

KINGS PARK NEWSLETTER

Updates from the Friends of Kings Park



Welcome to Spring 2024

With winter behind us, our volunteers are back working in Kings Park and looking forward for others to join them.

We have lots planned for the year ahead to help maintain and improve the park for the enjoyment of all those who use it, including regular activity in the Peace of Mind Garden, the Community Orchard and special activities planned over the next few months.

There are also issues affecting the maintenance of the park that we will be addressing with our partner, Stirling Council.



This issue:

Welcome to Spring
PAGE 1

Peace of Mind Garden
PAGE 2

Friends' Toolbox
PAGE 2

King's Tree
PAGE 2

Community Orchard
PAGE 3

Park Maintenance
PAGE 3

Stirling 900
PAGE 4

Kings Park, Perth
PAGE 4

Your Views
PAGE 4

Peace of Mind Garden

The garden's purpose is to be a small oasis of peace and relaxation, and it has gone through a major make-over to live up to its name. Pruning and tidying work continues and the first sights and smells of Spring have thankfully arrived. There is still plenty to do including more planting in the areas beside our new bark path.

Donations of plants, shrubs or bulbs will be much appreciated.

We usually meet in the garden every Thursday morning from 10am for an hour or two of pruning, planting or weeding and often finish-off retiring to the Pavilion Café for coffee and chat.

Everyone is welcome, no experience required, just interest and enthusiasm.

We can supply the essentials and basic tools, thanks to our new toolbox.



Friends' Toolbox

We have been busy installing the **new secure storage space to hold tools and larger equipment** for working in the park.

It was provided by a grant from the People's Postcode Lottery. Our volunteers will benefit from having tools and equipment 'on-site' and not having to carry them home each week. **Donations for tools are welcome.**



King's Tree

We met with Stirling Council officers and the Lord Lieutenant of Stirlingshire and Falkirk to discuss planting a commemorative tree for the King's coronation. As there is a history of trees being planted in the Kings Park to commemorate royal events, it was agreed that the Council would source a suitable tree and **a planting ceremony will be held in the Community Garden area.** We will share details of the event when they become available.

Community Orchard

Over ten years ago the Friends of Kings Park, with Stirling Council's support, planted 16 heritage apple trees that reside in the far-side of the park. We continue to care for this area by pruning the trees and tidying the area to keep the weeds away, ensuring we get the best harvest. **Once ripe, the cooking and dessert apples are free for anyone to pick.**

This year we will be developing the orchard to create a biodiversity area and experiment with **planting wildflower seeds**. By growing wildflowers near the apple trees, we hope to encourage insects to live there. More pollination means more apples!

We will also install a **new information board** funded by the council's Community Grants Scheme.

If you are interested in helping look after the orchard, do get in touch. No knowledge or experience needed.



Park Maintenance

We held an initial meeting with Council officers to discuss the implications of recent **council-wide budget cuts** for the park. These include: **reduced grass cutting** (from 16 to 12 cuts per season) and **no budget for annual planting**, which affects the four box hedge quadrants at the fountain and the three-tier planter at the park entrance at the tennis courts, and **reduced staffing levels**. We are determined to do what we can to maintain attractive planted areas around the park entrances and the garden. We welcome more volunteers to help with this and are also contacting other volunteer groups to see if they could offer support.

The **repeated flooding** where two paths meet near the playpark continues to be a hazard. We have raised the need for major drainage improvements with the council to make the paths safe.



Stirling 900

This year, Stirling celebrates 900 years of being declared a Royal Burgh and local organisations are being invited to join in a programme of events to showcase our city. The Kings Park is Scotland's most ancient royal park and Stirling's premier city park with its own rich history.

A guided walk by members of our group will take place on **Saturday, 11-May at 10:30am**, to tell its history through nine mosaic, concrete panels which are dotted around the park. These were created in 2011 by the Friends of Kings Park in partnership with local artist, Meredith Crone, and pupils from St. Modan's High School. In preparation, we have started cleaning the mosaics and notice boards.

Read more about the walk on our website and visit our Facebook page for updates closer to the date.



Your Views

Whether you are a member of the Friends of Kings Park, or not, we welcome your views about the following:

- We are a small group but is there more the Friends could tackle?
- What types of events would you like to see in the park?
- Are there issues we should bring to Stirling Council's attention?
- What would make you consider helping or joining the Friends of Kings Park?

Send us your feedback via our Facebook page or website or email us at fokpstirling@outlook.com

Kings Park, Perth, Australia



Did you know there is a Kings Park in Perth, Australia? Neil Ross, one of our committee members, took time out from his holiday there to visit the park. He met with Chris Olney, President of their Friends association, and she took Neil on a guided tour.

It may be a very different environment from the Kings Park in Stirling, but Friends groups face many of the same challenges wherever they are in the world.

The Friends group in Perth has just celebrated 30 years of friendship, volunteering and fundraising with over 1300 members.

We could learn a lot from their strategy and this could be the beginning of a long distance friendship between our two groups! Neil will be sharing some of his learnings and photos in our next newsletter, on the website and Facebook page.