

SMAG meeting with Midlothian Council  
7pm Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> August at 25A, Avero, Polton Bank

**Actions:**

**Car park gating:** James to review plan. Originally an inner set of lockable bollards were planned

**Keyholders:** SMAG to canvas possibilities in Stevenson Place

**Information board:** James to send Pete document with best practices.  
SMAG to then start to collate ideas

**Opening ceremony:** Initial thought is for it to be in Spring (May) 2009. Pete to arrange an afternoon meeting with Jo later this year.

**Press Release:** SMAG to contact local paper near the completion of phase 2

**Tree Trunks for seating:** Pete to make enquiries at Bilston Wood (contact Edin Uni))

**Agenda & minutes:**

- Introductions: Geoff, Jo (the ranger) and James
- Brief Update of where we stand: Geoff & Pete
- Facilities: what are the objectives, what are needed & how could they be achieved (examples: bins for rubbish or dog dirt, places to sit, things for school visits – pond dipping platforms)
- Signage: Who would like to contribute, what format do we want it take
- Opening Ceremony: Why, What and approximately when
- Supporting the ranger
- Possibilities for SMAG member projects

**Council introductions**

Geoff – planning

James (apologies from Gary) – Land Service: manages council open spaces

Jo – working for Land services group

**Update & Notes**

- WREN – The council have entered into contract with them, and have accepted a tender for second phase work – Darling & Sons.
- One of the first things to happen will be soil spreading, but the soil needs to dry out. Geoff hoping it will stop raining in September. Footpaths and fence construction can go ahead though
- Vegetation will be cleared from the walls against river
- Hoping to finish the work by November 08
- WREN – opening ceremony

**The Ranger service** – There is Jo & 3 others, each with specific locations to look after. They work 7 days / week during the summer, 5 days from October  
Funded by government, SNH at the moment

Roles:

- Education (formal) or informal – quite a few
- Recreation – e.g. you want somewhere to ride your bike  
[Access – what do you want to do / how to avoid conflict; can include “Tea and Cake” in Vogrie Country Park]
- Conservation aka Biodiversity

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The long term ranger for Springfield Mill has not yet been determined. Jo was here because of interest in the site. Specific interest to connect schools here rather than just Vogrie. "Keen to get their badges"

Ranger visits may be about once a week during the summer.  
[James talking about Roslyn Glen "spreading down" the valley towards Springfield Mill

]

**Maintenance:** – the first year is done in the contract. Longer term the rangers are involved. Cutting the grass, bins - expect two cuts per year, one in spring, one in Autumn. Considering "Cut and lift", it's the best method because it depletes nutrients

**Fencing:** Will add a fence along the front similar to the one on the bridge – will be painted moss green.

**Main entrance** – the left hand entrance, with a small car park. Some details to discuss about car park gating – haven't thought about second bollards which was on the original SMAG plan. There will be a height restriction.

**Main Tarmac Footpath:** Will start from the car park

**Woodland path:** will go round the back, using the red blaise from Harley Weston nursery.

**Seeding:** The main area will be planted to divide it into two unequal sizes – a possible SMAG project would be to plant several hundred trees – possible school connection. May depend on whether site works are finished

**Camping:** Cutting trees down is not acceptable

**Pedestrian only access** will remain adjacent to the bridge

**River Fence:** Timber fencing will be installed along some of the parts next to the river where there is a high wall. Not planning on reinstating the path by the weir (James – there are some safety issues they have to look after as a council)

**Gap in bank opposite Hewan Bank** - will put gabion matting

**Opening ceremony** – WREN want to get some publicity. Jo would have ideas of what's worked before, e.g. a theme such as "Springing" into action, possible sponsorship. James – being careful with the effort involved (No overtime possible => late afternoon meeting)

- Thinking more in terms of Spring
- Press release could be used for WREN and publicise the event

**Contamination Monitoring** still happening – Geoff's division hold on to the site until this is sorted out.

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**Access:**

- **No motorbikes** – this can be a matter for the police
- **Horses** – can't stop them unless they have been shown to cause damage, but we should consider signage of recommended / not recommended route. Geoff has asked Estates to write to the Riding School. Gary fairly confident that path would handle it. Ultimately could introduce management rules. Possibly include some signage for "No Horses between Nov and March"
- **Mountain bikes** – no restriction
- **Dogs:** Under control – but not putting pooper scooper system. Look at in the longer term. Guiding dogs to the pedestrian entrance? – Don't want any more signs than essential (Geoff!)

**Facilities**

- **Rubbish bin** – have put in for one. Will be emptied once a week or so. Siting and location tbd
- **Interpretation board** – Council expecting it. Can be used to combine material like expectations for access. Keep it next to the car park area? Target Green Flag status = ? Tan information board is not part of the immediate contract. The example for the Dalkeith / Penicuik walkway is considered very good but costs around £6k. Geoff thinking there may be enough money to get some design work done
- **Seating** – could be for anyone. Joan suggesting cutting a tree trunk in half. James thinking of a chain saw competition
- **Picnic Tables** – let's just wait before thinking about picnic tables.

**Ponds & pond dipping**

There will be an extra edge on the (single) pond, a pier of about a metre. It will be rot proof plastic wood (like Vogrie). Would need a path across to it – does this have to be disabled access? Yeuk if it's tarmac. Possibly a grass /sand mix – would also need to be wheelchair friendly

**Meeting Closed at 9pm**