



Friends of Newlands Park

Annual Report

Sept 2025 to Sept 2026

Introduction

Volunteers with Friends of Newlands Park (FoNP) have been very busy in the Park in the year that this report covers. The most visible part of our volunteering continues to be our dedicated gardeners who work hard on maintaining Newlands Park. The Wednesday group meet all year round, keeping the flower beds tidy. Their work is supplemented by occasional hit squads, either responding to specific seasonal Saturday challenges or as part of corporate volunteering initiatives. What a difference these bigger squads can make in just a few hours!

A lot of work goes on in the background too. Our volunteer committee meets four times a year, and also spend a lot of time on WhatsApp exchanging information, planning activities and agreeing on actions.

One of our volunteers sits on the committee for the Glasgow Friends of Parks and Greenspaces Forum, which has been set up in order for Friends Groups across the city to share ideas and information that help to make our parks better places for everyone.

We also attend the monthly Newlands and Auldhouse Community Council meetings, which gives us the opportunity to share what's going on in the park, raise issues of concern with the local Councillors, and to support

community initiatives such as the annual fête.

We have been talking to Councillors for some time about improving the play facilities in the park, and we are delighted that we have now been awarded funding from the Glasgow City Council Neighbourhood Infrastructure Fund for new playground equipment. Concepts are being drawn up and we hope to see this implemented very soon.

We have continued to press for the installation of a pétanque area, following consultation with park goers who demonstrated a clear interest in such a facility. We have been assured that funding has now been made available and that work should commence in 2027.

Looking ahead, FoNP continue to work in consultation with the local community and with Glasgow City Council, striving to sustain and enhance Newlands Park, ensuring the needs of ALL parkgoers are considered, now and into the future.

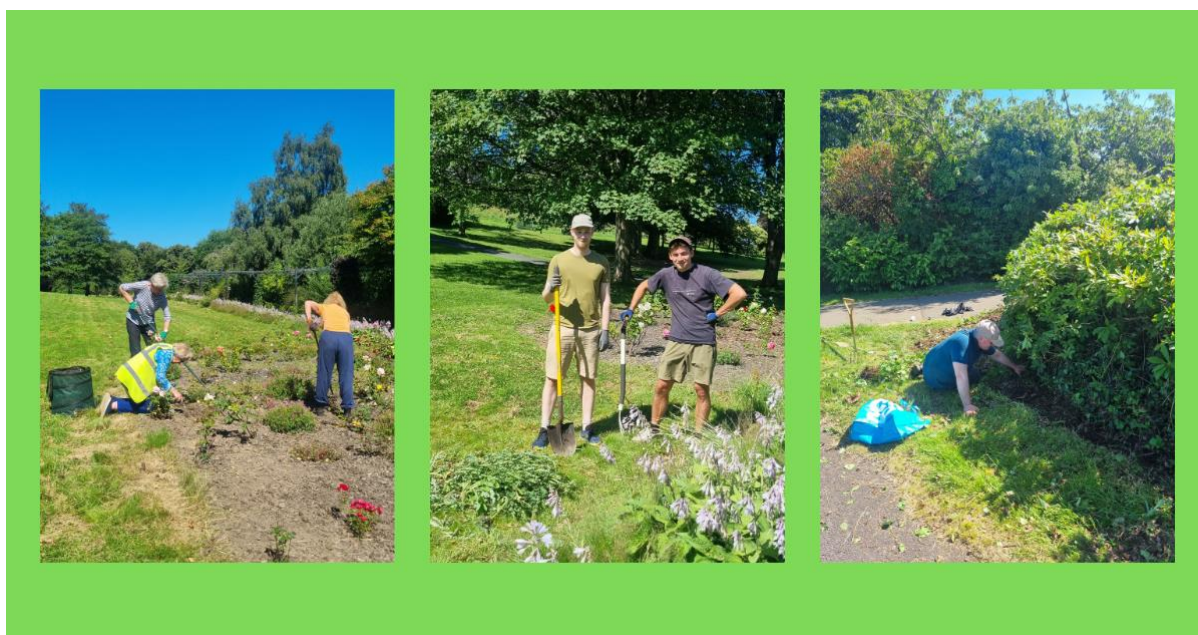
As always, we need additional volunteers, supporters and followers to help us develop new initiatives and help with park maintenance. Join us!

If you're involved already, many thanks for all your efforts - read on to see what we've achieved this year!

Dave McLeod, Chair, 2025-2026



2025 – 2026 Year at a Glance



	2025-2026
Horticulture and biodiversity activities	Volunteers planted 4 apple trees Wednesday gardening volunteers continued to maintain and refurbish flower beds Weekly (from April to September) butterfly transect observations Pond survey found palmate newts and 35 invertebrate species
Volunteering	15 regular volunteers & 914 hours of volunteering Sept '25 to Sept '26 (recorded monthly). This consisted of 563 hours of gardening and 351 hours of other volunteering.
Infrastructure	New wooden picnic tables installed Bird boxes installed Fairy house built Stolen pond sign found and reinstated
Events and social benefits	Supported the fête organised by local scouts, in September 2026 Held volunteers' summer lunch & Christmas dinner
Members	6 committee members Pool of 36 gardening volunteers in 2 WhatsApp groups Private Facebook group now has 1,286 members (Sept 2026), with around 14 posts/month
Social media/ Communications	5 enewletters sent to 179 subscribers; FoNP Facebook (330 followers); website (1,800 visitors); Instagram (263 followers)
Fundraising	Individual donations received totalling £1,021.94

Gardening Volunteers

The Wednesday Regulars



We now have 22 names on the list of people who have volunteered to work in the park on Wednesday mornings for a couple of hours. There is no obligation to turn up every week so on an average Wednesday we might have 4 volunteers or eight. However, it's amazing the difference 4 volunteers can make in a 2-hour shift.

This year we have been given some plants by neighbours who when splitting their shrubs at the end of the summer, have donated their cuttings to us. This has filled up some of the beds and will provide us with more colour in the beds in future. If anybody has cuttings or spare plants please consider donating them to the park.

We have been fortunate enough to get funding from a grant so we will soon be able to purchase a large selection of new tools. This will be added to the

tools we already have and allow a larger number of volunteers each to have their own hoe or rake etc. and not to have to share.

We reduced the size of the huge rosebed which ran the length of the hosta walk because it was sadly too large to maintain and kept just one bed at each end. The western bed has been taken over by thistles which we have found extremely difficult to eradicate: for the moment we are on top of them but while we focus on that bed the rest of the beds are neglected. Extra volunteers would help in this respect so if there's anybody out there with an hour or two to spend on a Wednesday morning we'd be delighted to see you.

Sometimes we think we are too small a group to maintain the park as well as we'd like, but then we think if we didn't volunteer as we do just what it might look like. It's a lovely wee park and we want to keep it that way.

The Saturday 'Hit Squad'



We understand that some people who can't always commit to regular volunteering are still keen to help out when they can, so we have been running occasional Saturday morning sessions to tackle some of the heavier seasonal

tasks that the Wednesday gardeners don't always have time to do.

The work tends to involve cutting back the previous year's growth, so that the various shrubberies around the park don't get too overgrown. In the summer, the biggest task is usually clearing new growth around the paths in the 'maze' area beside the pond. This is where the faeries live, and they are very grateful that we don't clear up too much, so they can still hide when adults are around.

We usually have around 8 to 12 volunteers at these sessions, with an age range of 7 to 70's. Some people get stuck in with the hedge trimmers and loppers whilst others follow behind clearing the cuttings and transporting them to our green skip. It's a great team effort, and everyone really enjoys it, especially when they are finished and step back to admire what they have achieved.

Other Volunteering Tasks

Non-gardening volunteering is equally important and non-gardening volunteering hours came to a total of 351 hours last year. This includes time spent on special project such as the picnic tables and homes for faeries and small birds, more of which below.

Administrative tasks are the much-needed hidden resource which keeps FoNP running smoothly. These hours include: correspondence and meetings between FoNP committee members and other organisations, including Glasgow City Council and the Glasgow Friends of Parks and Greenspaces Forum; social media and other promotional activities; strategic consultations and report writing; grant

applications; and event/project planning and management.

Installation of picnic tables

Picnic tables were one of the most frequently suggested items when we surveyed people last year on what facilities they wanted to see in the park, and Friends of Newlands Park volunteers worked hard to make it happen, agreeing with the council on acceptable locations and specifications.



Special thanks to volunteers George and Dave for all their hard work in getting the site ready for installation and for varnishing them.

The picnic tables were made possible by numerous small donations from many parkgoers, and a substantial donation from Newlands Park Community Tennis Centre.

We hope you enjoy using them. Please treat them with respect so we can all enjoy them for many years.

Building new homes part 1

A few of our volunteers wanted to do something to attract more small birds to the park.



After taking advice from the GCC Countryside Rangers, they decided to make and install a few bird boxes for small species around the park. Thank you Alan, Gavin and Sheilagh! We think they look great and we hope that they will provide safe homes for many years to come.

Building new homes part 2



One of our very creative volunteers decided that the little faeries that he spotted sometimes in the maze

deserved a nice home, so he set about building them one. The little creatures were delighted, but sadly some wicked gremlins decided to destroy it. Our volunteer was not to be deterred and rebuilt the house in stone. We are pleased to say that it is still intact and we hope to extend the construction project soon.

Meeting with the Experts!



Friends of Newlands Park are always keen to hear from parkgoers of all ages about what they think about the park and what improvements they would like to see. One of our committee members was therefore delighted to be invited by Mrs Sluman, a teacher at Merrylee Primary School, to meet with their Outdoor Learning Committee at the school. They talked about their favourite parts of the park, the importance of engaging with and protecting nature, and what they could do to engage the interest of other children. They came up with a lot of great practical suggestions and they also visited the park as a group, to start planning some new projects.

We look forward to working with the Merrylee Primary pupils over the coming year, and would welcome approaches from other schools and community groups.

The Pond



The pond is a major feature of Newlands Park, and the new bench and signage made possible by donations and grants to Friends of Newlands Park are proving to be very popular. In the case of the sign, perhaps a little too popular as it was stolen a few months ago. We were making plans to replace it, at a cost of over £400, so we were delighted when a sharp eyed local found it in some overgrowth in a nearby lane and one of our volunteers was able to return it to its rightful place.

A few years ago, the pond was a very sterile environment but now, under the care of the Glasgow City Council Rangers, it has become a wildlife haven.

A student from Glasgow University conducted a survey of the pond in July, comparing results from 201. She noted 35 newt larvae and 3 adult palmate newts so the newts certainly seem to be thriving in this new environment, which is good news.



And as for the invertebrates, there are now many more groups of invertebrates than there were recorded in 2011 (4 families compared to 25 families in 2026). She found different pond snails, water boatmen, water beetles, caddisfly larvae, mayfly larvae and damselfly larvae to name a few, so the freshwater invertebrate biodiversity has increased massively, which is great!

One concern, however, is that there is now potentially too much vegetation, therefore the Rangers will ensure that they clear a third of it every autumn, to ensure that the amount of vegetation is controlled.

Park Maintenance

Whilst the volunteers do a lot of gardening around the park, some of the biggest maintenance tasks are undertaken by Glasgow City Council staff. This includes grass cutting and hedge trimming, tree care and anything else that requires specialist expertise or the use of heavy machinery.

Friends of Newlands Park are in regular contact with the Council and highlight issues such as hedges encroaching on the pavements and other non-urgent issues that people tell us about.

For urgent issues, such as storm damaged trees that need to be cleared or for overflowing bins, we would encourage parkgoers to contact the council directly via the council website. There's also a QR code on each bin you can scan to report when it is full.

We all know that the Council's resources are stretched and they can't do as much as they used to do. As the Newlands Park Friends Group we try to reflect all views, and work towards reaching a successful compromise.

Improving Facilities in the Park

Those of you who follow our communications will know that we have been lobbying the Council for new play equipment for primary school aged children and for a pétanque piste for a long time. We are delighted that funding has now been secured for both of these, and we hope to see them installed during 2027. We have been guided in our priorities by our survey of 2024 as outlined in our last annual report, and will continue to engage with park-goers to hear suggestions for what else people would like to see, and will do our utmost to make it happen.

Newlands Summer Fête

This annual community event held in Newlands Park took place on 5th September, bringing people together for a fun-filled day, while raising funds for charity and community youth groups.



It was led by a group of community volunteers ably supported by the local Scouts and featured the ever-popular fire engine and police car.

There were also some well attended tennis try out sessions, run by the Newlands Park Community Tennis Centre.



Communications

Facebook Group “Friends of Newlands Park”

The group now has 1286 members.

This is a private group that people must apply to join. FoNP committee members administer the group, ensuring that only people with a genuine interest in the park can join. Any member can post, and there are around 14 new posts every month, with most posts getting between 200 and 700 views.

Just like the park itself, our Facebook group is a little oasis of friendliness, where you can see what our volunteers have been up to, photos of cute dogs and beautiful plants, as well as be alerted to lost/found items.

We are grateful to everyone that posts, comments or simply visits the Facebook group, helping us to create a sense of community and belonging.

E-newsletter

Launched in Aug 2025, the monthly email newsletter has nearly 180 subscribers. Sign up via our website.

Our website

www.friendsofnewlandspark.org is a comprehensive source of information about the park. It has details of volunteering activities and also has sections on the plants and wildlife, including a comprehensive guide to the trees in the park.

Other Social Media Accounts

These public accounts are used for sharing information about the park.

Facebook.com/friendsofnewlandspark:
330 followers

Instagram @newlandsparkg43: 263
followers

Treasurer's Report

Please note that this is for the Financial Year 6th April 2024 – 5th April 2025, which does not align with all of the activities described in this report.

These accounts were kindly examined and reviewed for accuracy by Iain Webster, CA

This financial year, we were grateful to receive £1021.94 in donations from members of the public. This was up considerably from the £655.25 donated in 23/24, and we are very grateful to everyone that contributed.

Our main expenditure in this 24/25 financial year was for:

- £67.71 for gardening equipment
- £89.89 for website hosting
- £303 for admin costs, including insurance for equipment and for volunteers/public liability and bank charges

Friends of Newlands Park Accounts		
Financial Year 6 th April 2025 to 5 th April 2026		
Income		Notes
Donations	£1,021.94	From individuals, by cash, cheques, or PayPal on-line donations
Other receipts	£120.00	From notice board adverts
Total Income	£1,141.94	
Expenditure		
Equipment	£67.71	Safety glasses, tool repairs
Sports & recreation facilities	£27.25	Faerie house construction materials
Publicity	£89.89	website hosting
Insurance	£226.38	Volunteers activities/public liability
Other payments	£76.88	Bank account charges, Glasgow Tree Lovers membership
Total Expenditure	£488.11	
Balance		
Funds carried forward from last year	£2,640.96	
Funds received in year	£1,141.94	
Funds spent in year	£488.11	
Current balance	£3294.79	



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