



Sunnybank Park Newsletter: Summer 2012

Keeping the 'sunny' in Sunnybank

News, opportunities, events and recipes from your local community park.

It's now less than three years since Sunnybank Park was threatened with being sold off, and just over one since a new community group, the Friends of Sunnybank Park, took on the lease and the task of turning a derelict space into a local green oasis. For what has happened since, read on...



Opening the Circle

Over the last year, little bits of Sunnybank Park's path network have quietly been slotted into place: the steps down the slope built by Aberdeen Greenspace volunteers; the clearing of the drains and the taming of Sunnybank Loch by Sinclair and Alan; the work done on the loop around the ground below the Health Centre by the Phoenix group; the opening up of the woodland behind the allotments. In the spring, BCTV slotted the last piece into place, with a beautifully subtle bit of cut and fill to make a path up through the trees behind the old tennis courts. As a final flourish, they added an arch to the gap in the old privet hedge where the path passes through.

As a result, you can now walk a circular path around the whole park, passing through wetland, grassland and woodland and down 'Orchard Street' between the fruit trees. In May we celebrated this achievement with an official opening, inviting Pete and Yvonne from BTCV along to do the honours.

A Fruitful Day

There was unexpectedly fine weather in March for our fruit tree planting day. After careful guidance from Alister Clunas of Aberdeen Greenspace and Alan Carter, we unloaded an assortment of apple trees, pear trees and cherry trees, and one enormous amelanchier, and set to to dig holes, guide roots, and set up cages to protect the young trees as they grow. Luckily there were lots of helpers: students from Robert Gordon's University were joined by children from the Mosque School and local residents, as well as an enthusiastic lost dog, and by lunchtime we had eleven trees safely in the ground and were able to sit down and share tea and coffee and a snack in the glorious sunshine. The trees are now thriving and in blossom, and with luck in a few years they'll be fruiting well.



Easter Egg Hunt

On Easter Saturday a small but keen party of egg hunters were let loose around the park and were lucky enough to find dozens of eggs in all kinds of places! The final prize, a large chocolate bunny, proved more elusive, but at last young Tom found it lurking in the woods and it was broken up and shared between the well-chocolated children. Meanwhile their parents enjoyed the seed swap, delighted to find some unusual vegetables on offer. Pockets bulging with eggs, all went home happy!

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Cherry plum chutney

Cherry plums have been described as 'Scotland's most undervalued fruit'. Fortunately, there's an abundance of them in Sunnybank Park. They're great straight off the tree! They also make great jam and chutney. Here's a tried and tested recipe, in case you're feeling foragey!

Recipe:

Chuck everything into a big pan. Let it simmer for 40 mins until thick and jammy. Remove the plum stones as they rise to the top of the mixture. Spoon into hot jars and seal with lids.

Makes approx. 5x 450g jars of delicious tasty chutney!

Ingredients:

900g plums

2 medium onions - roughly chopped

700g mixed sultana and raisins

600ml spiced malt vinegar (or malt vinegar with a pinch of allspice)

500g brown sugar

15g ground ginger

1/4 tsp cayenne pepper

45g salt



Teens' turn. The next big task on the Friends of Sunnybank Park's list is to develop the large expanse of tarmac that used to be the St Machar Outdoor Centre's tennis courts. This area has been made safe and less derelict looking by the removal of the tall, broken-down fence that used to surround it, but it remains a huge empty space within the park. We are trying to provide something for as many different user groups and age groups as we can within the park, so this area is going to be for secondary-school-age children.

A great opportunity has come up to really boost the development of the area. Northsound Radio have chosen it as a project to support through their Cash For Kids Campaign this summer. However, we can't tell you what we'll be spending money on yet, because that all depends on what the kids want, so we're launching a big consultation to find out. You should find a feedback form with this newsletter, but if you don't you can print off a copy or fill in an online version on our website. Remember that the survey is for ages 11-17, so don't let your parents do it! If there is more than one person aged 11-17 in your household, you can copy the form and fill in one each. The ideas in the survey were all suggested by young people from local schools.

Events and volunteering will be happening in the park all through the summer and autumn. See the Facebook page and the park noticeboard for details. The Trust for Conservation Volunteers' **Green Gym** carries out work in the park on an occasional basis: contact Yvonne or Pete on 01224 724884, mobile 07764 655681 or email Aberdeen@btcv.org.uk. **NEXT VOLUNTEER DAY:** Saturday 7th July at 11:00.

Committee Call. Many thanks to all who have served on the committee of the Friends of Sunnybank Park this year: Abdul, Aftab, Alan, Emma, Grace, Julie, Sinclair, Nick and Wamberto. Some of these people have now stepped down after doing their bit, so the committee could do with a couple of new members for the coming year. If you have a little time to spare and think that joining a friendly group of people to help regenerate your local park sounds like a good thing, we'd love to hear from you.

FoSP AGM: 11:00, Sat 28th July, in the park (dry) or Powis Community Centre on Powis Circle (wet).

BE A FRIEND TO SUNNYBANK PARK

The easiest way to show your support for Sunnybank Park is to become a member of the Friends. Membership costs only £5 and forms can be downloaded from our website.

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