

KINGS PARK NEWSLETTER

Updates from the Friends of Kings Park



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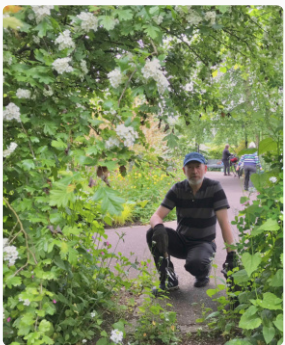
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Welcome to Autumn

It may not have been the sunniest or warmest of summers, but our volunteers have nevertheless been busy in the Park. As we approach Autumn and our AGM, we can reflect on some great work by the Friends group over the past year.



Community Orchard

Autumn is when we reap the benefits of the orchard, and there has been good variety of apples to pick this year, ranging from cooking apples, crab apples and juicy apples you can eat off the tree. The trees are labelled with their variety and the month when they are most likely ready to pick. We plan to provide information about the trees' heritage and culinary uses in future.



Archaeological Digs



Dr Murray Cook led two excavations in August to further explore the areas of the hill fort and Bronze Age cemetery. The hill fort is believed to be a Roman period small fort and located at the highest point of the Kings Park on the upper path. This year's dig uncovered some paving and a hearth from the interior of a house. The lost Bronze Age cemetery dates back 4000 years and is on the lower path just behind houses on Park Place. These excavations helped to understand more about the cemetery and the team will return for further exploration in 2025. We caught up with Murray who drew our attention to the findings here: [The Stirling Archaeology Substack page](#)

Learning About You (Park Survey)

We would like to thank Mrs Drysdale and the Stirling High School Advanced Higher Geography students for designing and carrying out an excellent park user survey. Committee member Sue Hunter, who initiated the project, conducted additional interviews, in total surveying 115 people.

Initial findings show that people see the park as a place to meet friends in the open, fresh air; a clean, friendly, pleasant space with lots to see and good paths. Many commented on the enormous difference the Pavilion Café had made to Kings Park.

Suggestions for improvements focused on repairs to the children's play park, a low maintenance multicourt space, basketball rings at child height and pickle ball, as well as bringing back mini crazy golf as a way of generating income. Many respondents wanted more bins and for children to be encouraged to use them, as well as asking for community police presence in the evenings. There was also an emphasis on Nature. Suggestions included increasing wildflower meadows for insects, a pond for biodiversity and community involvement in allotments. Others suggested outdoor fitness such as Pilates, Yoga, and Qi Gong and more to be organised for teenagers to do. Suggested events included markets, Armed Forces Day and the Stirling Marathon. If you are a group that uses Kings Park, The Friends would really like to hear your views. Please get in touch and we can share this short survey to canvas opinions in your group.

Good park for sitting, exercise and walking around.

Has everything I want, wide open space, coffee and toilets.

-Respondent quotes

Looking Back on 2023-24

Our volunteers are most visible in the Park on Thursday mornings but the Friends group has been doing a lot more over the past year. Our annual report of activities is summarised here. We look forward to the AGM and developing plans for next year.

Gardening and Orchard

- The redesign of the Peace of Mind Garden under the guidance of Andrew and Carol has kept our Thursday morning gardeners busy. Many visitors to the garden have been delighted with the new look
- We took over maintenance of the 3-tier planter by the park entrance at the Tennis Courts and it flourished with cascading nasturtiums
- With assistance from the children of St Ninians Primary School we planted up the wooden troughs by the changing rooms with summer bedding
- Another area adopted by the Friends Group is the quadrant parterres around the fountain at the main gate. Cosmos plants grown from seeds by our volunteers at home were supplemented by a donation of gladioli plants to give some colour at this focal point.



Peace of Mind Garden in Summer Bloom



3-tier planter before and after The Friends' efforts



Fountain quadrant before and after The Friends' efforts



Wooden troughs planted by St Ninians pupils

Working with Others

- The Friends group has developed good working relations with Stirling Council and other local organisations. Our committee of volunteers has met regularly to plan our activities
- We held a guided walk about the history of the park as part of the Stirling 900 events
- We were pleased to host a visit to the park from Evelyn Tweed MSP to see our projects.
- The Stirling Provost and Lord Lieutenant visited the park to plant a tree to commemorate the King's Coronation and continue a long tradition in this former royal park
- We have been delighted to see the restored tennis courts being well used with adults and young people alike.



Committee Meeting



Stirling 900 Mosaic Walk



King's Coronation Tree Planting



Restored Tennis Courts



Evelyn Tweed MSP Visit

Communications

We introduced a quarterly newsletter to share news about our activities. Our website and Facebook page were used to give regular updates and have attracted a good number of views. We have a weekly item in the Voice of the People section of the Stirling Observer.

Donations

In response to suggestions, we have introduced an online donation facility to help raise money for the Friends group and our projects. It can be accessed through our website. We are grateful for all financial and plant donations which we have received over the past year.

