

BIODIVERSITY

Communications Toolkit

A Sense of Place

Lead and partner organisations

- The Friends of Braidburn Valley Park

Aims and objectives

- To promote and encourage the local community to take an interest in the protection, upkeep and enjoyment of the Braidburn Valley Park
- To conserve, enhance and promote the park area for the benefit of people and wildlife
- To work with the local authority and other relevant organisations to help achieve these aims

Target audience

- The local community

Format of communication

Notices were posted locally and flyers sent direct to households encouraging people to join The Friends of Braidburn Valley Park, which produced a membership of around 250 almost immediately.

Background

The eleven hectares of Braidburn Valley Park in Edinburgh has a wealth of social history. Over the last century, its use has changed from farm, to park, to allotments, to park again. Now a little bit of history is being made again. Over the last few years, the project led by The Friends of Braidburn Valley Park has brought local people out in droves to create a wildflower meadow, plant bulbs and trees, spot bats and race ducks in the rain.

Summary of activity

A key part of the wildflower meadow project proposal was to involve children from the primary schools - South Morningside and Pentlands - at both ends of the park in the practical planting and management of the meadow, learning about wildflowers in the process. This has all now happened and autumn 2006 saw the first raking, which is planned to become an annual activity.

The Friends had originally focused their approach on the South Morningside Primary, involving P4 children in the wildflower meadow project. It was felt the project met the curriculum objectives in environmental studies and citizenship for this age group. However, the plan soon evolved and by November 2005 most classes in the school were being given the opportunity to be part of a 'park' activity. Some classes planted trees, bluebells or wildflowers. Others took photographic records and P7 mapped out an orienteering course. November 2006 saw further planting by both primary schools together with all the Sunday schools of Greenbank Church - 245 children in total.

The schools see these projects as providing pupils with important hands-on practical experience of the natural environment.

The Friends are developing a wildflower education pack in liaison with South Morningside Primary which senior teaching staff feel will give all teachers the opportunity to make good use of 'out of classroom experiences' at a very local level.

When the Friends promoted one of the first bulb planting events in the park, their publicity included an appeal for the Girl Guides or their relatives who had been part of the original Silver Jubilee cherry tree planting event in 1935 to come and join them. Incredibly, over 40 ladies turned out and joined current Guides, Brownies and Rainbows to make the event a very special occasion for all.

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The 'Living History' project has collected memories of the area and park and has even included documenting the words and music of the Tree Song, which was sung at the tree planting ceremony in the '30s.

In summer 2006, the Braid Cubs and Beavers put up 10 newly made bat boxes and learned more about bats during a quiz produced by the Friends.

Further information

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