

Friends of Kings Park Stirling

Annual General Meeting 2023

Wednesday 4th October at 7.00pm

The Smith Art Gallery and Museum, Dumbarton Road, Stirling

AGENDA

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Present**
- 3. Apologies**
- 4. Minutes of the AGM held on 5th October 2022**
- 5. Matters Arising**
- 6. Chair's Report 2023**
- 7. Treasurer's Report 2023**
- 8. Election of Committee Members**
- 9. AOCB followed by refreshments**

Friends of Kings Park Stirling

Annual General Meeting October 2023 – Chair's report for 2022-23

Introduction

It has been a year of significant transition in both our organisation and our activities. Three long-serving committee members, Trudi Togneri, Dorothy Wilson and Tom Wilson retired and we gained some new ones. We have looked afresh at our activities, our profile in the local community and wider city area, how best to target our limited resources and where we can pursue collaborative working for the benefit of the Kings Park.

Organisation

Three new committee members were elected at last year's AGM – Moira Fairweather, Neil Fairweather and myself and we co-opted a fourth, Wendy Garcia, to lead on a new marketing strategy. I agreed to take on the role of Chair in February and I've been pleased to attend many meetings with Stirling Council and partner organisations to represent us and promote the Friends group and our objectives.

As a Committee, we met almost every month over the past year to maintain a momentum of change. We have undertaken a strategy review to reaffirm our priorities and where we can best target our resources. We are undertaking a review of governance to ensure that our procedures are up to date and relevant. Our review of the constitution has been part of that.

Promotion and Membership

A key action for us was to improve our visibility to Park users and the wider community. Following the preparation of a marketing strategy, we launched a new logo, established a new website, new Facebook page and created a new main contact email address. Additionally, we set up a *WhatsApp* group which is mainly used by the volunteers who are active in the Park on Thursday mornings.

New signs have been distributed around the areas of the Park where we are active. These aim to raise awareness of our volunteers' work and to encourage new members. Posters have been distributed to various locations promoting the Friends group with a QR code link to our website. The website has become our main channel for attracting new members.

Turning to our activities in the Park, it has been an eventful and successful year.

Peace of Mind Garden and Butterfly Border

The greatest effort of our committee and volunteers over the past year has been directed to the Garden. After a period of reduced maintenance following the pandemic, and the necessary removal of the crumbling raised bed structure, our attention has been on redesign and on a serious amount of weeding and pruning. We are grateful to Andrew and Carol Hipkin for their leadership of the redesign and for the many plants which they have supplied. While there is much still to do, the Garden is in a much better state this autumn than last, and our new bark pathway is taking shape.

The Butterfly border was on the verge of being abandoned by us but some care and attention from our volunteers assisted by our partners at *Recyke-a-bike* have made a big difference.

The Apple Orchard

We have plans to promote a biodiversity hub in the area around the Orchard and have been discussing with partners, including Stirling Council, how best to achieve this. The first step of locating a new information

board beside the Orchard has been supported by the award of a community grant and work will be underway in the autumn. This will replace the rather poorly located existing sign.

A key task earlier in the year was to replace the slate labels, many of which were missing, with new labels on the trees highlighting not only the varieties of apples but also the best time for picking. With the assistance of the Criminal Justice payback team, areas were dug out around the trees to assist growth and protect them from grass cutting equipment. The team created a trial area for wild flower seed planting which we plan to use to complement our other emerging biodiversity proposals.

Elsewhere in the Park

We restored the three derelict planters by the changing rooms and filled them with spring bulbs and then summer bedding plants. This has much improved the area opposite the children's playground.

We worked with Stirling Council to relocate the 3-tier planter from its abandoned position near the main gate to a new location at the gate by the Pavilion Café. The Council arranged the summer bedding plants and it has been an asset to that park entrance over the summer.

We have been discussing with the Council how best to better present the area of box hedges around the fountain at the main entrance. We look forward to progress with this important feature.

With the assistance of the Criminal Justice payback team, we organised the cleaning of the mosaic structures around the Park. Our next stage will be to replace some of the missing tiles in the scenes.

We have been liaising with the Lawn Tennis Association and Stirling Council on the proposals to refurbish the tennis courts. The Friends group has strongly supported this investment in the Park and we were pleased to see the project start on site in mid-September.

Following discussions with the Stirling Council rangers service about opportunities in the Park, we partnered with them to promote a bug hunt for children in July which helped raise our profile.

Partnerships and Liaison

We have enjoyed good relations with Stirling Council officials from Land Services, Transportation, Community Development, Criminal Justice and the Rangers service. We have engaged with some of the local ward members and have welcomed their support for our work. However, we recognise the increasing restriction on local government expenditure and we want to continue to lobby for the best deal for the Kings Park.

We are developing new relationships with potential partners through the Area Forum and Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise, which we hope to build on in the coming year.

Our thanks go to our partner volunteers from *Recycle-a-Bike* who have enthusiastically tackled our suggested projects in areas of the Park which were beyond our resources.

Volunteers

We held a social event at Christmas in the Pavilion Cafe for the committee, volunteers and guests and arranged a pre-gardening get-together for volunteers in late January. We are grateful to Craig Wilkie and his team at the café for their support throughout the year.

On reflection, we have made good progress and can reflect on the past year with pride. We really couldn't have got through the year without all our enthusiastic volunteers whether they get stuck into weeding and digging or assisting with committee and other organisational tasks. Many thanks to them and to our committee members for their diligence, commitment and support.

We have made a difference! But there is much still to do!

David Leslie, Chair, the Friends of Kings Park