

Agenda Item 9 – BCR NP – Monday 12th October 2015

SUMMARY REPORT ON ACTIVITIES TO BCR NP

FROM THE FRIENDS OF ST ANDREWS PARK [FoSAP] – 23/09/15

1] THE ORGANISATION:

The committee of FoSAP meets every 6 weeks and is comprised of 15 active members with a wide range of skills, experience and interests. The committee has a number of special interest sub-groups concerned with a range of issues including anti-social behavior, heritage and wildlife, etc.

In addition to the committee, we support a group of over 40 friends and supporters many of whom attend committee meetings and events. There is also an active web site with a network of more than 300 member subscribers.

2] GROUNDS MAINTENANCE:

FoSAP are very concerned that the current standards of maintenance must continue and therefore we responded to the recent consultation on this matter. During July and August a number of members carried out an exercise to assess the standards of maintenance. The conclusion was that the current standards of maintenance are generally high and that the presence and commitment of the park keeper, Micky, is essential. We also stressed that the responsiveness of and our relationship with the current officer at BCC with whom we communicate, Sarah Tyler, is a great improvement on previous arrangements and is essential in maintaining current standards in this beautiful and popular park.

3] PARK AWARDS SCHEMES:

Following the demise of the Green Flag Award scheme, FoSAP applied for the RHS Park Award Scheme and inspections took place in July. The comments of the judges were generally positive and we are optimistic that the facilities and standards in the park will be recognised by an award when they are announced in the coming months.

4] ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR [ASB]:

ASB has been a major concern of members and residents for many years. The activities of some of the large numbers of young people who gather on warm summer evenings on the slope adjoining Leopold Road was the principle concern. Despite much lobbying by FoSAP and local residents over several years, the police and the city council were unable to achieve a significant improvement.

On the suggestion of a community police officer, FoSAP applied for a grant to plant the slopes with annual flowers in a series of spiral forms. Now in its third year, this planting has helped to reduce the intensity of the crowds and has dispersed people around the park. This has improved the situation significantly. We also hope that the new bylaws will give the police and the council additional powers to curtail ASB when and if necessary.

There are other occasional instances of ASB including graffiti and vandalism to structures but these are generally rare and are dealt with promptly by the park keeper and the officers of BCC.

The incidents of fowling by the dogs of a small minority of dog owners is a relatively rare occurrence.

5] WILDLIFE ACTIVITY:

FoSAP has an active wildlife group with a wide interest in all aspect of the natural history in and around the park. This group has been instrumental in creating and maintaining our small wild-life pond which has recently been restored and improved. It is once again a very popular destination for young families and others.

A bid to NP in Nov 2014 for the renovation of the perennial wildflower meadow was successful. The first part of the work has been done and further seed sowings will be done this autumn and next spring. It should be relatively self-sustaining, with help from volunteers for minor maintenance and annual mowing by the council.

6] THE PLAYGROUND AND PADDLING POOL:

The playground is a popular attraction and, along with the unique paddling pool, is a major benefit that attracts families from across the city in the summer months. Partly due to the heavy use, both these features require regular attention and maintenance. The FoSAP committee includes members with a special interest in these features and, thanks to their enthusiasm and excellent contacts with BCC, repairs and improvements have been carried out this year both to the playground and to the paddling pool, the only one still in use in the city's parks – and long may it continue!

7] THE STRUCTURES;

Much of the parks boundary structures, Victorian stone walls, require constant maintenance. Other boundaries are comprised of hedges which, in one section on Effingham Road, has been very successfully layered by BCC workers.

The toilets are in need of improvements and we hope that funding will be available to carry out this essential work in the very near future.

8] OTHER MATTERS:

a] FoSAP is committed to consulting with and communicating to park users and local residents and our membership and our meetings are open to anyone with an interest in the park. Agendas and minutes are placed on our active web site and agendas are posted on the park noticeboard. In addition information leaflets are available in the park and an occasional newsletter is produced and widely circulated.

b] An enthusiastic group of members organise social and cultural events which attract local residents and supporters and which also act as an opportunity to promote FoSAP's work. These events include an annual ceildh and a spring concert of baroque music performed by a professional Bristol-based chamber orchestra, Quorum. These are promoted in partnership with the St. Bart's church community.

c] Although not formally linked to FoSAP, The Tea Garden cafe is an essential ingredient in creating a happy and pleasant atmosphere in the park as well as providing park users and residents with a place to relax and to meet friends. Fay who operates the Tea Garden is an active and enthusiastic supporter of FoSAP.