

SAUGHTON PARK RESTORATION PROJECT NEWSLETTER 1

June 2014

Introduction

Welcome to our first Saughton Park Restoration Project Newsletter!

We will be using this newsletter to keep you informed of progress and details of any events and activities coming up.

We intend to issue it on a bi-monthly basis but it may be more frequent dependent on what news we have to share with you.

Please let us know if you have any suggestions of what you would like to see included.



Stenhouse Primary School children tour of EXPLORE Saughton community archaeology dig 06/2014

The funding

The Council was successful in a first round Heritage Lottery Fund '[Parks for People](#)' bid application and was awarded £392,000 to develop detailed plans to restore Saughton Park. This funding is being used to employ the necessary staff and appoint experienced designers to carry out the development work.

The detailed plans will be used to support the second and final round of the bid which will be submitted in August 2015. The Council will be bidding for around £3.7 million to carry out the capital works to restore and improve the park and if successful, it will take a further three years before all the work has been completed.



Getting the Project Team in place

Linda Anglin started as Project Manager for the project in February and she is supported by Peter McDougall who is the Development Officer. Pete is often at Saughton Park organising activities and speaking to people using the park, so if you see him around please say 'hi'.

It is expected that the Design Team will be on board by the end of summer. The main design work will begin in earnest at this point and members of the public will have a chance to have their say and give their views on design proposals as they are developed.

The Activity Plan

As part of our bid, we need to prepare an Activity Plan which will tell the story of who uses the park now, how they use it and what barriers they face. It will also state what our strategy is to increase the number and types of visitors to the park and what opportunities for learning and volunteering the park will offer. A fully costed Action Plan will be included.

We will be appointing experienced professionals who have worked on similar projects to help and we expect to appoint them by at the end of June.

Meanwhile a range of events and activities will be taking place during this Development Phase. This will allow the project team to try out different ideas, get people thinking about what they would like to see included in the Activity Plan and get feedback on the design proposals. Some things have already taken place but more is planned and we encourage you to come along and get involved!

EXPLORE Saughton Park

A major part of the project includes a community archaeological dig on the site of Saughtonhall. AOC Archaeology was appointed to help with this and they ran a series of activities in May and the start of June for the public to get involved with. This included an opening lecture, a training session on archive research and two weekends where members of the public got the opportunity to excavate the site of Saughtonhall.

The archaeology digs went extremely well with over 100 people participating over the two weekends. The weather was kind to us, the myriad of finds were very interesting and included some fine porcelain, post medieval glass, c. 17th oyster shells, a wig curling bobbin and some fascinating floor tiles.



EXPLORE Saughton archaeology dig 06/2014

We also had three school groups with around 60 pupils attending the dig from Balgreen Primary, Stenhouse Primary and Woodlands Special School.

Phyllis Mitchell the Balgreen P5 class teacher said ...

"We had a brilliant time at the dig on Monday, thank you for sorting that out for us.

The children really enjoyed it, they were so enthusiastic about what they got to do, Steven now wants to be an archaeologist!"

Hopefully some of you will have been involved with these activities and if you have any interesting stories or photographs from the day(s) you took part we would love to hear about or see them.

We are going to hold a closing lecture about the excavations once AOC and the Council's Archaeology Officer have had time to thoroughly assess and evaluate all of the finds. This will take place towards the end of the summer or early autumn. Look out for details of what promises to be a fascinating look back at the dig. In the meantime you can read more about it at: www.aocarchaeology.com/saughtonpark.

For those who are interested, there is now a Saughton Park history group which welcomes new members to take part in further historical research of the Park and surrounding area, and to work with the project team to decide how to interpret the park's important heritage.

Contact John Henderson

hendersonjohn11@yahoo.com or Joe McGuigan
joe.m.mcguigan@btinternet.com for further details.

Working with the Royal Caledonian Horticulture Society (The Caley)

The Caley have been very helpful in enabling us to progress our community engagement activities and have been, for example, providing expert help and support for a group of P5 pupils from Balgreen Primary School who have taken responsibility for looking after a large raised bed in the Sensory Garden at Saughton Park.



Helen from the Caley helping out pupils 05/2014

The Caley are also keen to start 'drop in' gardening sessions at the Park in response to local demand for some 'expert' advice. We are working on getting this going over the next few weeks.

If you are interested in developing your gardening skills, you can sign up for the Caley's Master Gardener Programme which offers training and accreditation for Scottish gardeners.

Check out their webpage

www.rchs.co.uk/education/caledonian-master-gardener for details.

Therapeutic Horticulture at Saughton Park

Several years ago Alison Wright along with staff and service users from Craighall Day Centre for people with learning disabilities started collaborating with Saughton Winter Gardens. They have been working with the garden staff to explore ways in which they could get involved with planting and learning gardening skills.



Craighall Day Centre client growing vegetables 05/2014

They are now in the third year of the project and work has been focussed on horticultural activity in the Walled Garden where they have planted 10,000 wild flowers in a long border. As well as this, the group work in the small courtyard adjacent to the Winter Garden where they have their own glasshouse which was funded by Skillspath. Here they grow a range of vegetables with great success. This group is also undertaking the Caley 'Grow and Learn' award which was specifically designed for people with complex learning needs.

This work will continue throughout the development stage of the Project and gives us a great insight into how the Park could be used more widely in a therapeutic way. With this in mind we are already looking towards linking the Craighall group with Skillspath, Health All Round and the YMCA Plus One programme.

Balgreen Primary School pupils Dig for Victory

Last month saw the P5 pupils from Balgreen Primary School start a year long partnership with the Saughton Park Restoration Project. The pupils will be working with the project team as their theme for this years study is 'community'. Class teacher Phyllis Mitchell is keen for the pupils to take full advantage of being a big part of the Project consultation process which will create a master plan and grand design for the Park.

Pupils have already spent time coming up with their own ideas for the Park as well as undertaking a 'kids audit' of the current facilities and recording these. They have become so enthusiastic about the community aspects of the project that they have asked to take responsibility for a large raised bed in the garden and are now spending Tuesday afternoons learning how to grow their own crops such as sweet corn, cabbage, lettuce and squashes. They are being given expert advice by members of the Caley who have agreed to support the pupils learning.



*Balgreen Primary School P4/5 sowing vegetable seeds
05/2014*

We are very keen to involve local school children in the project and this is a great example of what we can achieve by working together with the school teachers.

Balgreen Nursery School

After a really inspirational meeting with Jane Whinnett, Head Teacher of Balgreen Nursery School we agreed to begin working with the Nursery and recently had a successful family activity day in the Park which saw a group of 4 year olds and their mums spend a pleasant few hours wandering around the Winter Garden looking at the pineapples, hibiscus flowers and the banana trees before heading outside to check out the great tree collection in the walled garden.

This is an ongoing collaboration with the Nursery which will see the children who are about to go to school after the summer come along to the Park to participate in a range of activities which will continue when they reach primary school.



Balgreen Nursery School children exploring 05/2014

Stenhouse Primary School

Stenhouse Primary School Head Teacher, Marlene Galashan, is very keen to involve the whole school in the Saughton project and already uses the Park for a wide range of activities from football training to cycling. Rosa Tomany, the Stenhouse Support for Learning teacher has identified a group of around 10 older pupils whom will come to the Saughton walled garden on Wednesday afternoons and get stuck into planting up two of the most prominent raised beds in the Park, which are located just inside the entrance to the Winter Garden so everyone arriving in the garden from the car park will see them. Look out for a magnificent floral display throughout the summer brought to you by local schoolchildren.

Friends of Saughton Park

The first meeting of a group of nine local people who are interested in forming a friends group was held in the evening of 3 April at Saughton Park Winter Garden.

From this first meeting lots of ideas were generated for things that the group could do or get involved in:

- Practical stuff in the Park and Gardens like conservation work, planting and litter picking
- Becoming involved in the consultation process
- Getting young people involved in the planning process
- Identifying issues and possible solutions within the Park
- Working with local schools and nurseries
- Working with the Caley on practical projects
- Getting involved in publicising events and activities in the Park
- Making a photographic record of the Park development and restoration process
- Forming a Local History sub group

The group have met every month since then. They now have a membership of 15 and a draft constitution. The group meet on the first Thursday of the month in the Winter Garden at 7.00 pm. New members always welcome.

Community Representative

We have been working closely with local people, groups and the Friends of Saughton Park in order to identify a local person to become a Community Representative on the Project Steering Group. We are looking for someone who is willing to represent the views of the wider community and who has the time to commit to the Group. We are happy to report that we have made some progress in this respect and have identified a potential community representative; discussions are ongoing and we hope that they will be in place to attend the Steering Group meeting in July.

Consultation and Engagement

There are a mix of meetings, workshops and forums planned for park users, local residents and other stakeholders to give their views and come up with ideas for the restoration proposals for the Park. Once we have developed proposals for both the design and the activities, a full public consultation will be held to get feedback before the proposals are finalised ready for our bid submission in August 2015. It is likely that this consultation will take place towards the end of 2014.

The first of the workshops took place last month, details below:

Activity Visioning Workshop for Service Delivery Partners: On the afternoon of 2nd May in the Winter Garden Linda and Pete hosted a stakeholders visioning and networking session for organisations and community groups to explore and talk about how they use the Park at the moment and how they might use it in the future. This was a very successful session and enabled a range of both current and potential user groups to meet each other and share ideas for engagement using the Park.

We are holding another workshop in the Winter Garden for the same group of stakeholders on Friday 20 June at 2 pm and a similar workshop for members of the public on Thursday 19 June at 7 pm.

Sign up for future workshops now! If you have missed these workshops, don't worry as we will be holding more very soon and would welcome members of the public and anyone who leads activities in the park or may wish to do so in the future to come along.

Please contact Pete to book a place and discuss how you can get involved.

Other Community Engagement News

Pete has been engaging widely with local people and local groups and has had a lot of success in attracting potential partners who will either contribute to or benefit from the activities and events which we will be running in the Park as part of our development activities.

Included in this are Balgreen Library, Balgreen Nursery, Craighall Day Centre, St Aidans Church and Gorgie Memorial Hall to name but a few. He has also been attending all three local Community Council meetings and will keep them all up to date with developments.

Pete has also been working with Health All Round to bring their 'Green Welly' family project to the park. The 'Green Welly' family project engages local people and encourages their use of outdoor space for physical activity. A series of 6 sessions will see the group learn about growing and using vegetables, identifying trees, exploring the social history of the area and getting fit.

Communications

Hopefully you should have seen our new posters, post cards and information boards around the site and in the local neighbourhood. We've also tidied up the notice boards in the Winter Gardens and added interpretation at the various planting beds that the schools and the Craighall Day Centre clients look after.



New display panels at Gardening Scotland Caley stand 05/2014

We are trying to raise awareness of the project and need your help in publicising it. You can:

- Download our poster to put up in your area or building or give Pete a call to get copies sent to you
- Email out details of the project to members of your group or organisation
- Publish a story (for which we can provide words) in your group's newsletter or website
- Offer your premises to display consultation/notice boards
- Ask us for postcards to hand out at your events
- Ask us to speak at a meeting or to organise a workshop for your members

Until next time ...

We hope that you have found this Newsletter informative and we would love to hear your suggestions of things you think we should include.

Dates for your diary and our contact details are at the end of this newsletter. Please feel free to contact us if you want more information or would like to book for any of the events coming up.



Bedding plants in spring 05/2014

All that's left to say is to enjoy Saughton Park this summer and we look forward to seeing you at some of the events coming up.

All the best
Linda and Pete

Dates for your diary

Friends of Saughton Park Meeting

Thursday 3rd July and 7th August at 7pm in the Winter Garden

All welcome, no need to book.

Public Consultation Workshop looking at Issues and Opportunities at Saughton

Thursday 19th June 7:00pm in the Winter Garden

An opportunity for members of the public to tell us what they like about the park, what needs improved and what they would like to see the park used for in the future.

Please book as places limited. See contact details below.

Saughton Park Activity Providers Workshop – Exploring Opportunities

Friday 20th June 2:00pm in the Winter Garden

A workshop to scope requirements for organisations that use, or might use Saughton Park as a venue or focus for activities.

Please book as places limited. See contact details below.

Health All Round 'Green Welly Project'

Thursdays 3rd July - 7th August 2014 from 10.30am to 12.30pm at Saughton Park

Parents and children can come along and get some hands on experience in growing fruit and vegetables, learn about the trees in the park and explore the social history of the area.

Booking is essential. Contact Alan Gray for further details at alan@healthallround.org.uk

Carrickvale Community Centre Guided Walks

Tuesday 8th July at 11am and Thursday 7th August at 12.30pm in the Winter Garden

Meet for a tour around the park and gardens, with questions about the project, history and anything else.

Booking is essential. Contact Andy Vardy at Carrickvale Community Centre on 0131 443 6971.

Love Parks Week – Various Activities

25 July to 3 August at Saughton Park

Details to be confirmed ... watch this space!

How to contact us or get involved

Find out more or keep updated

Keep an eye on our web page at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/saughtonpark

Follow us on Facebook Edinburgh-Outdoors

Follow us on Twitter @EdinOutdoors

General Queries

Email us at parks@edinburgh.gov.uk or call 0131 608 1100

Register for Activity Workshops, Mailing List or Friends of Saughton Park

Email Pete at Peter.McDougall@edinburgh.gov.uk or call him on 07920 466000