

Report on Campbell Park

Images of Campbell Park can be viewed at www.colintoncc.org.uk/campbell-park

Current position

Campbell Park currently has a quality score of 62%, recognition of a “Very Good” standard community park but below the level required for “Excellent” which would allow the park to potentially go forward for Green Flag status. This is an improvement on the 2015 level of 61%. A Green Flag status, as with Spylaw Park wasn’t an initial ambition but came about with considerable input from the Parks & Greenspace Department of CEC.

Campbell Park is laid out with two junior sized football pitches and a cricket pitch. Bonaly Primary School & Edinburgh United use the football pitches while Scottish Widows Cricket and Edinburgh Cricket Club use the cricket pitch.

Most of the Park is grassed with surrounding areas naturalised with Daffodils and Tulips. To the western side is an area which is managed to encourage biodiversity. There are similarly graduated grass areas around other parts of the periphery.

In the north-west corner is a Play area which is fenced off to prevent dogs accessing there. There are swings and slides for younger children.

There are bench seats (6) and within the play area a picnic table. Litter Bins (2) are sited at each entrance to the park.

Community Usage

On an hour-long visit, only a small number of the community were seen walking their dogs, some with children. At the time of the visit the weather was fair but cold and the grass had just been cut. The overall impression was that of a pleasant open space to be in.

Edinburgh Public Parks and Gardens Strategy

There are six goals detailed in the strategy to

- highlight and interpret those aspects of Edinburgh's heritage located within the city's parks
- conserve natural habitats and wildlife
- realise parks potential in supporting healthy living
- put parks at the centre of community identity and planning
- improve the landscaping and visual appearance of parks
- develop resources and structures required to implement the strategy.

Opportunities for improvement

Access

Comments from park users and the current parks quality assessments indicate access is not ideal and that the entrance paths from Woodfield Avenue became muddy with large puddles of water making access difficult in wet or other extreme weather. This issue could be viewed as an urgent matter for attention. Access from Campbell Park Crescent has been noted as having a similar problem in very wet weather. General access for all users to the park would benefit greatly from a path network which was safe, sustainable and to a standard suitable for public parks.

The quality of the paths need not be of the highest standard but sufficient to maintain a dry route to the play area. It may also not be necessary to complete a full circuit of the park initially, but perhaps stage the installation as funds become available.

Biodiversity and Information

The areas where the grass is managed for biodiversity could be turned into wildflower beds in time. This might be challenging as the soil quality will have been improved over many years of grass cutting. A small investment might be needed to bring about a more biodiverse environment in these areas.

We would suggest a graduated cut in the less trafficked areas as a process, significantly reducing the fiscal and energy inputs to grassland management. The cuttings could be removed so that the nutrient status of the soil is decreased, reducing the vigour of the grass species. In the short term, spreading annual wildflower seed immediately after collection of the first cuttings would achieve a wildflower meadow effect. This could involve volunteers and community input. Later, perhaps five years on, after the nutrient status has decreased, perennial wildflower seed could be used and a once a year, spring cut be introduced further reducing the cost of maintenance of the 'wild areas'.

If this approach was adopted, we recommend information panels explaining the benefits that the management techniques bring to biodiversity in the park.

Recommendations going forward

As this report comes from discussions with the local Parks & Greenspace officer who has also had an input into it, the way forward might be as follows:

- Obtain costing for the path(s) with options (in progress). The suggested material is ULTITREC a 100% recycled pathway material. Prioritisation of path options might bring about early action rather attempting to complete all paths and failing to obtain sufficient funding.
- Consult with the community on the proposal and take into account any suggestions.
- Investigate sources of funding

There may be other actions that come forward following consultation with the community and other Colinton groups.

David Bewsey
Secretary