

2026 - VOL. 4 ISSUE 3

KINGS PARK NEWSLETTER

Updates from the Friends of Kings Park



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Welcoming Autumn

Our autumn newsletter includes news about recent activities and a review of the past year in the lead up to our AGM.

Non-members are very welcome to join us on Tuesday 6 October at 7pm in The Smith Art Gallery and Museum. We will be celebrating the work of our volunteers and launching our new historical walking routes website. Together with refreshments and cakes using apples from our orchard harvest, we look forward to a great evening. See you there!



Members pictured above during a visit with Tracy Duff of Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise (SVE).

Kings Park Glasgow

Did you know there is a King's Park in Glasgow with a very active Friends group?

A group of volunteers from Stirling paid them a visit in early August and had a lovely afternoon touring the park and learning about their work.

The Glasgow group was re-established in 2019 and has delivered many improvements to the park, including a sensory garden by Aikenhead House, the mansion house (now flats) which sits at the heart of the public park.

Formerly a private estate, the park is located in the south west of Glasgow and was gifted to the City in 1930. There is a great variety of trees, dating back to the early 18th century. The Friends group has been successful at attracting grants to replace lost trees and add to the species in the park. There is a very impressive walk through a collection of old yew trees. The walled garden is a key focus for the Friends volunteers and we were pleased to join the Wednesday group for tea and cakes in the garden after our guided tour. Many thanks to Kevin and Kathleen for their most interesting tours and discussions. We will be back!



The Conservation Volunteers and the Community Garden



Thanks to the assistance of The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) on two visits in August, and some hard digging by our own volunteers, we have been able to tackle some of the overgrown borders in the community garden. We will be discussing with Stirling Council our ideas for new planting in these areas.

Where archers and jousters once honed their craft...

...now thousands are entertained at Radio 2 in the Park!

Yes, the Kings Park has a rich and varied history, and a fine early August afternoon saw an intrepid band of volunteers checking out the Kings Knot area of the park, once the formal royal gardens for the castle. We also visited the Butt Well, 'Butt' being understood to have taken its name from an adjoining enclosure in which were located the archery butts. While, nearby, jousters were able to practice their skills. It must have been quite a scene.

At the edge of the Kings Knot we noted the site of Clay Toll Cottage, which served long ago as a toll house at the western entry point to Stirling. We enjoyed fine views of the castle battlements and looked, in the distance, towards Ben Lomond.

There was even time to carry out some light remedial work around the wonderful iron pedestrian 'double' gate, at the far corner of the Kings Knot. Following the removal of undergrowth, the old gate can now be operated in both directions, as intended!

The walk provided the opportunity to check out the 'Kings Knot Loop' section of the new Kings Park walking routes, soon to be launched, and about which we'll be hearing more at October's AGM. It was rewarding to be able to take in so many points of historical note, and exciting to contemplate these now becoming more readily identifiable for everyone.

As we approach Autumn, look out for details of the next park walk."



Radio Stars?



Following their debut appearance on Stirling Community Radio back in 2024, David and Neil were delighted to be asked back again by Stirling Voluntary Enterprise's Tracy Duff, host of the popular afternoon show 'Community Connections'.

Such was the success of our previous visit, we were afforded an extended slot of nearly two hours. This gave ample opportunity to discuss what's been happening in the park over the summer, and future plans. In a wide ranging conversation we explored the benefits all of us can derive from volunteering, and the role of the Friends' group within the community.

We highlighted the many projects carried out within the park, including the Peace of Mind Garden, entrance parterres, and the orchard, and spoke about the new 'walking trails' and accompanying information being developed. Tracy was interested to learn also about our engagement with local schools and other organisations.

The visit was an opportunity to further develop our relationship with SVE, following upon our recent involvement in 'Volunteers Week, and Tracy's subsequent visit to the park, which itself led to the work of the Friends' being showcased in SVE's monthly bulletin.

We will await our next radio invitation and anyone interested in getting involved next time round please let David or Neil know! While the prospect of becoming radio stars is slim, this was an enjoyable experience, and another means of promoting what we do."

Review of the Year 2025-26

As we approach our **Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 6 October**, it is a good time to reflect on our volunteers' achievements over the past year. Also, to thank those partners who've worked with us to improve the park.

Peace of Mind Garden

Our gardening projects in the park have provided improved amenity and interest for park visitors. The Peace of Mind Garden has matured in splendour over the seasons after a few years of significant restructuring.



Parterre Borders

We planted four new themes in the parterre borders by the fountain to promote interest and understanding. The interpretation signs encouraged visitors to learn more about the plants in each theme and generated many discussions.



Butterfly Border

In the community garden, we gave the pollinator "butterfly" border an overhaul and it provided interest throughout the spring and summer seasons. Elsewhere in the community garden we have been assisted by TCV volunteers to cutback and clear some of the borders.



Apple Orchard

The crop of apples from the community orchard has been enjoyed by our volunteers and the wider community. Some of the apples harvested by our volunteers have been saved to make some delights to accompany the refreshments at our AGM.



Borders Boxes and Planters

We planted and maintained the flower boxes and 3-tier planter near the Pavilion Café and tennis courts. Together with a first stage improvement to the border by the outdoor gym, a tree was donated and planted there in memory of Tom Wilson, one of our founder members. To accompany this, some donated iris plants were planted in the cleared area.



Review of the Year 2025-26

Walking Trails

Our most significant new project has been the development of walking trails with web-based heritage interpretation. Using the old paper-based pamphlet, the history of the Kings Park has been updated and translated to a new format to encourage more exploration and enjoyment of the Royal Park. It will be launched at our AGM.



Social Outings

We arranged social events for our members throughout the year. A Christmas party at the Pavilion Café, a visit to the Braehead Community Garden in the spring, and a summer outing to Glasgow's King's Park to meet the Friends group in our "sister" park. Also, through a series of informal walks in and around the Kings Park, we introduced our members to new discoveries.



Working in Partnership

We have appreciated the support of Stirling Council to provide us with compost, to arrange a fence repair and to fix a leaking water tap in the garden. We welcomed youngsters from the Stirling Guides and Beavers groups to help clean the mosaic panels and some of the park benches. The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) had three work sessions to help us clear overgrown areas. The Rotary Club loaned us equipment for our litter picks.



Promoting our Work

Promoting our work to potential members and highlighting volunteering opportunities in the Friends group is important to us. We published four quarterly newsletters, updated our website and Facebook page and starred (again!) on Stirling Community Radio. Following our participation in a Volunteers' Week challenge, we were pleased to host a visit from Tracy Duff of Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise (SVE) to present badges to our volunteers. Come and join us next year!



Friends of Kings Park Updates

The management committee of the Friends of Kings Park meets regularly to organise activities and support volunteers' work. Details of our meetings can be found on our website: www.friendsofkingspark.org/about-us

If you might be interested in joining the Friends of Kings Park committee, we would be happy to hear from you and have a chat, without any obligation. Contact us at: fokpstirling@outlook.com