



Sunnybank Park Newsletter: Issue 3

Keeping the 'sunny' in Sunnybank



Happy New Year to all the Friends of Sunnybank Park!

As we see daylight increase and the Park emerge from the ice and snow, we're delighted to tell you that we have finally signed the **Lease** for the Park! We can now begin the real work of redeveloping the Park and seeing this lovely greenspace emerge as a vital part of the local communities lives.



Shelter building: Sunnybank School with the Rangers

Over the autumn we have had a few exciting 'goings on' in the park – one of which has been Primary 5/6 from Sunnybank School enjoying four sessions of **Forest School** with the support of Aberdeen Countryside Rangers, Stephen and Simon. This involved encouraging the young people to observe, listen and enjoy the area, including all manner of activities like: nature art, bird watching and, best of all, shelter building!

Events carried on in the Park right through until November, with litter picks, pruning (usually with food as a vital part of the mix!), some story sharing and one HUGE bulb planting session – look out for a mass of colour appearing from the ground shortly! Thanks to all who have been supporting these gatherings, it has been fun to meet those of you who've come, and exciting working with you all to see our Park grow. There will be many more opportunities to have a face to face with more of you as we move forward!

Sunnybank Park - it's worth it! We know it! You know it! We are going to prove it!

We've been working with Greenspace Scotland (the national agency for greenspace) in a Government funded pilot programme: 'Greenspace is good – so prove it'. This involves 12 community greenspace groups demonstrating the benefits of their projects using the 'Social Return on Investment' (SROI) approach. This aims to show that for every £1 invested, a greater amount of 'social value' is produced. It will quantify this social value in £s, and document the range of benefits that the projects provide for their communities, the people and organisations supporting them.

We've been focusing on the range of benefits delivered by the variety of community events to be held in the Park over the course of 18 months. These events include our Sunny Day Picnics, volunteer, school and nature and wildlife events, healthy walks and so on. We think these events and activities are a great way to help to create more connected and cohesive local communities, improve people's health and wellbeing and provide new learning and skills. We are compiling evidence to demonstrate this and will produce a report in early 2011 with the results.

This will help us to prove that Sunnybank Park is a vital local greenspace. It will help us to generate support in our efforts to look after and protect the Park.

Discovering Sunnybank Park

Finding the Park was a completely unexpected discovery - a wee emerald gem and right on my doorstep. This discovery has led to meeting lots of wonderful people and achieving lots of exciting things. It's amazing to see the just how much energy is out there. It's life-affirming stuff!

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What now?

Now we've secured the lease, all the hard work behind the scenes will start to show. Work on the **Allotments** has already begun! New fencing should already be in as you read this. It may seem severe at first, but it will be painted green and softened with native planting. Inside there will be raised beds on one part of the former bowling green. And, over the hedge on the former putting green there will be traditional dug beds. There will also be a composting toilet, storage containers, a pond and a shelter. Plots have not yet been allocated. We'll be in touch with potential plotters soon!

Aberdeen Greenspace Trust are already getting underway with the **access and wildlife improvements**; paths, fences, gates, a boardwalk over the marsh area, a pond, benches and other work. Volunteers are essential for this, so if you're keen, please contact Alister: email: info.ag@btconnect.com or phone: 01224 711129.

BTVC (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) have also started their **Green Gym** volunteer programme in the Park. They are actively recruiting local volunteers to help! They will be in the Park most Mondays doing Park maintenance and specific improvement projects: creation of seating areas, bird feeders, nesting boxes, information boards, a composting area and much much more. etc. They will be providing training too. Volunteers are also essential to this, so if you're keen, please contact Yvonne or Pete: 01224 724884, mobile: 07764 655681 email: Aberdeen@btcv.org.uk



The 'marshy' area, Sunnybank Park

There are many things in the pipeline, and so little time! We will be working to see the former tennis courts area redeveloped. For now, our efforts are concentrated in delivering the projects for which we have got funding – allotments, access and wildlife improvements and the volunteer programme.

Help needed!

We are putting together a funding application to recruit a **Development Officer** to manage projects, events, funding, and whatever else is needed to see the Park redeveloped. And, **we need you** too! Please make a pledge to do something this year, be it coming along to at least one volunteer event, or getting involved with the Management Committee. We meet monthly and are looking for people who to be more involved with the running of the Park; making decisions on projects, events, and the future. Our next one is on 19th April at 6.30 in Sunnybank Community Centre. Come along, or phone, drop us an email or a message on facebook. This is for you all, and it can't survive without you.

We are keen for those using the park to continue to do so in the way you enjoy best and one thought to leave with you is that each time you visit, take some litter with you!

While there are heaps of positive things happening in the Park, there are also occasional issues. If you have any concerns with disturbances or vandalism please do the usual and contact the police: Emergency - 999, non-Emergency - 0845 600 5 700 and/or the City Wardens - 01224 653310

For any more **information, suggestions or offers of help**, please contact Grace on:

Mobile: 0779029828

Email: sun@sunnybankpark.org.uk

Visit us at: www.sunnybankpark.org.uk

Or join our facebook group: http://www.facebook.com/home.php?sk=group_135544933162397

Sunnybank Park, formerly known as St Machar Outdoor Centre, is located off Sunnyside Road