

Minutes of the Calton Hill Task Group & the Friends of Calton Hill Committee: January 2023 to May 2024

Calton Hill Task Group

2023, 24 January, 1 February

Friends of Calton Hill Committee

2023: 9 February, 9 March, 5 April, 29 May, [24 June, AGM]

4 July, 16 August, 3 October, 18 December,

2024: 23 February, 7 May, [18 May, AGM, adoption of the new constitution and name: the Calton Hill Conservation Trust]

Calton Hill Task Group Meeting, 24 January 2023

Attended: Vikki Brooks, David Brooks, Laura Graham, Simon Holledge, Fran Holmes, Jim McCormack, Hartley Millar, Charles Milton, Henrietta Thewes.

1. Introductions

2. Agreed to start a Friends of Calton Hill, to have a role in the management of the hill and apply for grants for its protection and improvement etc etc.

3. Friends registration: We would send a simple application form to CEC Parks and Greenspaces, including the names of a chair and secretary. (Appendix I, Friends of Edinburgh Greenspace Information Pack).

4. Constitution. It was agreed to look at the draft constitution at our next meeting.

5. We need to have provisional officers/committee to take forward the task group, subject to eventual nomination and confirmation. The Friends committee would be defined by the constitution. We would discuss this at our next meeting.

6. We would need a Treasurer, responsible for setting up a bank account. Jim raised the issue of auditing, formal or informal. David raised the issue of insurance. The difficulty of getting a bank account was noted. (Laura explained Gayfield used RBS, while Simon had experience with Bank of Scotland involving a waiting list.)

7. Membership fees: it was agreed that there should be a fee. £5 or £10 pa would be appropriate.

8. Henrietta suggested getting a website up as soon as possible.

9. Particular issues such as the western slope of the hill were noted. We discussed working

with the council on these, also the status of the 2017 Management Plan. Hartley noted recommendations in the plan had not been acted on.

10. Public launch meeting date: The earliest feasible date was 23 Feb 19.00. Saturday 25 February was also possible. It was agreed that the public launch would be a pre-meeting rather than formally the first meeting of the Friends.

11. Public launch meeting: In-person preferred to virtual. Could we use Collective? Simon to contact them. One alternative would be Greenside Church, or the Lookout or the Crannie. We would invite Kirsten Carter McKee and CEC's Sarah Murphy to make presentations. It would be advertised widely with registration via Eventbrite.

12. Next meeting: Wednesday 1 February, 19.00 at 9/1 Carlton Terrace

Summary: Calton Hill Task Group Meeting, 1 February 2023

Attended: Vikki Brooks, David Brooks, Sorcha Carey, Laura Graham, Simon Holledge, Fran Holmes, Jim McCormack, Hartley Millar, Charles Milton, Sarah Morton

1. Summary of 24 January 2023 meeting approved.
2. Constitution. Laura and Hartley to redraft clauses 6, 11, and 12. Simon to make corrections to the other clauses as per the discussion.
3. Vikki and David raised the issue of tourists being confused by 'Calton Hill Road' and we had a brief discussion about signage.
4. We reviewed the CEC Friends registration form. Agreed to go ahead with the application as soon as we had a finalised constitution.
5. Charles kindly agreed to undertake the secretary role.
6. Hartley volunteered to be treasurer, at least for the interim, and to look for a suitable bank.
7. We will delay the public launch meeting until late March at the earliest. (Laura suggested Tuesday, 21 March.)
8. Sarah kindly offered to try to find contact details for Kirsten Carter McKee, author of 'Calton Hill and the Plans for Edinburgh's Third New Town'. (An alternative presenter could be Iain Gordon Brown, author of the new book 'Old Greekie'.)
9. The next meeting, primarily to approve the constitution and consider next steps, will be on Zoom on Thursday 9 Feb at 19.30.

SCMH 2 Feb 2023

Friends of Calton Hill

Committee Meeting of the Friends of Calton Hill

Date: 9th February 2023

Location: Zoom

Attendees:

1. Simon Holledge
2. Hartley Millar
3. Charles Milton
4. Henrietta Thewes
5. Jim McCormack
6. Fran Holmes
7. Vikki Plant
8. Sorcha Carey
9. Laura Graham

Agenda and Discussion:

1. Previous Meeting Minutes: Agreed as circulated
2. Constitution
 - i) Minor Typo's identified and corrected
 - ii) Constitution Agreed. We are constituted.
3. "FOCH" acronym.
 - i) Agreed this would not be used externally in documentation
4. Standing Orders
 - i. Identified as the proper place for setting meeting frequency, membership fees and similar items et cetera (as opposed to within the constitution).
5. Public Meeting.
 - i. It was agreed that the meeting would serve both as an event in its own right and as a membership drive.
 - ii. Sorcha Carey (Collective) advised that their capacity is 40 people. They will advise us of the cap to be on Eventbrite registrations.
 - iii. Provisionally 29th March 2023 - 18:30. Sorcha Carey to confirm.
 - iv. Location: The Collective City Observatory
 - v. The Collective has kindly offered to provide complimentary refreshments
 - vi. No budget available for paid speakers. Speakers would be invited to give short talks rather than full presentations.
 - vii. Kirsten Carter McKee, Sarah Murphy and possibly others may be invited to speak.
 - viii. Membership fees initially set at £5 per member per year.
 - ix. Meeting will be promoted via New Town residents associations, community councils and social media.

6. Next Meeting Set:

- i. 9th March - 19:30 possibly via Zoom.

Full Meeting Recording:

<https://vimeo.com/798082342>

Charles Milton, Secretary, Friends of Calton Hill, 12th February 2023

Committee Meeting of the Friends of Calton Hill

Date: 9th March 2023

Location: Zoom

Attendees:

1. Simon Holledge
2. Sorcha Carey
3. Fran Holmes
4. Francis Galashan
5. Henrietta Thewes
6. Vikki Plant
7. Hartley Millar
8. Charles Milton
9. Jim McCormack
10. Laura Graham
11. Carol Nimmo

Agenda and Discussion:

1. Previous Meeting Minutes:

- i. Agreed as circulated

2. New Committee Member:

- (i) Welcome Francis Galashan

3. Office Bearers Vacancies:

- i) ii) Vice Chair - Laura Graham has volunteered to fill this position. Membership Secretary. Remains vacant and we will advertise at the Public Meeting on 29th March.

4. Chair's Report:

- i) Registration of the Friends group accepted on 21st February.
- ii) 45 Members and 45 followers on Twitter.
- iii) Lib Dem budget passed with £3m additional allocation for parks and green spaces. Calton Hill is one of 6 "premier parks" and out of 150 parks / green spaces within Edinburgh and there is a likely possibility we will be awarded a reasonable sum.

4. Secretary Report:

- i) www.friendsofcaltonhill.org website is now secured
- ii) info@friendsofcaltonhill.org email address is up and running
- iii) Website will be live for the public launch meeting

5. Treasurer's Report:

- i) Bank of Scotland identified as best choice for bank. Shortest run in-time on account opening and simple initial joining hoops. No strong objections, Charles to proceed with Bank of Scotland.
- ii) Initial research conducted on software to manage the organisation, decision not needed at this stage:
 - a. Membermojo for membership administration. Expected cost: £40 + VAT per year
 - b. ClubTreasurer for accounts and membership: £72 + VAT per year
 - c. Stripe for payment processing. Expected cost: 20p plus 1.5% - 1.9% for UK Cards
- iii) Draft expense claim sheet prepared and submitted to the committee for review.

6. Public Launch Meeting

- i) Laura Graham volunteered to prepare a poster for the meeting, with QR code provided by Simon.
- ii) Market to existing members first and then 7-days later we will publicly advertise.
- iii) Zoom offering discussed. The Collective has a 'Zoom Bar' and hybrid Zoom/in person would be possible albeit never tested in a meeting on 40+ people in the Observatory which may not work for camera angles etc.
- iv) Eventbrite page will be setup and sent out to Members asap.
- v) Launch Party is likely be dominated by people who have already expressed interest (owing to 40PAX maximum capacity) and therefore having another future meeting date is important to set prior to the public launch meeting.
- vi) Meeting Timetable: Iain Gordon Brown will speak for 20minutes at the start with no Q&A. Linda Anglin will talk for 5-10 minutes (in charge of the thriving green spaces project). Charles will introduce a survey for all attendees as to suggested improvements on the Hill in order to coalesce around a short set of key priorities.
- vii) Simon, Sorcha and Charles to meet 16:30 on March 16 to view the Observatory meeting space.
- viii) Laura and Simon to work on a permanent Friends of Calton Hill poster alongside the poster advertising the Public Launch meeting. Laura identified Minuteman on Elm Row as a good supplier for printed and laminated posters. Simon has keys to 6 local noticeboards around Calton Hill.

7. First Members Meeting

- i. Location Discussed:
 - i. Lion and Turnbull noted as a potential location.
 - ii. Greenside Church identified as preferable due to on-site location.
 - iii. Outdoors within The Collective identified as best-case if weather permitted and it was feasible.
- Provisional Date - 11:00AM Saturday 24th June '23.

iii. Marketing of the meeting to be discussed and agenda to be set in due course but funding applications likely to form part of the meeting.

8. AOB

i) ii. Next Committee Meeting Date Not Set.

Laura Graham invited committee members to support Gayfield Square Garden's Climate Change Fund application and noted the same would be possible for Calton Hill.

iii. 'Second Thoughts' invited to be circulated post meetings in order that they maybe discussed as part of the next meeting.

iv. Only known council employee who is paid to be responsible for Calton Hill is David Kyles.

v. Recording/Live-streaming Public Launch Meeting suggested with wide support and to be discussed with Sorcha.

Full Meeting Recording:

<https://vimeo.com/807499401>

Charles Milton, Secretary, Friends of Calton Hill, 13th March 2023

Committee Meeting of the Friends of Calton Hill

Date: 5th April 2023

Location: Zoom

Attendees:

1. Simon Holledge
2. Francis Galashan
3. Henrietta Thewes
4. Vikki Plant
5. Hartley Millar
6. Charles Milton
7. Jim McCormack
8. Carol Nimmo
9. Fran Holmes

Agenda and Discussion:

1. Previous Meeting Minutes:

- i. Agreed as circulated with a minor typo update.

2. Chair Report

(i) (ii) Council have agreed to provide backup for litter pickups.

Simon has contacted David Kyles to provide an accurate update as to the status of the barrier at the bottom of Calton Hill drive.

(iii) Simon has enquired as the cost of clearing the stone gutters / gully's (terminology)

as to what they are called be confirmed with the council!)).

(iv) Simon has been in touch with 'Access Panel' for introductions and has invited them to provide their opinion on access for disabled people to Calton Hill.

(v) Simon has been in touch with Edinburgh World Heritage regarding Monument protection to see if they have a view on the subject.

(vi) Simon and Andy Heel (a forestry expert) and member of the group walked around Calton Hill and Andy will hopefully be able to provide some expert advice to us in the future regarding tress/shrubs.

3. Secretary Report

(i) Friends of Calton Hill (.org) is now live.

(i) Agreed to include its launch in the first newsletter to Members.

(ii) Feedback / suggestions requested from the Committee.

(ii) Bank Account still in-progress.

4. Treasurer's Report

(i) Awaiting bank of Scotland.

(ii) Budgeting for approx £300 in membership fees this year.

(iii) Discussed: Organisations to approach within Edinburgh (Essential Edinburgh for example).

5. Survey

(i) Simon, Hartley and Charles have concluded the survey after a number of revisions.

(ii) Survey will be distributed after the meeting today. 1-week for Committee members to pass feedback / suggestions on the survey prior to it having a final sign-off and being distributed to the Membership in the first newsletter.

6. Litter Pickup

i) Henrietta has offered to organise.

ii) David Kyles has agreed to collect rubbish bags and provide litter pickup kits.

iii) Stressed need to continue to challenge the Council to prioritise litter collection.

iv) First litter pickup will be announced in our inaugural newsletter if a date has been set.

v) Henrietta to email David Kyles to set a date for a litter pickup and establish the process.

vi) Sat April 15th 10AM set as a possible first date for a litter pickup between the Committee - Henrietta to see if we can get the collection kits organised in time.

7. Events Notification System

i) If somebody wants to organise an Event on Calton Hill they fill in an application form which goes to CEC and there is a presumption to allow. Application then goes to CEC Parks & Green spaces for approval/disapproval either for whole or elements of it, and then information sheet goes out to stakeholders (including us) and there is a period of time for us to pass comment / concern / objection. The notification also goes to an EPOG and we may wish to consider representation on that group in the future.

8. Greater Calton Hill Area

- ii) Agreed we would not look to expand our remit beyond the definitive pavement boundaries of Calton Hill - i.e. not to include graveyards.
- iii) Simon suggested a walk-around in the future and maintaining an open mind.

9. Public Meeting 24th June

- i) Procedure for election of Committee discussed. Notifications that individual people wish to stand should be submitted in-writing to Secretary 1-week in advance of the meeting with proposers and seconders. Simon has a template that can be used.

10. Membership Secretary

- i) Vacancy to be marketed to Members in inaugural newsletter.

11. Membership Fee

- i) Financial year running from 1st July so collection of membership fee will happen in June in/around first members meeting.
- ii. Membership fee discussed and agreed to set at £10 per individual with no household discount in order to maintain simplicity.

12. Next Committee Meeting

- i) 9AM 3rd May '23. Public launch is the primary agenda item to discuss.

12. AOB

- i) Carol Nimmo has offered to provide un-used jackets from the Community Council and arrange screen printing "Friends of Calton Hill".

Full Meeting Recording:

<https://vimeo.com/815805944>

Charles Milton, Secretary, Friends of Calton Hill, 7th April 2023

Committee Meeting of the Friends of Calton Hill

Date: 31 May 2023

Location: in-person at 9 Carlton Terrace.

Time: 19.00

Agenda

1. Nomination forms for committee and officers
2. Chair, Secretary and Treasurer reports

Treasurer's Report

1. The Bank of Scotland account is now open and its functioning has been tested.

2. Following a review of options by the Secretary and the Treasurer, it was decided to use Club Treasurer software for accounting and membership administration. A one-year subscription has been taken and data is currently being loaded. The next stage is to make sure reconciliation between Bank of Scotland transaction downloads and Club Treasurer membership and other records is as easy as possible. This should be done in the next two weeks.

3. To make sure we keep data on all contacts who may need mail shots the membership system is being set up to include more than simply member, i.e. the following categories

- Full Member (fee paying, with voting rights in due course)
- Supporter (no charge, to be kept informed. Potential Full Member)
- Link Representative (no charge, representing linked organisation or funder of current project or activity)
- Honorary Member (no charge, decided by Committee as requiring to be kept informed and ideally involved, e.g. local MP, MSP)

Measures to ensure ongoing GDPR conformity will be examined. Comments on the categories are welcome; they can be changed but preferably not after the data has gone active. Hartley Millar 31/5/23

3. Survey results

4. Water fountain suggestion from the Access Panel

5. City Centre Community Grants Fund application, deadline 12 June

5. Newsletter to be published Sat 3 June to include:

First Members Meeting date/place: 24 June 11.00/Greenside Church

Draft standing order for £10 fee

Survey results

Date of the next litter pickup (possibly Saturday 1 July?)

Website launch (including nomination form and survey results)

Link to the nomination form (nominations deadline 17 June)

6. AOB

Committee Meeting of the Friends of Calton Hill

Date: 4th July 2023

Location: Zoom

Attendees:

1. Simon Holledge
2. Laura Graham
3. Charles Milton
4. Hartley Millar
5. Henrietta Thewes
6. Adda Gogoris

7. Susan Poupard

Apologies:

1. Fran Holmes
2. Carol Nimmo
3. Vicky Brooks
4. Sorcha Carey

Agenda and Discussion:

1. Introduction

i. Simon Holledge introduced the meeting and Adda who has volunteered to fill the role of Membership Secretary and Susan Poupard who has volunteered to fill the Funding Officer role.

2. Membership Fees and Finances

- i. We have taken £380 in membership fees thus far. No reminders have yet been sent, scheduled for 10th July.
- ii. We have 81 members who have been invoiced for their membership fees.

3. Website

i. ii. iii. iv. Annual subscription is approx £55 a year. Allows us flexibility, layout changes, fonts and colour schemes. Plug-in and different templates schemes exist.
Lifetime purchase of the upgrade is approx £130.
Existing website is hosted with Fasthosts.
Agreed to upgrade to lifetime membership.

4. Community Grant Application

i. ii. We are located in South-East Edinburgh. We have applied for £4988 for re-grassing the area in-front of the National Monument.
Jade Mooney has confirmed the Council will review the application in August.

5. Nelson Monument

i. ii. Hasn't been opened since Covid. Historically could go up the tower for a small fee. There has been significant engagement on Twitter as a result of mentioning the Monument so there is clearly wider interest in the subject. Followers on Twitter have nearly doubled as a result.
iii. Edinburgh Museum's department within the Council are responsible for the Monument.

6. AOB

i. Litter pickup dates provisionally set at 16th September and 11th November. These will be used as recruitment opportunities by Adda as well.

Full Meeting Recording: <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/847993805>

Friends of Calton Hill Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: 3rd October 2023

Location: Zoom

Attendees: Simon Holledge, Hartley Millar, Charles Milton, Adda Gogoris, Jim McCormack, Sorcha Carey, Fran Holmes

Apologies: Carol Nimmo, Henrietta Thewes, Vikki Brooks, Susan Poupard, Laura Graham

Agenda and Discussion:

1. Previous Committee Meeting Minutes

i. Agreed and accessible here.

2. Resignation

ii. Francis Galashan has resigned from the Committee and Simon has sent him our thanks for his contributions.

3. Chair Report

Our Friends project has now been going for 150 days and I would like to start with a summary.

On 24 January and 1 February we held the first meetings of a 'Calton Hill Action Group'. We wrote a constitution which was agreed on 9 February thereby becoming the Friends of Calton Hill.

On 14 February we applied for council registration which was approved a week later.

We held a night-time walkabout on 8 March, and on 29 March we had the public launch of the Friends of Calton Hill at the Collective City Observatory, with five speakers, Dr Iain Gordon Brown, the historian, Linda Anglin, the council Green Spaces manager, Silke Schneider, of Edinburgh World Heritage and City Councillor Hal Osler.

On 15 April we held the first Friends litter pickup, and from 18 April to 7 May we opened a Membership Survey to get a clearer idea of the members' concerns and opinions. (We will talk more about the survey later.)

Engagement

During these 150 days we've introduced ourselves to other organizations: the residents association, the community council, the Collective — with whom we have been working closely — Regent Gardens, also the Access Panel (which looks after the interests of the disabled), the Royal High School Preservation Trust, the Edinburgh Green Spaces Forum (which includes all the Friends groups), Festivals Edinburgh and obviously the Council Parks and Greenspaces officers. We've also invited a forestry expert, a botanist and an entomologist to visit the hill and advise us in future.

Calton Hill Drive

Next, I'd like to explain where we are and what we've been doing about access to the hill from Calton Hill Drive. We know this is a concern of members — after litter, the road access question was the most frequent cited issue in the survey.

There is a sign on the gate saying, "*Pedestrian and authorised vehicles only*" and an entry system with keypads, however the gate is always left open, even though council policy is not

to allow free access to parks by vehicles.

We asked council officers on 30 March, and again on 15 June, whether the security system still worked, or if not whether it could be repaired. The background to this is that most (if not all) parties would like to see a separate pedestrian entry. That is not possible with the present apparatus.

At the moment, there's free access for every kind of vehicle up to and including large tour buses. On Wednesday, there was a loud event on the hill which many of us will have heard. It was held by a small group who almost certainly took amplifiers and generators up in a van.

Management Plan (2017)

I would also like to briefly mention the management plan. This was written in 2017 by an organization called LUC Glasgow for Edinburgh World Heritage and The City of Edinburgh Council. It has 59-pages and there are seven pages (pages 32-9) of detailed proposals on heritage protection and conservation, 'user experience', and management and maintenance – but not nature protection.

We will put the plan on the website for those who are interested.

4. Secretary Report

- i. Paid up members are now sitting at 60, with £598 in the bank account . There is a list of non-payers that we are chasing for dues. Simon has agreed to chase up people personally.
- ii. We have not yet received the Community Grant Fund.
- iii. The Membership drive has started albeit weather hampered efforts on our first day which was the litter pickup and more work needs to be done before we can provide a formal update.

5. Treasurers Report

- i. A sub-account has been setup on Club Treasurer to receive the grant money.
- ii. Procedures to authorise expenditure still need to be agreed.

6. Crown Estate Grant

- i. We have submitted an expression of interest for a £50,000 grant towards the Nelson Monument.

7. Proposed Closure of Access Barrier for Bonfire Night weekend.

- i. Proposal is to close the barrier overnight to prevent private parties and large number of firework being brought up onto the Hill via vehicle.
- ii. Carol and Henrietta support (sent in via email) the position to keep the barrier open.
- iii. Arguments were discussed both ways and it was agreed that we won't support the temporary closure for the weekend.

8. Upcoming Events.

- i. Angus Millar is conducting a geology walk on 4th November.
 - ii. Litter Pickup on 11th November will be in conjunction with the Residents Association.
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Friends of Calton Hill Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: 18th December 2023

Location: Zoom

Attendees: Simon Holledge, Hartley Millar, Laura Graham, Charles Milton, Susan Poupard, Jim McCormack, Adda Gregoris, Fran Holmes, Vikki Brooks

Apologies: Henrietta Thewes, Carol Nimmo, Sorcha Carey

Agenda and Discussion:

1. Previous Committee Meeting Minutes - 3rd October '23

- i. Agreed and accessible here.

2. Expenses

i. Important expense claims are submitted prior to the year end, even if they are to be re-donated back to the organisation. This shows members that their annual membership fees are being used by the organisation for their intended purpose.

- ii. Vat receipts/invoices important to allow us to reclaim in the future.

3. Laura Graham

Thanks to Laura as a founder of the organisation. Laura has resigned as Vice Chair but will stay on as a committee member and Susan Poupard has offered to fill the role of Vice Chair.

4. New Constitution / Charity Registration

i. Charitable status allows us to apply for grants that we are not currently able to. There are some restrictions on becoming a Scottish Charity Incorporated Organisation, (SCIO) as detailed in the Draft Constitution.

ii. Michael Osborne has indicated he would be prepared to independently audit us as a registered charity. He is the treasurer of Regent Gardens.

iii. Committee Members are encouraged to read the Draft Constitution to familiarise themselves.

5. Erosion Report

- i. 2015 / 2017 onwards has seen a marked deterioration in the state of the Hill.

- ii. Edinburgh Enquirer is interested in running an article on the erosion problem.

6. Chair Report

On 10 October, there was a 'Calton Hill Stakeholders Group' (in this case just the Collective and ourselves) meeting with Karl Chapman (CEC Head of Heritage, Cultural Venues, Museums & Galleries).

Karl explained it would cost £452k to repair the Nelson Monument, both the black ball mechanism and fixing leaks to the building. Craig Miller who attended the meeting is responsible for the monument. Karl hoped the job could be done as a whole, rather than

the building first, and then the mechanism later. We also learned that the access barrier arrangement is covered by the Collective lease (Clause 35).

On 29 October, the south Indian Dusherra festival took place in a marquee behind the National Monument and fireworks from the Trig Point. No real problems, though some litter afterwards and a vehicle parked on the grass.

On 4 November, Angus Miller led a Geology of Calton Hill Walk. 14 members joined.

On 6 November I went up to see the aftermath of Bonfire Night. Huge amounts of firework debris were left behind. Prominent among them were '120 shot Compound Cake Thunder Bombs' which each launch a series of 120 rockets. Made to be just inside legal limits, these are almost certainly brought up by car. Fortunately, the council cleansing team and park rangers arrived early in the morning to remove much of the remains of the fireworks, and on 11 November, we held the Fourth Friends Litter Pickup which left the hill looking clean.

On 20 November there was an Edinburgh Thriving Greenspaces Workshop, followed by the Edinburgh Green Spaces Forum in the evening with presentations by CEC's Linda Anglin (Parks & Greenspaces Development manager) and Aly Hoadley (ecologist), who talked about Edinburgh Nature Network, currently being developed with five small Leith parks.

On 7 December, there was a report to CEC Culture and Communities which reported that 65k visited the Nelson Monument in 2019. We also learned that access to council museums is free and this could only be changed by permission of the Scottish Government.

On 7 Dec we met with CEC's Linda Anglin and Alex Hunter (ecologist) at Waverley Court to discuss funding, and the Edinburgh Nature Network, but also to remind them of our ongoing issues. Alex Hunter will visit the hill with colleagues on 22 January.

Finally Regent Gardens have removed almost all the graffiti on the wall facing the hill, following similar action by the Royal High School Preservation Trust and the council. We have asked Greenside Church to remove the graffiti at the back of the church and also asked the Collective to clean up their signage.

Meanwhile, I have been posting regularly on the website: 26 posts to date, also on twitter where we now have 232 followers. The website also has documents, a timeline etc and I recommend it if you want to know what is happening.

7. Secretary Report

i. Council have used their repairs and maintenance budget to repair and rebuild the pathway on the south side of the Collective by the Douglas Stewart monument. This has been functionally repaired and the Council have no budget to improve the look or feel of the area.

ii. Iain Craig and Son's who have the maintenance contract for Regent Gardens and have been appointed to do the first round of re-grassing and repair in January

(15th / 16th / 17th). We will pay and source 100 sqm of turf directly which will be delivered on 16th.

iii. We have said no to David Kyle's request for us to return the money back to his budget and we will contract the contractors directly.

iv. Vat will be payable however we can reclaim if we go on to register for VAT within the next 3-years.

v. Final church service at Greenside Church will be at 28th January.

vi. Nelson Monument visit on either 10th / 11th.

8. Funding Report / Susan Poupard

i. We submitted an expression of interest application to the Crown Estates Scotland Community Capacity for £50,000 towards the Nelson Monument and this was unsuccessful and without feedback. (125 applications, only £300,000 to give away).

ii. Several smaller pots of funds are available. Edinburgh University Community Grant (micro grant scheme) up to £500. Safe Deposit Scotland Community Fund - up to £2,000. We are aiming to develop a roster of small projects on the Hill that we can use to apply for these smaller grants. Potential suggestions include a water fountain near the Nelson Monument, updates to signage and directional signage, re-grassing smaller areas, tree planting and seating. 'Adopt' a square metre of grass proposed as a possible approach for the future albeit we can not procure turf at less than 100 sqm in a batch.

9. Membership Drive Report

i. Has not been successful in its current form with only 1 member sign-up having noted the Membership Drive as their reason for registering.

ii. Building relationships and developing a corporate membership solutions with local businesses maybe an alternative to trial in 2024, alongside tour operators and local hotels.

10. Upcoming Dates

i. Saturday 13th January set for the next litter pickup.

ii. Nelson Monument - 10th / 11th January OK for the site-visit.

iii. AGM set at 23rd March '24. Charles to speak to Greenside Church regarding.

iv. 1-Year anniversary / celebration set for the evening of Saturday February 10th.

Friends of Calton Hill Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: 23rd February 2024

Location: 9 Carlton Terrace

Attendees: Simon Holledge, Hartley Millar, Susan Poupard, Sorcha Carey, Jim McCormack, Henrietta Thewes

Apologies: Charles Milton, Vikki Brooks, Laura Graham, Carol Nimmo, Adda Gregoris

Agenda and Discussion:

1. Previous Committee Meeting Minutes - 18th December '23

Proposed by Hartley Millar and seconded by Jim McCormack. Agreed and [accessible here](#).

2. Chair and Treasurer: the new draft constitution, registration as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), proposed change of name to Calton Hill Conservation Trust.

New draft constitution distributed and it can only be adopted at an AGM. Committee Members automatically become trustees. All trustees must declare interests and we must maintain a register of interests. Members must be paid members with no membership fees owing. Constitution will be put forward at the AGM alongside the name change to Calton Hill Conservation Trust.

Action: Hartley to review clauses, specifically Clause 35 (suggested rewording: "The quorum for a members' meeting is 10 members, present in person or participating online, or 10% of the membership, whichever is the greater.") and Clauses 50-53 about election and re-election. Hartley also to Check SCO registration process.

3. Chair Report

At the end of last year, I met Richard Wilkins, Chair of Lochend Park and discussed cooperating in the Edinburgh Nature Network. Lochend Loch has a lot of water birds (27 Dec).

Together with botanist Ben Averis and forester Andy Heald, we produced a list of native tree species suitable for planting on the hill (7 January) and I was interviewed by Sarah McArthur of the Edinburgh Inquirer (8 January).

Some of us visited the Nelson Monument to check the condition of the interior — which was much better than we expected (10 January), and on we did our 5th litter pickup (13 January).

We had 160m² of turf delivered and laid (more about this from Charles later). This was between 16 January and 2 February.

We held a Zoom with our nature experts (28 January), who opted for a series of separate nature walks rather than an all-in-24-hours bio-blitz. There will be three walks in May, three in July and three in September.

The CEC ecologist Alex Hunter and two colleagues visited the hill and we discussed making the western section into a nature reserve (30 January).

I visited Water of Leith Conservation Trust and talked to Helen Brown Trust Manager and SCIO and conservation trust status. Helen offered to give us a keynote talk at our next AGM (9 February).

Iain Craig & Sons estimated for four jobs on the hill between £1,584 and £2,820 (include VAT) (13 February).

Edinburgh Stonecraft (Dave Halliday) came to look at three potential jobs on the entrance and Regent Gardens steps and the Regent Walk wall and promised us estimates (16 February).

The Calton Hill Drive access gate was repaired and I met CEC's David Kyles and we discussed how it would operate (20 February).

I met Sarah Adamson and Dorothy Lyle of the Edinburgh Natural History Society. They may be interested in holding joint events with us in the future (22 February).

4. Treasurer Report

- The financial year ended on December 31st. From a cash accounting point of view at that point there was a bank balance of £4,696.77 and no payments had been made during the year.
- The cash balances included £3,988 which was the grant for regrassing part of the hill and is therefore restricted, i.e. cannot be used for general expenses.
- The remaining cash arose from subscriptions (net of processing charges for online and card payments) and one small donation. This can be used for general administration.
- Committee members have incurred expenses that will be reimbursed. As of now the known expenses amount to £510.86 but there may be further claims. The expenses incurred are predominantly for software licenses, web presence and registration fees plus expenses incurred for litter pick-ups.
- Since year end the expenditure on re-grassing has amounted to £3,868.16 leaving £119.84 available but restricted.
- The uncommitted amount in the general administration fund is about £200, taking account of subscriptions still coming in.

5. Vice Chair Report

- Application to the Mushroom Trust being made currently for re-grassing
- Community Grants via Edinburgh University will be applied to when the next round opens in May.
- Water Tap on the Hill. All quotas filled, next opportunity would be 2025 however Scottish Water don't currently have a record of a public supply to the Hill.

6. Future Organisation: members, volunteers and a possible task force. Agreed to setup a register of volunteers, separately to a register of members. In contrast to members, volunteers would not be asked to pay fees.

7. Update on the Calton Hill Drive access barrier: existing apparatus to be repaired by the council. The existing access barrier apparatus was repaired on 20 February. Discussions took place between the Council and the Collective on 22 February. David Kyles is getting further estimates for a series of additional technical enhancements to the system.

8. Update on the Nelson Monument reopening. Works has apparently started. The lower section is planned to open in April and the tower in October.

9. Future dates:

- 2 March (Saturday, 10.00): 'Our Classical Hill': Iain Gordon Brown led history walk
- 13 April litter pickup
- 30 April Beltane Festival on Calton Hill
- 11 May plants and trees walk led by Ben Averis

- 18 May early morning bird walk led by Stephen Welch
- 18 May '24 AGM (18:00) - Location TBC
- 25 May invertebrates (insects) walk led by Craig Macadam

**Minutes of the Friends of Calton Hill Committee,
7 May 2024, 9/1 Carlton Terrace (in person)**

Attendees: Simon Holledge, Susan Poupard, Hartley Millar (by Zoom), Vikki Brooks, Adda Gregoris, David Lowenfels, Jim McCormack, Carol Nimmo

Apologies: Sorcha Carey, Laura Graham, Charles Milton, Henrietta Thewes

Minutes: David to transcribe Zoom recording and collate minutes.

Agenda and discussion

1. Previous Committee Meeting Minutes - 23rd February 2024

Proposed by Adda and seconded by Susan.

2. Resignation of Fran Holmes and welcome to David Lowenfels as new committee member

3. Arrangements for the AGM on 18 May

Cost of the SCO venue would be £30 per hour. There would be a talk by Helen Brown of the Water of Leith Conservation Trust to start off the meeting.

a. Completion of nomination forms

Elections would be held under the old constitution before the approval (or otherwise) of the new constitution.

Nomination forms duly proposed and seconded from: Vikki Brooks, Sorcha Carey, Adda Gogoris, Simon Holledge, David Lowenfels, Jim McCormack, Hartley Millar, Carol Nimmo, Susan Poupard,

Actions:

- Simon to publish nominations in the next newsletter with the address of the AGM venue (previously omitted). Newsletter to be sent Saturday 11th May to comply with the constitution deadline.
- Simon to bring nomination forms to AGM to give to Cllr Jo Mowat (as Charles Milton resigned as secretary) as officiator.

b. Registering attendees and collecting fees from new members

Vikki and Susan to be at the door to register attendees, noting membership, and collect fees with card reader.

c. Replacing the broken card reader

Hartley would get a replacement card reader from SUMUP. He had been made a signatory on the SUMUP account by Charles Milton.

Hartley explained that SUMUP pays amounts to the bank account with an invoice number but without recording the name of the payee.

Adda offered a donation to cover the cost of the card reader.

d. Audit of the accounts

Hartley reported that the accounts have been approved by the independent auditor Michael Osborne by email.

4. Treasurer's written report on 'state of the banking'

2023 accounts have been submitted for inspection and a positive report received.

The 2023 accounts only show revenues since they are cash accounts and payment of expenses and other outgoings happened after the year end. The formal accounts therefore could be misinterpreted as showing a large surplus even though almost all the funds were required for the re-grassing project and for expenses. A note has been added to correct any misapprehension.

Since year end several more members have joined, adding £155 to our funds. We have decided to take a paid-for subscription to Zoom and to discontinue the subscription to Club Treasurer (substituting an excel spreadsheet approach). Apart from the re-grassing project the other main expenditures are for the website, online service costs and incidental costs for walks and litter picking (including printing, signage and catering).

The expectation is that unallocated funds at the time of the AGM will be approximately £130 but there will be an expected income during 2024 of about £550 from membership renewals (assuming there are several non renewals among the 71 members on record at December 31st). It should be possible to keep administrative expenditure for the year below £500.

The actual outcome will be significantly better if more new members are recruited and there are donations, e.g. from Calton Hill walks. I therefore conclude that the organisation is financially sound. Hartley Millar Treasurer

Discussion: Agreed that membership should roll over yearly with a renewal/start date of 1 July each year. Fixed date to be simpler than renewal by joining date. Hartley to consider drafting a text about the yearly membership for newsletter.

Agreed to keep membership fee at £10.

5. Recruiting a new secretary following Charles's resignation and defining the role to make it less onerous

Discussed whether secretary functions could be split up into more than one role.

Simon to put together & circulate list of job functions

Discussed ways of advertising membership

David offered to collate minutes for this meeting.

Simon to meet with David on membership process, David to review membership process and recommend how it can be improved.

6. Applying for grants

Susan to apply for community grant fund for further re-grassing (£5k, 20 May deadline) and Edinburgh 900 fund (£5k, 27 May deadline) for improvements to information boards

7. Brief Chair report on Nelson Monument, aftermath of Beltane, volunteer work, repairs, cleanups and new projects (Northern Brown Argus butterfly, lost Trinity College Church stones etc.)

8. Future dates

Simon noted need for help on walks to sign up or get donations from non-members.

- 11 May: plant and tree walk, led by Ben Averis (Susan to attend)
- 18 May: bird walk, led by Stephen Welch (David to attend)
- 18 May: Annual General Meeting, at Scottish Chamber Orchestra Salon, 4 Royal Terrace
- 25 May: invertebrates walk led by Craig Macadam (Adda to attend)
- 31 May: Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust volunteers (13.00-16.00)

9. A.O.B.

Next year we should ask Beltane to clear up the immediately surrounding streets.

Agreed that we would apply for Calton Hill to be a Firework control zone - no private fireworks allowed - Simon to apply.

Access gate update - Friends of Calton Hill hope CEC and the Collective can come to an agreement soon about the barrier.

Simon to draft a paper membership form.

David to suggest improvements to the online membership form. David to follow up early June on the litter bin issue.