
Foreword

Dundee has more open spaces and parks per head of population than any other Scottish city, occupying 28% of the urban area. Dundee City Council recognises the value of parks, and whatever the size and condition of the park, we need your help to improve these public parks and open spaces.

Your local public park and open space provide opportunities for communities and visitors to enjoy a wide span of outdoor leisure uses, benefiting health, and providing a safe play area for children. Public parks and open spaces do, however, need local people to use them wisely and, unfortunately some of our parks and open spaces have been the target of anti-social behaviour.

This guide has been written to assist individuals interested in establishing a 'Friends' group, with the aim of improving the appearance, facilities, conservation value and safety of their local public park or open space. The guide contains contact details for council officers along with step by step advice on establishing your group, ranging from organising an event to applying for funding.

There are already a number of active 'Friends' groups throughout the city, working with us to improve parks and open spaces. Many have been running for a number of years. The Council recognises that groups may have different priorities for their areas, and that there are no quick fixes to improving public parks and open spaces, as you can see in the case study from the Friends of Barnhill Rock Garden, in this document. However, without the involvement of local residents Dundee would not be the city it is. By working together we firmly believe we can create the parks that we want, and our citizens deserve.

You could help protect or improve a local park or open space within Dundee - so give it a go, and good luck.

Councillor Bob Duncan

(Convener of Leisure, Art and Communities)

2.0 ESTABLISHING A 'FRIENDS' GROUP

2.1 Identify interested parties

This can sometimes seem like the most difficult and daunting stage to tackle but there are a few simple things you can do. Most groups tend to advertise by distributing flyers, putting up posters or holding an event such as bulb planting.

Try to represent all communities surrounding the park as this will ensure that the group is acting on behalf of the wider community and assist in avoiding conflicts at a later date. A diverse group will provide more opportunities, knowledge and experience.

Inform community councils, resident groups, and park users such as bowling clubs and allotment societies. Invite members onto a steering group.

The more widely the 'Friends group is known the better, as it can support and be supported by organisations with similar aims or interests.

2.2 Set up a steering group

The steering group will guide the formation of the 'Friends' group. Six is a good number to get started. Once the group has a constitution, members can be elected as office bearers. The steering group members need not be office bearers once the group is constituted. The steering group will develop the initial interest, as well as developing the aims and constitution of the group, using a model which the Leisure and Communities Department can provide.

2.3 Letter of intent

The steering group should write a letter of intent to the Director of Leisure & Communities, Level 3, The Wellgate, Dundee, DD1 1DB, to register their interest in setting up a 'Friends' group.

Anyone within the initial group of interested individuals can write to register the group's interest in becoming a 'Friends' group.

The Director will offer the assistance of a Leisure and Communities officer, who will work with the group initially if required, offering guidance and support. The officer's support may also be useful in developing the groups aims etc.

2.4 Identifying a venue for possible meetings

The group will have to identify possible venues for regular meetings. These meetings should be organised in a facility that is local to your park or open space, and as open and accessible to as many community members as possible. The Leisure and Communities Department cannot cover the cost of hiring venues. However, where there are existing facilities within local, council buildings, these may be available for use at no cost.

2.5 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Once you have found a number of interested individuals the next phase is to hold an inaugural Annual General Meeting (AGM) to adopt a constitution and elect a committee. Thereafter hold the AGM once a year in order to elect or re-elect committee members and present an annual report and accounts to the rest of the group.

All meetings held by your group should have an agenda, indicating what issues will be included in your meeting. Minutes should also be taken at every meeting, to keep a record of what was discussed. Record the names of those in attendance, and any apologies sent by those who were unable to attend the meeting. Please include the Duty Parks Officers and any supporting officers in the circulation of your minutes.

2.6 Forming a Committee

The group's committee helps with the day to day running of the group, and is elected by the members of the group, to carry out actions and tasks on their behalf between meetings. The committee is responsible for the actions of the group - so members cannot act without the committee's authorisation.

The aims of the committee should be achievable and realistic short, medium and long term visions for the park complimenting the aims of the Council's Leisure and Communities Department.

Remember "small wins" or successes will encourage support and participation. Short term achievable projects will achieve positive publicity, allowing the group to develop its role, experience and confidence in dealing with issues.

The Role of Elected Members - The Council is aware of the interest that councillors have in their local parks and open spaces within their constituency. Invite councillors to attend your meetings as non voting ex officio committee members and include in your circulation of minutes.

2.7 Other forms of 'Friends' Groups

Below are some of the other types of groups and organisations with an interest in the improvement of parks and green spaces:

- Informal, unconstituted groups
- Conservation groups
- Park Watch groups
- Community Planning Groups

The Council's advice is to use the most popular choice, and to operate under the title of 'Friends...' for example Friends of Baxter Park. It is a title that suggests a supportive and protective role, and a commitment to bring benefits to the park, which is what most groups want. The best thing about the 'Friends' title is that it can include the group in every type of park interest and activity. It is a handy 'catchall' title that gives the group a high degree of flexibility. In addition, the title is now well used and understood, quickly letting people know what the group is all about.

2.8 Naming of 'Friends' groups

Dundee City Council reserves the right to the use of the names of all its parks and open spaces. The incorporation of the name into the title of your group will usually be granted but requires the agreement of the Director of Leisure and Communities.

The Office of Scottish Charity Regulator is also legally bound to review the names of charities (i.e. 'Friends' groups who apply for charitable status), and if they are too alike, to direct either one or both charities to change its name.

2.9 Roles and positions within the committee (example)

1. **Chairperson**, helps the group to achieve its aims, sets agendas, conducts meetings and acts as the leader of the group, ensuring its smooth operation. The chairperson should act as a good facilitator, ensuring positive discussions, and involving all members of the group.
2. **Secretary**, ensures all members of the group are kept fully informed and that they feel involved and included. The secretary prepares the paperwork and agendas for the meetings, books meeting rooms, maintains the group's records, deals with the group's correspondence, and supports the chairperson.
3. **Treasurer**, looks after the group's financial activities, ensuring accounts and records are kept up to date and accurate. The treasurer is responsible for making financial reports to the committee.
4. **Events officer**, manages the event budget, seeks permission to hold the event, arranges the hiring of acts and booking of the venue, co-ordinates event set up, technical specifications, site plans, and health and safety.
5. **Marketing and press officer** communicates the aims and objectives of the group to the wider community, including the local press and other media bodies etc. Arranges a variety of PR on behalf of the group, to promote the group's achievements in projects, funding, newsletters and activities.
6. **Web Master**, designs the group's website, creates webpage, and inserts information and images. Responsible for updating the content of the site.

2.10 Developing a Constitution

A constitution explains how your group will be managed, from the aims and objectives of the group, through to how meetings will be run. The constitution of your group does not have to be complicated, but should reflect how you wish your group to be managed. Appendix 3 is an example of a constitution form.

Constitutions are important for the following reasons;

- To ensure the groups aims and objectives are clear and agreed by its members.
- To provide a mechanism for making decisions and resolving disputes.
- To gain credibility with other organisations and bodies.
- To ensure accountability.
- To clarify liability and lines of responsibility.
- To enable the group to qualify for various grants where the awarding body insists on a group constitution.
- To enable the group to join other bodies that can help and support them.
- A constitution is also vital if the group wants to apply for charitable status.

2.11 Registering for Charitable Status

As well as the vital support the council can provide to you as a group, there are various organisations that will be able to offer help and advice. Once your group is constituted, you may wish to consider becoming a registered charity.

2.12 Benefits of charitable status

The main benefits of charitable status are tax related. Special advantageous relief's and schemes concerning income tax, corporation tax, council tax/rates, and others, are available to recognised charities. Charities do however pay VAT - but there are exemptions available for a range of activities.

2.13 Scottish Charity Register

If you want your group to be entered on to the Register and become a charity, you will need to apply to the office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

You can get hold of an application form and charity trustee declaration form from the website www.oscr.org.uk, by writing or by phone, at the contact details below. The OSCR's website provides a checklist on how to identify whether an organisation is a charity when you are asked to contribute.

You can contact OSCR as follows;
Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator
2nd Floor
Quadrant House
9 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

Tel: 01382 220446 Email: info@oscr.org.uk

2.14 Setting up a Bank Account

You will need a bank account to manage any money that is generated through fundraising, and to pay for items such as stationery etc. Set up the account in the name of the group, with at least 2 signatories. The signatories must be members of the committee, usually the chairperson and the treasurer. It is possible to have 3 signatories on the account, allowing a member of the committee to sign if another is unavailable.

2.15 Insurance and Health and Safety

If your group intends to undertake practical tasks, and hold events then you will require insurance, usually public liability insurance (which covers accidents to the public on site) and public accident insurance (to provide compensation for your volunteers).

To comply with Health and Safety laws the group is required to carry out risk assessments, prior to an event. This would involve looking for hazards (e.g. using tools), deciding who might be harmed and how, and then recording the findings of your assessment (e.g. the main risks and the measures you have taken to deal with them). Please contact the Departments' Environment Events Officer for advice and more detailed written guidance.

3.0 ADVERTISING

3.1 Local Media

Often the best way to inform people about your event is through posters, local newspapers, radio or television. The papers usually have a 'What's On' column which advertises details of events from local groups. Contact the news desk, at least one or two weeks before the event, so that they can put the date in their diary.

Things that you need to tell the media:

- What is happening
- When the event is taking place
- Where it is taking place
- Who is involved
- Any prizes
- Who is presenting
- Any additional information
- Who to contact for further information

This information can be put together in a press release (Appendix 4). Sometimes the press will send a photographer and/or a reporter but this is not always guaranteed. If the media does not attend you can send them a description of the event and what was achieved, along with photographs taken before, during and after the event.

3.2 Newsletters

These are a great way of informing your members, and the wider community, of what your group is up to; celebrating successful events, promoting forthcoming events and recruiting new members.

3.3 Websites

If a member of your group has experience of web design, the group could set up its own website providing information about the group, a history of the park, and a list of activities/events that your group is involved with.

4.0 FUNDRAISING

In the majority of cases your group may wish to raise funds to help run the group and carry out projects. Some groups organise fund raising events, such as a plant sale, to raise revenue. Building positive relationships with local organisations may help you to get some resources for free. For example, you could persuade a local cafe or supermarket to provide free refreshments after a clean-up event.

Your group may wish to apply for funding to help improve your park/open space. When applying for funding, please bear in mind the following points:

- It is really important that the funder you apply to is willing to give funds for projects like your's. Make a list of the funder's aims and objectives, and make statements about how your project will reach these aims and objectives.
- Don't be too extravagant with your first bid, it is better to apply for smaller amounts of money when you first begin. Funders like to see experience of dealing with money and projects, before they offer you a large sum of money.
- Funders like projects which meet the needs of local people. If you have completed a piece of consultation that shows your project will meet these needs, try to refer to it in the application.
- Funders also like to fund projects which include more than one group or organisation. Refer to the fact that you work in partnership with Dundee City Council and any other groups or organisations.
- Mention any match funding you have received. Equipment, facilities or staff given in kind can be classed as match funding. Contact the Leisure and Communities officer to get a cost for these items.

4.1 Funding Advice

There are a number of funding opportunities open to community groups, these may be provided by local or national organisations. Advice on what funding is available and how a community can go about obtaining funding is also available locally and nationally, listed below are organisations and publications that you may find helpful.

- Claiming Your Share - Greenspace guide to funding for parks Community and 'Friends groups.
- Dundee Voluntary Action and Volunteer Centre.
- Dundee City Council provides assistance to help Dundee groups and organisations access external funding.

Dundee City Council provides 'Search for Grants Online' - a free on line server that provides details of local, national and EU funding support. The Funding Fact file, this has been developed by the Council and includes valuable guidance and information on the key issues to consider when applying for grants, as well as hints and tips for filling out application forms etc. The Reference and Information centre, in Central Library, subscribes to the FunderFinder database - enquire at the Service desk

For enquiries regarding external funding contact the Council:

External Funding Officer

Dundee City Council

3 City Square

Dundee

DD1 3BA

Telephone 01382 434212

Fax 01382 434650

4.2 National Funding Bodies

These organisations provide advice and information on funding, rather than providing grants and awards themselves, and are a good place to start if you are new to fundraising. Many of them are based online, and have some excellent information, guidance and advice available.

Sources Of Possible Funding

Awards For All

Funded by the Big Lottery Fund, Awards for All gives grants of between £500 and £10,000 for people to take part in art, sport and community activities, and projects that promote education, the environment and health in the local community.

Contact

4th Floor
1 Atlantic Quay
1 Robertson Street
Glasgow
G2 8JB

Tel: 0141 242 1400

E-mail: Scotland@awardsforall.org.uk

www.awardsforall.org.uk

Big Lottery Fund

Grants are available to help regenerate the communities which are most in need.

Contact

E-mail: enquiries.scotland@biglotteryfund.org.uk

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Scottish Natural Heritage

Various grant schemes aimed at protecting and improving Scotland's natural heritage.

Contact:

Battleby
Redgorton
Perth
PH1 3EW

Tel: 01738 458677

E-mail: grants@snh.gov.uk

www.snh.gov.uk

Forward Scotland

Grants for community-based projects promoting sustainable development.

Contact:

The Lodge
Earlsgate House
st Ninian's Road
Stirling
FK8 2HE

Tel: 056000 10 560

E-mail: enquiries@forward-scotland.org.uk

www.forward-scotland.org.uk

5.0 Further Information

Dundee City Council will always welcome people interested in setting up a 'Friends' group, to help care for their local park/open space, and will offer advice to those trying to establish their group.

5.1 Useful Contacts

Contact details of the parks department can be found on signs in parks or in leaflets. They can also be found in the Phone Book. If you still cannot find out who to contact, the council switchboard will be able to connect you to the Leisure and Communities parks team. The following contacts will provide further information.

Dundee City Council

Parks Operations Manager - 01382 432128

Environment Development Section Leader - 01382 433815

Environment Events Officer - 01382 433881

Greenspace Development Officer - 01382 433863

Countryside Ranger Service - 01382 431848

Urban Ranger Service - 01382 489323

Tayside Biodiversity Officer - 01382 433042

Head of Community Learning and Development - 01382 307464

Dundee Voluntary Action and Volunteer Centre

The Dundee Voluntary Action and Volunteer Centre is an independent voluntary organisation that provides a 'Volunteer Centre' service in Dundee by:

- Gathering information about local volunteer opportunities.
- Putting people in touch with organisations where they can volunteer.
- Providing information and advice to those who work with volunteers
- Promoting and publicising the values of volunteering.

Dundee Voluntary Action and Volunteer Centre

10 Constitution Road

Dundee

DD1 1LL

Tel: 01382 305705

website: www.volunteerdundee.org.uk

Appendix 1:

Established 'Friends' Groups in Dundee

Increasing interest by members of the public, in improving the maintenance and development of parks and open spaces, has led to an increase in the number of Friends of Parks groups across the country. Within Dundee there are a several groups, at various different stages of development. These include:

- The Friends of Barnhill Rock Garden
- The Friends of Balgay Park
- The Friends of Balgarthno Circle
- The Friends of Baxter Park
- The Friends of Camperdown House
- The Friends of Magdalene Green
- The Friends of Western Cemetery
- The Friends of Templeton Woods

There are also other established groups relating directly to the city's parks and open spaces, and these include:

- Ardler Environment Group
- Balgay Conservation Group
- Broughty Ferry Environment Group
- Broughty Ferry in Bloom Group
- Dighty Group
- Bonnie Dundee Group
- Dundee Red Squirrel Group
- Dundee SWT - Miley Group
- Middleton Woods Management Team



Appendix 2: 'Friends' Group Case Study - Friends of Barnhill Rock Garden

Why the group was set up?

Formally constituted in 1997, the Friends of the Barnhill Rock Garden is a recognised Scottish Charity, whose main purpose is to promote and support the Garden, ensuring this unique facility has a secure future. The first 'Friends' group in the City formed to support a public park, the group is widely held as an example of what can be achieved through community participation.

Regular discussions with representatives of Dundee City Council's Leisure and Communities department have resulted in a number of joint ventures to improve the Garden, and provide new ones for the benefit of the local community. Friends are encouraged to play an active part in the Garden, and raise a large number of diverse plants for the Rock Garden each year. A propagation unit has enabled the volunteers to raise cuttings of a wide range of shrubs, which are grown on and eventually planted up in the Rock Garden. The 'Friends' also provide financial assistance to purchase seeds, bulbs and plants, to ensure the long established collection of plant materials from around the world.

What has the group achieved?

The 'Friends' group now has just under 500 members, and is involved in a varied programme of garden visits, talks, and workshops, and publish a twice yearly newsletter. The Beechgrove Garden television programme featured the Garden on the 23rd April 2008, following a day long visit by Jim McColl, when he spent time talking to the gardener and members of the 'Friends' group.

The 'Friends' work actively to bring outside groups down to the garden; have established links with local primary schools; and have run a number of children's activities during the summer holidays.

Additional achievements

The Garden is a credit to the partnership of the city council and the 'Friends' group. In 2007 the Garden received its first Green Flag Award, and as a result of this joint partnership working, the garden has achieved Green Flag status in 2008, for the second year running.

Also in 2008, the group scooped a prestigious environmental prize in the Beautiful Scotland Neighbourhood Awards. The 'Friends' received an Outstanding Achievement award for creating a beautiful, clean and sustainable neighbourhood.

Also assisted by the participation of the Friends, a four star Visit Scotland Garden Award was obtained in 2008.

What have been your main challenges so far?

The completion of the Geddes Glasshouse project. In 2006 Dundee Contemporary Arts donated a large glasshouse to the Friends, as a result of which an application was made to Awards for All, and £9000 was received, to be used mainly to set up information and display boards within the glasshouse; run a series of children's activities during the summer holidays; and obtain computer, projector and camera equipment to aid the work of the Friends. Setting up the glasshouse was a joint project with Dundee City Council as was the Pergola erected in 2005. Both provide meeting and activity areas and complement the work going on in the garden.

Additional challenges

The renewal/renovation of the woodland, which resulted in us obtaining the Neighbourhood Award mentioned above.

Our latest project – revamping part of the scree bed – again with the assistance of Dundee City Council.

What advice would you give others?

Be adventurous – don't give up easily if things do not always go to plan – remember Bruce and the Spider!



Appendix 3: Sample Constitution

1. Name

The name of the group shall be known as Friends of (insert name of park here)

2. Aim

To improve the green space generally known as (insert name of park here)

3. Objectives

The main objectives of the group are to:

- a) To represent the views of the residents of (insert name of area and park) in matters concerning the park.
- b) To actively seek the involvement of the relevant departments of Dundee City Council, so that it performs its statutory responsibility to maintain the Park.
- c) To carry out and promote both environmental improvements and practical conservation. To educate, encourage and support the local population in environmental practice, by working with statutory and non-statutory agencies.
- d) To work with similar groups and exchange information and advice with them.

4. Powers

In furtherance of the aims, but not otherwise, this association and its committee may carry out the following powers:

- a) Organise meetings, training courses and events.
- b) Raise funds and receive contributions where appropriate, to finance work.
- c) Publicise the Friends activities through the media.
- d) Buy, hire, or legitimately borrow any equipment, tools, services, or other property required.

5. Membership

- a) Membership of the group is open to any person who is interested in helping the group to achieve its aims, willing to abide by the rules of the group, and to pay any subscription agreed by the management committee.
- b) Every member has one vote at general meetings.
- c) The management committee may, by unanimous vote and for good reason, terminate the membership of any individual, provided that the individual concerned has had the right to be heard by the management committee, accompanied by a 'Friend', before the decision has been made.

6. Office Bearers

- a) Friends of (insert name here) shall be administered by a Management Committee of not less than three people elected at the group's Annual general meeting.

The officers of the Management Committee shall consist of:

- The Chairperson
- The Treasurer
- The Secretary

And any other posts deemed necessary.

- b) The election of office bearers shall be for a period of two years initially and shall take place at the AGM.
- c) Elections will be by majority vote at the AGM. The Secretary will give notice of an election in writing, at least 14 days before the date of the meeting. Nominations may be submitted before or at the AGM. Nominees to be at the AGM unless written apologies received.
- d) The Committee may from time to time appoint sub committees for any special purpose.
- e) Should an elected office bearer resign, or cease to be able to attend meetings for a period in excess of three calendar months, the vacancy may be filled at the next Committee meeting.
- f) Relevant financial interests of members applying for a position should be made known before the election.

7. Finance

- a) The Treasurer shall open a bank account in the name of the group.
- b) There shall be three signatories to the account with a requirement for two signatories to sign withdrawals from the account.
- c) The Treasurer shall keep proper and accurate account of the group's finances and shall produce an Independently Examined Statement of the accounts for the AGM.

8. Representation

- a) As a matter of policy, representatives from the following organisations may be invited to Management Committee meetings:
- i) Dundee City Council
 - ii) News Media
- b) Representatives from other organisations may be invited to the Committee meetings, by the Office Bearers jointly.
- c) The invited representatives may participate in the business of the meeting at the discretion of the Chairperson, but will not have the right to vote.

9. Committee Meetings

- a) The committee shall meet at least two times each year.
- b) The quorum for a meeting shall be five.
- c) The committee shall be accountable to the members at all times.
- d) All committee members shall be given at least fourteen days notice.

10. Annual General Meeting

- a) The Friends of (insert name here) shall hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- b) The business of the AGM shall include:
 - Receiving a report of the group's activities over the year.
 - Receiving a report of the last financial year's accounts from the Treasurer.
 - Electing a new Management Committee and considering any other matters that may arise.

11. Administration of All Meetings

- a) The Secretary shall give notice of meetings by circular to all members giving at least 14 days notice.
- b) Accurate minutes of all meetings will be kept.
- c) Copies of the minutes and the agenda for forthcoming meetings shall be circulated by the Secretary.
- d) Business, to be included on the agenda of the meeting, must be notified to the Secretary at least 10 days before the meeting. Late business may be introduced at the discretion of the Chairperson.

12. Dissolution clause

- a) Should the group be dissolved all assets will be transferred to an equivalent organisation with the same objectives as the Friends (insert name of group here).

Signed:

Chairperson.....

Date.....

Secretary.....

Date.....

Treasurer.....

Date.....

Ratified By (Name)

(Position)

Date.....

Appendix 4: Sample Press Release

PRESS RELEASE
FAO:
PHOTOCALL/PRESS RELEASE INFORMATION
WHAT IS HAPPENING?
WHEN IS IT HAPPENING?
WHERE IS IT HAPPENING?
WHO IS INVOLVED? (participants, organisers, sponsors)

For more information contact:

NAME	TELEPHONE NUMBER

Friends and Community Groups



Broughty Ferry in Bloom Group



Friends of Baxter Park



Friends of Barnhill Rock Garden



Ardara Environment Group