

**Friends of Linn Park
AGM Annual Report
07.10.20**

Signed By	(two of three)
Chair	
Treasurer	
Secretary	

Set-Up and Management

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

Friends of Linn Park (FoLP)

The key aim of the group is to protect, improve and promote the green space of Linn Park Local Nature Reserve (LNR). Our committee and membership base represent a wide range of interests and skills. This has enabled us to target and successfully deliver a diverse range of projects/activities in recent years.

The emergence of COVID-19 in 2020 and the resultant national and local restrictions at different times during the year has impacted the work FoLP has been able to do and also changed the dynamic of wider park use during the year.

Pre-COVID-19 we held monthly meetings and managed an active events and volunteering schedule throughout the year. This year, in particular, our 'normal' weekend Group volunteer days have largely been suspended and replaced by smaller weekly (socially distanced) activities carried out by our 'Tuesday Group'.

Following the suspension of our monthly group meetings due to COVID-19 restrictions we have, like many other organisations, moved onto virtual meetings via the Zoom meeting platform.

We continue to receive support at these meetings and, wherever possible in the current circumstances, in much of our volunteer work by Gary Linstead, Countryside Ranger and by Alison Greig, Senior Countryside Ranger. The Committee, once again, wishes to formally acknowledge the continued 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).

Events

Following from our last AGM we have held several events within the Park. We undertook volunteer days to further the Cathcart Castle Project – Phase 1, Yellow Rattle planting, Wildflower Seed planting, participation in Netherlee Parish Church Christmas tree event, Southx5 Race Event Series, St Fillans Primary School path work

volunteering days, a fun Wildlife Day, TCV joint volunteering days, Pathwork repair work and participation in Netherlee PTA Scarecrow Trail.

Large-scale public volunteering events have not been possible after February 2020, and remain on hold.

Much of the volunteer work throughout the year has been undertaken by the 'Tuesday Group' who comprise various individuals who meet each Tuesday morning (circumstances permitting) to carry out tasks such as path clearing, invasive plant removal and minor repair work. The Group has grown in numbers over the year and post 'before' and 'after' pictures of their work the Love Linn Park Facebook page.

Despite the social distancing measures in place, the Group has managed to meet over 30 times during the last 12 months.

Post-lockdown in June, our Butterfly and Nestbox monitoring teams were able to begin their work. Despite missing a significant proportion of the monitoring season both teams managed to collect valuable data which has been submitted to the Butterfly Conservation Trust and British Trust for Ornithology, respectively.

The Group was successful in obtaining funding from the Area Partnership Fund for a repeat of last year's 'Celebration of Linn Park' Event. Due to the current restrictions on such public events the Group are currently exploring the possibility for an alternative activity that will allow social distancing requirements to be satisfied.

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. Once again, special thanks in this regard must go to Aileen Milne and George Wilson for their regular photographic and video footage.

Awards and Nominations

Our Wildlife Trail which has been hugely popular with the local community since its re-launch and has recently been assessed for a Community Green Flag Award by Keep Scotland Beautiful.

Finally, one of Junior members, Michael Sinclair, continues to receive recognition for his work in establishing and coordinating the nestbox introduction and monitoring programme in the park. Most recently he was the recipient of a national 'Diana Award' in recognition of his environmental conservation work. He also received the Young Persons Award for Wildlife Recording at the 2019 National Biodiversity Network Awards.

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 etc. 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 in the last 12 months include:

Netherlee Parish Church – wheelbarrow to further the volunteer work in the park
Glasgow South Road Runners - £100
The Run Bible - £100

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

- Action Earth (Wildflower cultivation)
- Historic Environments Scotland (Arbour work at Cathcart Castle)
- Glasgow City Council Local Area Partnership Award (Celebration of Linn Park Public Event)
- Wee Green Grants, Glasgow City Council (notice boards and rocks!)
- Green Flag Award – Keep Scotland Beautiful (Tools and Equipment)

Projects

We have five 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 7 volunteers who monitor them. Data is submitted to the Butterfly Conservation Trust. Other volunteers are welcome to join.

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.

Cathcart Castle Project. We were able to secure funding for Phase one for this project. We will continue to pursue the next two phases.

We have begun a **Community Shelter Project** which is at an early stage but has received encouragement from the Council to take it forward.

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 – In 2019 FoLP, the Countryside Ranger and a representative from Paths for All met to discuss areas for improvement and better understand the potential financial and manpower commitment required to address certain issues. As previously mentioned, the 'Tuesday Club' are already making a significant impact on addressing some of the 'quick wins' relating to path clearance that should deliver immediate benefits for park users.

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 Friends of Pollock Park and Green Space/Parks Community Zoom
- Representation at Glasgow City Council's Participatory Budgeting Group where we are represented on the Steering Group;
- 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, RUNBible and Glasgow and Paisley Ramblers continues to grow and provide benefits for all parties.

We have undertaken projects including many younger volunteers from the following schools and groups: Netherlee Primary School, St Fillans Primary, Heathdene Nursery, 91st 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. We would respectfully remind park users to recognise that FoLP volunteers are **not** responsible for policing antisocial behaviour issues such as alcohol consumption and dog fouling/control.

The following issues, in particular, continue to crop up periodically as topics of concerns for park users.

- Alcohol consumption in the park;

- Drainage problems in certain areas;
- Periodic issues with overflowing bins (especially in good weather);
- The presence of invasive plant species (especially Himalayan balsam); and
- Dog Fouling and uncontrolled dogs

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

- Excellent support from the Ranger Service to assist FoLP with the planning and delivery of path improvement works in key areas and support with provision of wildflower planting;
- 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

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 2019 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 despite the unique challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, progress has continued.

As stated in last year's report, 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 Sep 31st 2019 to Sep 31st 2020

11.10.19 Tree Planting

Brilliant effort planting 60 or so young Oak, Rowan and Hawthorn trees marking an effort against Climate Change.

13.10.19 – Path Improvement Day

Improving the White Cart Walkway at the Millholm steps and path onwards.

15.10.19 – Cathcart Castle Phase 1

Day one of beginning to cut back Ivy and clear the area.

22.10.19 – Cathcart Castle Phase 1

Day two of cutting back Ivy.

29.10.19 – Wildflower Seed Planting

Planting over 1000 seeds in trays in Pollock Park polytunnel – to bring on and plant out as seedlings in the park.

04.11.19 – Yellow Rattle Planting

Planting yellow rattle into the glades to augment the wildflower areas.

10.11.19 – Wildflower Seed Planting

Planting more seeds in trays in Pollock Park polytunnel – to bring on and plant out as seedlings in the park.

12.11.19 – Yellow Rattle Planting

Planting yellow rattle into the glades to augment the wildflower areas.

26.11.19 – Wildflower Seed Planting

Planting more seeds in trays in Pollock Park polytunnel – to bring on and plant out as seedlings in the park.

29.11.19 – Cathcart Castle Phase 1

Trees cleared from the site by arborist.

Nov 2019 – Community Learning – Netherlee Primary School

Partnering with Netherlee Primary School to deliver four afternoons of community learning around the wildlife trail.

07.12.19 – Linn Park Christmas Tree – Netherlee Parish Church

Joined in with a community Christmas tree project. We used a native tree which could then be planted into the park and the decorations reflected the many projects undertaken by us in the Park.

22.12.19 – S x 5 – South by Five Running Event

We joined in to support this great event taking place across six different parks in the Southside of Glasgow.

20.01.20 – Mag 11 – Posts

We joined the Countryside Ranger to help put in way marker posts as part of the Mag 11 route.

11.02.20 – Cathcart Castle Phase 1

Final day of cutting back Ivy. The ruins are ready for inspection by HES.

16.02.20 – S x 5 – South by Five Running Event – Final Race

We joined in to support this great event taking place across six different parks in the Southside of Glasgow. Thank you for the donation!

28.02.20 – St Fillans Primary School – Path improvements

The wonderful pupils and staff from St Filans joined with us and the Countryside Ranger to do some path improvement works to the Wildlife Trail.

29.02.20 – Wildlife Day

This was a lovely event of family activities celebrating the wildlife of Linn Park LNR. A variety of wildlife monitoring equipment was also on show for the public to use.

06.03.20 – St Fillans Primary School – Path improvements – Day 2

The wonderful pupils and staff from St Filans joined with us and the Countryside Ranger to do some path improvement works to the Wildlife Trail.

10.03.20 – TCV Partnership Path Improvement Day

The start of some great partnership working on the paths with The Conservation Volunteer Crew.

15.03.20 – Path Improvement Day

Improving the White Cart Walkway at the Netherfield braes with the Countryside Ranger and Glasgow Ramblers.

5.9.20 – Nestbox Cleanout

Removal of old nests from nestboxes in preparation for next spring's nesting season

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 64 nest-boxes and 20 bat-boxes installed in the park.

Nestboxes

Due to the restrictions imposed as a result of COVID-19, nestbox monitoring was only able to begin very late in the nesting season. As a result, some chicks had already fledged (left the nest). The numbers reported below are therefore the minimum number of birds which successfully bred/fledged.

The final results for the year showed that 38 out of 64 boxes were used for nesting; all but two tit boxes were used. A total of 107 chicks (mainly blue tits) successfully fledged their nests, although the actual figure would have been higher as detailed above. Sadly 29 eggs did not hatch and 7 chicks died before fledging. One adult was also found dead in the nest. 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 2021 will be to continue with the established group of 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. In late 2019 FoLP hosted one public bat walk which was 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*.

Subject to COVID-19 restrictions, bat boxes will be checked for roosting bats by a Licensed Bat handler during late 2020.

Butterfly Monitoring

In 2020, we continued with monitoring of the two butterfly transects established in the previous year. A total of 7 volunteers carried out the weekly monitoring when not prevented due to restrictions. 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 2021.

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

Through this year we have continued to upgrade the path area and added the additional doors produced by Heathdene Nursery.

We now have signage indicating the trail from the rest of the path, and we have worked with St Fillans Primary and Netherlee Primary School to continue to improve the area.

This area has been selected through discussions with the Council for assessment for a Community Green Flag Award. We have a 'permission to use' in place which promotes our continued work to improve the area.

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

We have been successful in receiving funding from Historic Environments Scotland to enable us to undertake an initial phase of work to improve the environs of Cathcart Castle, and to start to try to protect the remaining stonework. Works to achieve phase one have been completed.

We hope to continue to develop this project through the following phases;

- 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

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

Community Shelter

During Lockdown an opportunity to develop some proposals for a community shelter within the park arose. These would include improvement of access at the Adventure Playground side of the park, the provision of a growing area, possible polytunnel and container type accommodation for storage, facilities etc.

This project is at an early stage but has met with encouragement from the Council.