

Park It!
celebrating people in parks

CASE STUDY

Park It! Scotland



Celebration in the Park

Baxter Park, 06.08.05



The park

Baxter Park, designed by Joseph Paxton, the famous landscape gardener, was donated to the Dundee community by jute mill owner Sir David Baxter. The sandstone pavilion at the centre of the park was designed by G H Stokes. The park has a number of footpaths and contains a play area, bowling greens and tennis courts.

The park is currently being restored with an HLF grant. The re-planting and work on the children's playground will happen in 2006 with the final work on the pavilion being completed in 2007. It is the only complete Paxton Park in the country.

The event

To celebrate the park's Victorian roots, the group decided to have a Victorian Fun Fair as its theme. A number of Victorian style fun fair rides and side stalls were used to attract families into the park. 4,500 people attended the event despite two rain showers. A number of local councillors were also in attendance.



A historical timeline was put together by the youth group, S-Crew 5. They created a collage of the pavilion that included pictures of the different people who would've frequented the park from the day it opened up to present times. In the park Centre, the architects discussed their plans for the pavilion that was due to be restored with HLF funding from the Monday following the event.

Dundee houses one of the few remaining red squirrel populations in Britain. To help conserve their numbers a stand featured information about the endangered squirrels and a workshop on how to make a red squirrel feeder that grey squirrels can't access.

Budding footballers were given the chance to display their skills, as football tournament was organised for children and young adults. The council's sports development team set up their mobile 5-side football facility. This proved to be very popular, as a queue of teams stood patiently awaiting their turn to shine.

A number of community groups were invited, including the local church who arranged table tennis and pool games in their tent for youngsters. The WEB project ran a stand promoting its work with those who have drug addictions. They also ran a workshop, in which a mural was created depicting the problems that young people faced in Victorian times and the problems they face today.

The main stage featured a number of acts to appeal to everybody. There were rock bands, a samba band, The Woodlands Orchestra and even an Elvis impersonator! Meanwhile, the new amphitheatre was used next to the Park Centre, as local music company, Newstar, belted out well known hits from popular musicals.



We are delighted with the success of this years Celebration in the Park. The event proved to be a fun way in which to bring people together from all over the city, promoting the regeneration of the park and creating a vibrant community atmosphere.

Councillor Charles Farquhar

The community group

The Friends group has only recently been formed, but they are well supported by the well established Stobswell Forum.

Stobswell Forum is a residents group that holds regular meetings with the council. They had experience

of organising events in the past, although they saw Park It! as a great opportunity to promote the new Friends and to promote Baxter Park as part of a national project.

Feedback

They were very pleased with the turnout of 4,500, bearing in mind that two rain showers interrupted the day's proceedings. The group felt that focusing on the heritage of the park for the event helped to create a unique feel to the day.

The benefits

Although the community group already had experience of putting on events in the past, they felt the park really benefited from focusing on the heritage, especially in light of the HLF events improvements that were to be made on the Pavilion building, beginning the Monday after the event. The group already had established links with other community groups and organisations, but the event strengthened these ties. Since the event, the youth and church groups have already been in contact with the community group to discuss what they can do next year.

Everyone involved believe that a lot of good will come out of the event, even in the future, that can't be quantified, in terms of people's perception of the park, and the stronger community ties that were established.

The future

The group aim to build on the stronger relationships with other community groups. They feel that this will benefit them in a number of ways, as well as in terms of organising events. Next year, building on the momentum of this event and dependent on available funding, they would like to organise a Mela in the park.



Lessons learnt

- Make sure all stewards and volunteers know where they should be stationed and their areas of responsibility and tasks.
- It is often a good idea to have a PA system to announce what is happening around the park in different areas of the event.
- In meeting leading up to the event and during organisation, hold meetings at a time when the majority of people can attend, which may mean evening meetings and avoiding those throughout the day.
- When distributing minutes and updates about the organisation of the event, remember that not everybody has access to email.

Further information

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Links

Park It! – www.park-it.org.uk
GreenSpace – www.green-space.org.uk
Heritage Lottery Fund – www.hlf.org.uk
Sheffield City Council – www.dundeecity.gov.uk

