

FRIENDS OF MOUNT EDGCUMBE COUNTRY PARK (FOMECP) (CHARITY NO. 295261)

Report to The Joint Committee, 19 November 2021

This paper provides an update on activities, priorities and future plans for the FOMECP.

Our Vision

To work in partnership with the Park Management by jointly agreeing funding requirements and projects.

To continue to support the Park, as set out in our constitution: 'to preserve, or assist in the preservation of Mount Edgcumbe Country Park, Cornwall, for the benefit of the public, as a place of historical, botanical, horticultural, architectural and natural beauty'.

Committee Changes

Following the resignation of a number the FOMECP 2021 committee – including the key posts of Chair and Treasurer - a Special General Meeting (SGM) of the membership was held on 5 September 2021. Following the SGM, all posts on the committee were filled – the first time this has occurred in many years. The committee changes are:

Officer Posts:

- Chairman – Nicola Cull resigned - Ged Edgcumbe was elected.
- Vice Chairman – Alan Drummond stood – Gordon Crocker was elected.
- Treasurer – Gill Bunnell resigned – Carol Drummond was elected.
- Membership Secretary – Ged Edgcumbe stood down – Alan Drummond was elected.
- Secretary – Carol Drummond stood down – Glenis Edgcumbe was elected.
- Committee Members:
 - David Louis-Puttick, Katherine Storr, Rosemary Ferguson and Agnies Calkoen resigned.
 - Neil Rugg remained in place - Tony Hutchins, Steve Creese, Anne Creese, Mike Tong, Teresa Budd, Harry Vosper, Janet Vosper, Rozanne Griffiths-Woodcock and Malcolm Cross were all elected to the committee.
- All changes have been reported to the Charity Commission.

Policy Changes

We have notified the Park and the Joint Committee of a change to our policy to remove 'ex-officio' members from our committee. We await confirmation in writing that this is acceptable.

Membership

During the COVID 19 pandemic, and subsequent lockdown, FOMECP membership figures reduced and the number of new members being signed up was extremely sporadic. Since May 2021 and the easing of some of the lockdown restrictions, membership numbers have slowly risen back to pre-pandemic levels (circa 620) and we are now seeing an encouraging increase in new members.

The FOMECP committee is currently considering a series of 'membership drives' for 2022 to not only increase membership numbers, but also to try and attract families and a broader range of age groups.

Financial Update of The Year to Date

The cancellation of events in 2019 & 2020 has had a significant impact on our fund-raising efforts. Our funds currently stand at circa £120,000 and as previously reported a large proportion of that has been set aside for specific projects.

We are aware that supply chain issues and other factors have significantly increased the costs of timber and building materials. Whilst we remain committed to new projects such as statue restoration, new/updated toilets and a children's shelter, the increase in material costs may impact on what we can do and/or when we will be able to do it. We will monitor the situation and reconsider priorities with the Park Management if necessary.

During 2021, FOMECP provided £26,795 of funding for projects in the Park, which included a utility vehicle for use by the gardeners (£12,345), fencing material for a deer fence (£5,000), a tool to assist in erecting the deer fence (£3,450), bedding plants (£4,000) and mannequins for the Blitz Exhibition (£2,000).

Lambert Lodge – our second-hand bookshop re-opened in June and is attracting new members and also raising some much-needed funds. The Lodge is also proving to be an extremely useful information centre for visitors to the Park.

The full annual accounts can be viewed on-line at fomecp.org.uk.

Joint Committee Funding and Deterioration of the Park and its Assets

We fully support the future vision for the Park and will continue to work with the Park management to make it a success. However, the Friends remain concerned by speed and timing of zero funding, particularly in the aftermath of Covid.

We understand that a review of the condition of the Park, its buildings, contents, vehicles and plant has been undertaken and we are keen to fully understand how much support the Park will receive from the councils to make good various assets **before** all funding is removed.

The Summer Fayre and Car Show

The Summer Fayre & Car Show is an annual event run jointly with Cornwall Hospice Care. The event was cancelled this year, although planning for next year's car show is already in hand. The event is the single biggest annual revenue source for the FOMECP.

For the 2022 event, the joint FOMECP and Cornwall Hospice Care sub-committee agreed are investigating a change from a charge for car parking (£10 per car) to a charge for all adults over 18 (£5 each). This will impact primarily those arriving from Plymouth on the Cremyll Ferry who previously would have entered the event free of charge.

The reason behind this change is the greatly increased use of time-consuming card payments, which will reduce the rate at which cars can enter the car parks and this would be likely to cause queuing and obstruction of the highway.

We will give a great deal of publicity to this change and the assistance of the members of the Joint Committee in getting the message about this change across to the public will be much appreciated.

Other FOMECP Events

All Friends' events have been cancelled this year due to Covid with the exception of a successful trip to the Breakwater on 29 August. However, with lockdown restrictions easing we are currently planning our 2022 events programme to include our annual Easter Egg Hunt, Car Rally and Halloween Trail.

2021/22 Actions in Discussion

1. Membership campaigns
2. Encouraging our existing FOMECP members and local visitors to become active volunteers for all events held in the Park
3. Recruiting a volunteer(s) to run and manage the FOMECP online presence – e.g. website, Facebook etc.
4. Continuing to promote and support traders in the Park

Prepared 5 November 2021

Ged Edgcumbe

FOMECP Chair