

# **Bonnyfield Nature Park**

## **Bonnybridge's New **Green** Space**



# **Report on Consultation Meeting**

**27th April 2004**  
**Bonnybridge Community Centre**



**Falkirk Council**  
**Development Services**



## **Introduction**

This report summarises the results of the consultation evening held at Bonnybridge Community Centre on Tuesday 27th April 2004. The members of the public in attendance were those who expressed an interest in the future development of the Bonnyfield Nature Park after the initial consultation meeting held in November 2003. Fourteen members of the public attended and were asked to give their opinions on the future development of the area.

## **Meeting Summary**

Following introductions the meeting was opened by Ian Edwards, Landscape Officer with Falkirk Council who then outlined the agenda for the evening as follows:

Soil issues  
Summarise report of first meeting  
Formation of a Management Group  
Discussion groups  
Summary

### **1 Soil Issues**

A summary of issues relating to the illegal dumping of soil within the Nature Park was given. It was noted that since the last meeting in November Council staff had been negotiating with two developers - Persimmon Homes who formed a bund of soil behind the houses in Woodlea Gardens, and McFarlane Homes who had deposited soil in the eastern part of the site. Deposition of this material on Council ground had been done without permission and was causing problems of overlook into adjoining properties.

The matter has been resolved with Persimmon Homes who moved the bund of soil to an agreed location elsewhere in park along with making a financial contribution of £10,000 to the Council for the future management of the park

The problem with McFarlane Homes is still ongoing but it is anticipated a satisfactory conclusion would be reached in the near future.

### **2 Summarise Report Of First Meeting**

A brief summary of the first meeting was given.

Thirty five members of public attended and just over fifty people have asked to be kept informed of future developments. The invitation list for this evening's meeting was based on that list of fifty people,

During the consultation part of the last meeting those in attendance were asked to consider the following question

*'How would you feel if the Bonnyfield site was to be managed as a nature park by the Council and local community?'*

Responses to this question were grouped broadly as either as negative or positive comments

For example - negative - 'lack of bridge over the burn', and 'area may be used as a dump'.

Example of positive - 'area already used for dog walking', 'good place for children to play and learn about the natural environment'.

The groups were then asked to look at suggestions for improvements which generally fell into the following categories

#### **Access**

- Improve access
- Traffic management
- Restrict access

#### **Habitat management**

#### **Future site management**

#### **Furniture that could be provided**

#### **Dissemination Of information**

**Miscellaneous** - e.g Clean up Bonny Water, dog zone

Generally the greatest areas of concern as reflected by the negative comments were:

#### **Access to and within the park**

#### **Empowered local management**

#### **Safety and security of park users and those who live around it**

#### **Anti-social behaviour in its various forms**

### **3 Management Group**

It was stated that one of the main purposes of the meeting was to discuss formation of a management group. Mike Ewart of Central Scotland Forest Trust talked about the various types of management group that could be established and the advantages/disadvantages of each.

These ranged from giving total control of management and finances to the group to minimal community involvement. These could be in the form of:

A steering group which needs to hold an A.G.M but no other public meetings.

An incorporated association which can be largely independent.

An unincorporated association which works closely with its members.

The most common type of group is the Unincorporated Association. This is relatively easy to set up and run, it cannot hold property, the members can be held liable for debts.

To form a community group the following needs to be agreed:

Agreement in principle that a community group is to be formed

Members of group

Draft constitution - aims, decision making structure, personnel structure

Public meeting to approve constitution

Management committee

#### **4 Discussion Groups - Introduction by Mike Ewart**

The meeting then split into discussion groups, the purpose of which was to generate ideas which would be developed by the management group.

The topics discussed were as follows:

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Example</b>
Access to and within the nature park	Where Surface types Stopping off points with e.g. litter bins, Dog bins, seats, picnic tables
Habitat management	Vegetation types, get ecological expertise
Safety and security	Motorbikes, horses - who to allow in and who to keep out
Dissemination of information	Web site, newsletter, work groups

#### **5 Use Of Information On Group Response Sheets**

Information on the response sheets from these groups will be collated and passed to the management group which will use them as basis for possible project work.

The meeting was also advised that Councillor Buchanan had asked that the following points be raised:

Bonnyvale Place - area needs tidied and possibly closed down to prevent unauthorised access

Consider use of old railway line as footpath access point

## 6 Summary & Other Information

Ian Edwards summarised the purpose of the meeting and how the results would be used. It was also noted that the Council will need to be represented on the management group for financial reasons and also for contact with other Council services. Ian Edwards advised he would be willing to chair the group in the first instance until it was up and running but would then be happy to step aside for a local resident to take this role.

It was also advised that anyone who could not make the first meeting but would like to be on group let Ian Edwards know and will be invited to subsequent group meetings.

## 7 Meeting Results

Following the meeting the results of the discussion groups were collated.

The suggestions in the topic discussions were as follows:

**The numbers in brackets shows the number of times this comment, or a similar one, was made. Where there is no number the comment was recorded only once.**

### Access to and within the nature park

Formalise occasional routes

Limit access at entrances with use of chicanes, barriers (3)

No more tarmac paths

Make paths pram friendly

Make paths wheelchair friendly (2)

Is there to be another access from the MacFarlane Homes site

Some accesses steep and muddy

Poor access from Dugald Stewart Memorial Park (3)

Consider access points onto the Bonnyfield Road - visibility and safety(2)

Link to bus stop on Bonnyfield Road

Access from new library site

Formalise access at bridge to right of way

Have a hierarchy of footpaths

Minimal access at north west corner of housing area

Access at north west corner of housing area most used

Form links to wider footpath network, e.g. Antonine Wall (2)

Have paths surfaced with whin dust (2)

Keep paths away from edge of housing area - privacy (2)

Extend access from NW corner of housing area to Bonnyfield Road, steep in places

Have variety of path surfaces, e.g bark, gravel, tarmac

Footpaths must be well drained (2)

Install bridge over burn (2)

Provide access from recreation ground (2)

No horses

Allow horses

Have a circuitous path around park

Be able to enter park from ends, not just middle

## **Habitat Management**

Encourage/allow natural regeneration (4)

Encourage a mosaic of vegetation

Planting along southern boundary of housing area to be kept low

Cut back broom

Get advice on habitat management - consultant ecologist, Council, wildlife trust, local knowledge

Plant around SUDS pond (2)

Maintain wetland area near burn

Minimum intervention (3)

Planting along southern boundary of housing area to be thorny

## **Furniture**

Provide litter bins

Provide bird boxes

Signs for what allowed/not allowed in park (3)

Furniture should be natural looking, not too large

Seats

Dog zone (2)

Dog bins, who empties (2)

Signs to describe/advertise park

Sign with web site address

No wooden structures

Signs with map of area - sanctuary area, footpaths

Signs at access points

Barriers/chicanes to slow bikes (3)

## **Miscellaneous**

Publicise park in newspapers

Put contact numbers on maps

Use internet, link to Council web site (2)

Publicise park in schools and libraries

Have a park leaflet

Under-used as a resource

Anti-social behaviour under bridge

Use local labour and expertise

## **8 Conclusions**

As can be seen from above access was the most debated topic and a wide range of suggestions were made, both for routes within the site and links to surrounding areas. Privacy for householders around the edge of the whole site was important, as was access for a wide range of users. As regards habitat management little or no intervention was favoured along with keeping a variety of habitats. The provision of some signage describing the park along with 'rules and regulations' was thought to be necessary. Use of the internet to publicise the site and provide information was favoured.

## 9 Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all members of the public who attended the meeting, those who have volunteered for the management group and the following Council and Trust staff for their help on the night:

Ian Ludbrook, Planning Officer, Falkirk Council

Naomi Sandilands, Planning Officer, Falkirk Council

Mike Ewart, Community Liaison Officer, Central Scotland Forest Trust

Linda McConnachy, Community Liaison Officer, Central Scotland Forest Trust

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