

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

Report to The Joint Committee, July 2022

This paper provides an overview of the FOMECP vision and Executive Committee structure and an update on activities, priorities and future plans for the FOMECP.

Our Vision

To work in partnership with the Park Management by funding – jointly or independently – mutually agreed projects.

To continue to support the Park, as set out in our constitution: ‘to preserve, or assist in the preservation and enhancement 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 an Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the FOMECP membership on 3rd April 2022, The FOMECP Executive Committee comprises:

Officer Posts:

- Chairman – Ged Edgcumbe was re-elected.
- Vice Chairman – Alan Drummond was elected.
- Treasurer – Carol Drummond was re-elected.
- Membership Secretary – Post remains vacant – Ged Edgcumbe will cover until the post is filled.
- Secretary – Glenis Edgcumbe was re-elected.

Committee Posts:

- Neil Rugg, Tony Hutchins, Steve Creese, Anne Creese, Mike Tong, Teresa Tong, Harry Vosper, Janet Vosper and Rozanne Griffiths-Woodcock were re-elected.
- One Officer post (Membership Secretary) and one Committee post remain vacant.

Policy Changes

As required by Charity Commission requirements, the FOMECP Constitution and Policies were recently reviewed and all proposed changes were submitted for approval at the FOMECP AGM held on 3rd April 2022. All of the proposed changes were agreed by the membership. An overview of the changes is as follows:

- **FOMECP Constitution** – in addition to a number of grammatical amendments, changes were made to membership categories to better reflect diversity and a new ‘joint life’ membership; the removal of the Ex-Officio posts – which removes the need for the Park Manager and Council Representatives from being Trustees and thus allowing them to attend FOMECP Executive Committee meetings (should they choose to do so) without exclusion due to any conflicts of interest; a change to permit on-line meetings of the Executive Committee and a change to allow the storage of FOMECP documents in a secure online account.

- **Finance Policy** - changes were made to clarify the permitted trading activities undertaken by the FOMECP and to increase security for online payments (i.e. bank transfer).
- **General Policy** – changes were made to update the FOMECP internal complaint process; to clarify how Committee members can formally approach the Charity Commission; to assist Committee members during debates and subsequent voting on proposals made at meetings and to link the General Policy to other relevant FOMECP policies.

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. During the lockdown period, FOMECP membership numbers dipped as low as 550. However, on the 31st May 2022, membership of the FOMECP stood at 664, which is an extremely encouraging number that reinforces a continued support for the FOMECP and the work it does at Mount Edgumbe.

Financial Update of The Year to Date

The cancellation of events during the pandemic significantly impacted on our fund-raising efforts. Despite this, in 2021 the FOMECP provided £26,795 of funding for projects in the Park, and thus far in 2022 we have supported 4 significant projects; bedding plants (£3,500), an Education Shelter (up to £7,500), resurfacing of the road adjacent to the Barrow Centre (£20,000) and the repair of 2 statues (Athena & Diana the Huntress) located close to Mount Edgumbe House (£10,000) – a total of £41,000.

The Education Shelter detailed above is currently under construction with a scheduled completion date of end June/ early July. The Shelter is using a large garage/stable at the Barrow Centre, which was previously used to house a display of a fire engine & fire fighting equipment– The Shelter will have six murals painted by local schools/community groups depicting six separate periods of time (e.g. Medieval, Bronze Age, Tudor etc.) at Mount Edgumbe. In addition the Shelter will have a series of posters depicting British trees and wildlife; equipment for school children to view local insect and plant life and a model of HMS Beagle and a narrative on Charles Darwin. The shelter will be equipped with benches and coat pegs, and will be used by school groups visiting the Park.

The repair of the statues (Athena & Diana the Huntress) is Phase 1 of a project we hope to continue in the future – subject to the availability of funds - to repair as many of the statues in the Park as we can.

In addition to the funds already provided in 2022, the FOMECP have also agreed to fund the restoration of a traditional Cornish hay wagon, which the Park manager hopes to display in a prominent area just above the Barrow Centre once the restoration is complete. The estimated cost of the restoration is £3,000. The FOMECP are also committed to a Park/ FOMECP funded collaborative project to undertake a much-needed refurbishment of the toilets located near the Orangery in the lower part of the Park. Work is already underway to secure an architect to provide design work prior to a request for tenders from building firms to complete the work. Specific timings and costs for the project have yet to be formally agreed.

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

Park Funding

The FOMECP are well aware of the strain on both Plymouth City and Cornwall County Councils budgets – particularly in light of the impact the Covid-19 pandemic had on Council incomes/

expenditures. The FOMECP also applauds the enormous efforts by the Park Manager and his staff in working towards zero funding.

Notwithstanding this, the FOMECP remains concerned at the lack of support/funding to enable proper investment in restoring and maintaining the many historic/listed buildings in Mount Edgcombe Park – some of which are already in a critical state - and we are keen to understand if funds could be made available in the future to assist in this matter.

FOMECP Events

The FOMECP, assisted by Park staff, manage 3 main events per year. They are:

- **Summer Fair & Car Rally** – the annual Summer Fair and Car Rally is scheduled to take place on Sunday 7th August. The event is jointly run with Cornwall Hospice Care. In addition to providing a fantastic day of fun for the many thousands from Plymouth, Cornwall and beyond that visit the event, it also acts as a significant source of income for both Charities. Organisation and preparations prior to and on the day of the event are labour-intensive, and in addition to the excellent support provided by the Park Manager and his team, we require a large number of volunteers to enable us to run the event in a safe and efficient manner. Unfortunately, since the easing of covid lockdown restrictions, volunteers have been extremely difficult to recruit and failure to secure a sufficient number of volunteers could jeopardise our ability to hold the event.
- **Easter Egg Hunt** – On Sunday 10th April, the FOMECP held its annual Easter Egg Hunt in the Park. The event is a traditional Easter Egg Hunt whereby participants (children with their parents/guardians) collect a clue sheet and follow a pre-planned route answering a series of questions and at the end are rewarded with an Easter egg.

On the Sunday, 766 children participated and a further 177 during the following week (which was half-term week) – giving a total participation of 943 children; which when parents/guardians etc. are added, the event attracted circa 2500 people into the Park. Organisation and management of the event required a total of 32 volunteers - which included 10 from the Open Doors International Language School (ODILS) in Plymouth – and in addition to providing a fantastic day out for families, it raised £1,900 for the Charity.

- **Halloween Trail** – The FOMECP annual Halloween Trail event is scheduled to take place on Sunday 30th October. As with the Easter Egg Hunt, this event is aimed at children and previous events have attracted similar numbers to that of the Easter Egg Hunt detailed above. Past events have been extremely successful, but require at least 30/35 volunteers to manage in a safe and efficient manner and are susceptible to the early winter storms/gales.

2022/23 Actions in Discussion

1. Continuing to support the Park and work in a collaborative manner with the Park Manager and his team on mutually agreed projects
2. Recruiting for the vacant posts on the Executive Committee and a volunteer(s) to run and manage the FOMECP online presence – e.g. FOMECP website, Facebook etc.
3. Encouraging our existing FOMECP members and local visitors to become active volunteers for all events held in the Park
4. Continuing to promote and support traders in the Park

Prepared 26 June 2022

Ged Edgcombe - FOMECP Chair