park users the work carried out by FoLP. We have had between 8 and 20 volunteers turning out to help plan and volunteer at the events, and we have had between 10 to 500+ attendees.

The 'Celebration of Linn Park' Event was a real success with over 500 people coming to the park to enjoy a lovely sunny day with lots of fun activities. It celebrated all the activities and history of the park and we hope to hold a similar event each year.

We post regularly on social media about our events and also encourage some of our regular park users to post their pictures throughout the year. Special thanks in this regard must go to Aileen Milne and George Wilson for their regular photographic and video footage.

A list of the events over the last 12 months is included at the end of this report.

## **Awards and Nominations**

We were fortunate to be finalists in two categories for the Streets Ahead 'Evening Times' awards. The Boxing Clever Project was finalist in the Environmental Category and the Wildlife Trail was finalist in the Community Award.

We also have been nominated in the Community Initiative Award Category for the Nature of Scotland Awards. Shortlisted nominees will be announced at an event in the Scottish Parliament on 30 October.

Finally, one of Junior members, Michael Sinclair, received an East Renfrewshire Council Convenor's Award for Outstanding Achievement (Community) for his volunteering work in Linn Park.

## **Funding**

Our funding comes from a combination of one-off membership fees; donations, funds raised from community events and grants. Full details of income associated with fundraising activities are presented in our Treasurer's Report.

We would like to acknowledge the support of everyone who contributes to the funding of FoLP; without financial support we would not be able to carry out many of the activities which we believe add value to the local community. Notable donations include £200 from Heathdene Nursery PTA and £100 from Eastwood Rotary Club.

We would like to acknowledge the receipt of grants from the following organisations which have enabled us to deliver some of the larger scale initiatives over the last 12 months:

- Paths for All (Wildlife Trail)
- Action Earth (Wildflower cultivation)
- RSPB (Boxing Clever – Bird and Bat Box initiative)
- Glasgow City Council Local Area Partnership Award (Celebration of Linn Park Public Event)
- Chestnut Support Fund (Tools and Equipment)

## **Projects**

We have four projects currently running on an ongoing basis. More details about some of these are included at the end of the report. Information about them can also be found on our website.

Started in March 2018 the **Nest Box/Bat Box Project** will run on a yearly basis going forward. Whilst we will consider the addition of some further nest boxes within the park, these will be restricted to specific target bird species and limited in number.

The **Butterfly Project** currently has two transects and a group of 6 volunteers who monitor them. Data is submitted to the Butterfly Conservation Trust. Other volunteers are welcome to join.

We intend the **Wildlife Trail Project** to continue to grow and evolve with recruitment of new schools and volunteers to assist with developmental work. Anyone keen to participate should contact us.

An opportunity has been identified to develop a project around the existing **Cathcart Castle** Remains. This is a new project in this year.

### **Aspirations**

**100 Year Celebration Event** – 2021 will represent 100 years since Linn Park opened as a public park. The committee has agreed that we should look to formally mark this milestone and future meetings will seek to develop exactly how this occasion can best be celebrated.

**White Cart Walkway Improvements** – A meeting has been held with members of FoLP, the Countryside Ranger and a representative from Paths for All to help prioritise areas for improvement and better understand the potential financial and manpower commitment required to address certain issues. The newly formed 'Tuesday Club' are already making a significant impact on addressing some of the 'quick wins' that should deliver immediate benefits for park users.

**New Park Maps** – As part of the funding provided under the RSPB 'Boxing Clever' initiative, we have funding set aside for the production of 3 large scale maps to replace those 'out of date' versions that are currently in the park noticeboards. We are awaiting a response from Glasgow City Council on their timescale for producing these.

**New Action Plan** – A separate summary has been provided showing progress against the original elements of our first Action Plan produced when the current FoLP was constituted.

It is our intention to devote time during our November meeting to agree a new Action Plan which will take effect from January 2020.

### **External Engagements**

FoLP members have been active in the local community, attending a range of events/meetings in support of other 'Friends of' Groups and similar organisations. We are grateful for the opportunity share our experiences with these groups and value the ideas and suggestions that we are able to bring back and implement in Linn Park. Some of the activities we've been involved in over the last 12 months are listed below:

- Presentations to the Friends of Kings Park and Friends of Alexandra Park
- Guest speakers at the AGM for Friends of Glasgow's Local Nature Reserves; and
- Representation at Glasgow City Council's Participatory Budgeting Group where we are represented on the Steering Group;
- Attendance at a Street Play Event at Elrig Street; and
- Attendance at the Friends of Glasgow Parks Forum

### **Partnership Working**

I'm particularly pleased to report that collaboration with different park user groups such as W.I.L.D., the Equestrian Centre and Glasgow and Paisley Ramblers continues to grow and provide benefits for all parties.

We had many groups and organisations represented at the Celebration Event including Scotland; The BIG Picture, The Scottish Wildlife Trust, Glasgow Dog Training Club, Glasgow Life, Fit for It and W.I.L.D.

We have undertaken projects including many younger volunteers from the following schools and groups; Miller Primary School, Netherlee Primary School, Merrylee Primary School, Kings Park Secondary, St Fillans Primary, Heathdene Nursery, 91<sup>st</sup> Glasgow (Netherlee) Scout Group.

### **Issues in the Park**

At our monthly meetings we discuss issues brought to our attention by both FoLP members and members of the public. The Love Linn Park Facebook Page is a popular medium for individuals to raise concerns as is direct contact with individuals during volunteering events.

The resolution of complex issues can be time-consuming and involve a number of organisations outwith FoLP. In contrast, there are some relatively simple issues that can be addressed by FoLP volunteers.

The following issues have been brought to the attention of FoLP, and are in the process of being addressed by us or brought to the attention of the relevant parties:

- Alcohol consumption in the park;
- Excessive speed by vehicles entering the park;
- Reported sightings of mink;
- Drainage issues in certain areas;
- The presence of invasive plant species (especially Himalayan balsam);
- Damage to the meadow area with holes appearing in desire lines; and
- Dog Fouling and uncontrolled dogs

On a more positive note, we are pleased to report success with the following issues:

- A generally quick response from Glasgow City Council arborists to deal with reports of fallen trees;
- Provision of new litter bins at an increased number of locations throughout the park;
- Excellent support from the Ranger Service to assist FoLP with the planning and delivery of path improvement works in key areas
- A quick response to requests for litter uplift and major mud removal by Glasgow City Council

## **Fundraising**

It is not an overstatement to say that without the ongoing support of the public and our active volunteers it would be very difficult to sustain the activities detailed in this report. All support is hugely valued, irrespective of the scale and type; indeed, not all contributions are monetary. Examples of this include:

- Home baking and other food items for event days; and
- Cards made from photographs taken by one of our members which are offered for sale at events

Thank you to everyone who has been able to help in any way to help the future of Linn Park Local Nature Reserve.

## **Summary**

Our 2018 Chairperson's report praised the contribution of volunteers and the general public for their efforts in supporting the work of FoLP and contributing to the many successes since the current FoLP Group was formed.

It is testament to those two groups again, that in the last 12 months we've not only sustained a high level of quality activity across a wide range of different areas, but we've expanded our work into a number of new areas.

It would be wrong not to acknowledge that there remain areas for improvement; in particular, we recognise that a number of infrastructure improvements (particularly relating to fences, drainage and paths) require attention. As a volunteer body we are reliant on both the critical mass provided by the volunteer base to undertake many of the larger 'projects'. Whilst we acknowledge the financial pressures facing Glasgow City Council, we will do our best to work in collaboration with Council Officers and the relevant funding bodies to ensure that essential improvement works are identified and actioned in a timely manner either by the Council themselves, or in collaboration with FoLP.

Once again, it has been highly rewarding to reflect on the past year and the work and effort from so many volunteers. We remain fortunate as a group to have a wide range of interests and abilities reflected in our membership.

A great big thank you to you all in helping the Friends of Linn Park to flourish.

## List of Events from Aug 31<sup>st</sup> 2018 to Aug 31<sup>st</sup> 2019

### **15.09.18 – Path Improvement Day**

Improving the White Cart Walkway by filling in a rather large hole! Led by the Countryside Ranger and with the Glasgow Ramblers.

### **16.09.18 – Path Improvement Day**

Putting up another 22 nest boxes in Linn Park. These are all sponsored boxes by our lovely members. We will report on how many are used in the nesting season.

### **29.09.18 – Drainage Works**

Hoping to eradicate the large pond which forms on the path from the Seil Drive entrance. Some new volunteers and some excellent drainage formed.

### **27.10.18 – Litter Pick**

Friends of Linn Park supported the Equestrian Centre in undertaking a litter pick of the area surrounding the stables in the Park.

### **17.11.18 – Old Wildlife Trail Walk**

An enjoyable walk in the park trying to find the route from the old guide book.

### **25.11.18 – Path Improvement**

A day to work on the steps at Netherton Brae. A great effort but a bit more needed to complete the flight.

### **09.12.18 – Path Improvement**

A day to complete the steps at Netherton Brae. An epic 37 steps completed by the end of the day, some new and some repaired!

### **20.01.19 – Magnificent Eleven Walk**

Starting and finishing in Linn Park, this fantastic 11 mile circular walk was led by Gary Linstead, Glasgow Countryside Ranger and included FoLP members, Glasgow and Paisley Ramblers and assorted 'guests'.

### **06.02.19 – Mary Queen of Scots, Linn Park**

A fantastic display of the documents and history that links Mary Queen of Scots with Linn Park. This was displayed in the library at the Couper Institute.

### **16.02.19 – Path Improvements**

In preparation for the re-launch of our Wildlife Trail, volunteers and our ever-present Countryside Ranger replaced two old wooden bridges on the Trail.

### **23.02.19 – Children's Nestbox/Batbox Building Event**

On a cold but clear day we welcomed over 20 children who came along to assemble nestboxes and batboxes ready for putting up in early March.

### **02.03.19 – Nestbox Siting**

A further 20 new nestboxes were put up in the park bringing our total to 60 since the first ones put up by FoLP in March 2018.

### **17.03.19 – Tree Planting**

Volunteers supported by the Countryside Ranger planted over 400 new trees at the edge of the meadow area up from the White Bridge.

### **23.03.19 – Re-Launch of the Wildlife Trail**

Following months of work involving pupils from Kings Park Secondary, St Fillan's, Netherlee and Merrylee Primary, the Countryside Ranger and FoLP volunteers over 150 children plus around the same number of adults attended the official re-launch of the trail.

### **29.04.19 : 04.05.19 – Spring Clean Week**

A series of litter picks took place across the park during the week with fabulous support provided by Kings Park Secondary and the 91<sup>st</sup> Glasgow Cub Scouts.

### **11.05.19 – Celebration of Linn Park**

Hosted in the area adjacent to the mansion house this event was blessed with some fabulous spring sunshine which allowed the crowds to enjoy a host of activities including dog shows, children's games, wildlife demonstrations, pony rides and much more!

### **08.06.19 – Wildflower Planting**

A total of 118 native wildflowers (mainly wood avens) were planted by FoLP volunteers after removing rhododendron regrowth.

### **18.06.19 – Evening Times Streets Ahead Awards**

Shortlisted in the 'Best Community Initiative' category (for the Wildlife Trail) and 'Glasgow City Council Environmental Award category (for the Birdbox/batbox programme) members of FoLP attended this event in the City Chambers. Sadly, we did not lift either award but felt proud that our work had been recognised in making the shortlist for both categories.

### **23.06.18 – Volunteer Day (Waterfall Viewpoint Re-instatement)**

The original waterfall viewpoint area which had been severely eroded was reinstated with guidance and support from the Local Countryside Ranger.

### **27.07.19 – Wildflower Walk**

Delivered by Val Charlton from Friends of Glasgow's Local Nature Reserves, this walk took place despite poor weather with participants treated to a tour around the original meadow and woodlands adjacent to the river.

### **13.08.19 – Toota Linn Running Event**

Linn Park played host to this running event (part of the Tour of Clydeside programme) for the first time. A total of 120 runners took part, with members of FoLP providing encouragement and post-race refreshments.

### **27.08.19: ongoing – 'Tuesday Group'**

Meeting each Tuesday, this group comprises any individuals who wish to attend. Work carried out focuses on 'housekeeping' tasks centred around maintaining paths such as removal of overgrown vegetation/invasive plants such as Himalayan balsam and mud removal. Anyone is welcome to attend.

### **31.08.19 – Bird Ringing Demonstration**

Run in conjunction with Friends of Glasgow's Local Nature Reserves and supported by members of the Clyde Ringing Group this event saw a total of 19 blue tits, 8 great tits and 2 coal tits caught, ringed and safely released.

### **20.09.19 – Bat Walk**

Event fully booked and attended by 18 members of the public who had the opportunity to use two different types of bat detector and see 3 different bat species.

## **Details of Projects**

A number of projects have been outlined above. Further details of these are presented below.

### **Nest Box and Bat Box Programme**

Started in spring 2018 by one of our young members who gifted 6 nest boxes to Linn Park the initiative has developed via a public sponsorship programme and an external grant award to an extent where there are now 60 nest-boxes and 20 bat-boxes installed in the park.

In Autumn 2018 we were awarded £698 from the RSPB to fund, amongst a number of things, the purchase of materials to make a further 20 nest boxes and 20 bat boxes. A summary of both programmes is given below.

#### *Nestboxes*

At the time of last year's annual report seventeen boxes had been put up in the park. Following a second public sponsorship event held in October 2018 a further 23 boxes which were erected bringing the total to 40. The range of boxes was expanded to include spotted flycatcher, treecreeper and nuthatch. Email contact details were taken for box sponsors to enable updates to be given during the 2019 breeding season.

At the end of February 2019, as part of the RSPB funding, primary school pupils from Miller Primary in Castlemilk assisted with making 10 birdboxes and 5 bat boxes. A separate public event in the park saw a further 20 children participate in box construction. The additional 20 nestboxes were put up in the park with assistance from the Countryside Ranger in early March.

As part of the nest-box monitoring programme for 2019 a team of 10 volunteers were trained and monitored boxes from April – June.

Special endoscope cameras were purchased to enable non-intrusive inspection with the ability to take photographs at different stages of nest development. These pictures were sent to box sponsors and participating children in addition to being posted on social media.

All data collected has now been compiled and submitted to the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) via their DEMON online system.

The final results for the year showed that 39 out of 60 boxes were used for nesting; all but one tit box was used. A total of 109 chicks (mainly blue tits) successfully fledged their nests. Sadly 16 eggs did not hatch and 15 chicks died before fledging. This can happen for a variety of reasons including adverse weather conditions resulting in food shortages at key times, death of one or both parents and 'natural' infertility of eggs. These numbers are perfectly normal and in line with national figures.

The focus in 2020 will be on recruiting and training additional nest box monitors as well as expanding the focus on identifying and recording natural nest sites. Anyone



interested in participating is welcome to contact us via the 'Love Linn Park' Facebook page. All data collected will continue to be submitted to the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO).

### **Bat Boxes**

A total of 20 bat boxes were erected in the park in early June 2019. Locations were selected on advice from Mr Stewart Whittaker (a licensed bat expert) who works with Cassiltoun Housing Association in Castlemilk.

Currently, there is only limited information available on the bats present within the park with only two 'official' surveys taking place during the year, targeting a specific species of bat (Daubentons). This survey has been carried out for years by the Glasgow City Council Ranger for the park, Gary Linstead.

Bat boxes will be checked for roosting bats by a Licensed Bat handler during the coming 12 months. Bat monitoring will be undertaken (i) as part of organised bat walks and (ii) via the annual survey carried out by the Countryside Ranger.

At the time of compiling this report, FoLP had hosted one public bat walk which had been attended by 18 members of the public. A total of three separate bat species were recorded on the evening: *Common Pipistrelle*, *Soprano Pipistrelle* and *Daubentons*.

### **Butterfly Monitoring**

In 2019, we continued with monitoring of the two butterfly transects established in the previous year. A total of 6 volunteers carried out the weekly monitoring from April – September. The results will be lodged with the United Kingdom Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS).

Under the terms of this project it must run for a minimum period of 3 years. Additional volunteers are welcome to contact us to participate in the monitoring programme in 2020.

Butterflies are uniquely placed to act as indicators of the state of the environment, allowing us to assess the impacts of climate change and the progress of government policy initiatives to conserve biodiversity.

### **Wildlife Trail**

Since the 2018 AGM the trail was repaired by volunteers from Friends of Linn Park and pupils from Kings Park Secondary school and St Fillan's Primary school. Children from Merrylee and Netherlee primary schools designed the doors and helped develop the content for the website. All these activities were led or supported by Friends of Linn Park volunteers. The Kings Park pupils helped design a launch event to celebrate all the work which has gone into creating the trail. There was a quest around the trail with

prizes and lots of other fun activities to try. This effort totalled around 174 hours of volunteer time to run workshops, prepare materials, path improvements, event planning etc.

Our launch of the Wildlife Trail in March 2019 saw the largest turnout of the public for any single event staged since the new FoLP was formed. The doors and trail have proved immensely popular and continue to be so. The use of QR codes linked to the FoLP website to provide details of the story behind each door is widely considered to be an innovative use of technology to engage young and old alike.

Since the trail launch, further work has been undertaken with Heathdene Nursery whose PTA kindly donated £200 which helped to fund the purchase of additional materials, including additional QR codes.

It is intended that additional partner organisations will be recruited on an ongoing basis to add further doors to the trail. Work will continue to improve aspects of the trail, including path improvements and maintenance of foliage.

## **Cathcart Castle**

An opportunity has been identified to develop a project around the existing **Cathcart Castle** Remains. This is a new project in this year.

The remains are currently hidden away in a fairly inaccessible spot of the park with no formal path, with trees grown over and in-front of any viewpoint, and with only a small interpretation panel to draw your attention to it.

The project will involve a three-phase developmental programme as follows:

- Phase 1: Preservation of the tower/keep found;
- Phase 2: Opening and formal recognition of the scheduled monument area; and
- Phase 3: Remediation of the curtain wall and opening up the view from and up to the castle

Quotations have been obtained with respect to initial works necessary for Phase 1. These have been submitted to Historic Environment Scotland for consideration. It is essential that these initial works are completed before 30 November 2019.

It is hoped the Castle can form some part of the celebration of the centenary of Linn Park in 2021.