

## **FoNL responses to survey suggestions and comments.**

Thanks to everyone who filled out one of our surveys. There were some great ideas about both how to celebrate our 21<sup>st</sup> and things to consider for the next 21 years. Some suggestions are things we already do and some are not within our control. The committee has discussed all the ideas and have passed on to Hobsons Bay City Council the ones outside our charter.

A summary of our discussion is below as well as some comments about our thoughts on some of the other issues.

**Survey monkey for surveys:** Only the very simple versions are free so we chose not to use survey monkey for this survey; we will consider in the future

**Attend relevant council meetings / Advocate to HBCC when necessary:** The FoNL committee liaises extensively with HBCC and advocates about park issues. We do not see a need to attend council meetings at the moment, but should an issue arise that threatens the park we would certainly consider this.

**Fund raiser at Sun theatre :** A great idea if and when we have a particular project for the park that requires extra funding. At present this is not the case but we will keep in mind.

**Increase awareness through networking, publicity and general public events (eg picnics); Social media and better use of web page to attract younger members; Greater social media presence (eg Facebook); Higher profile:** The main purpose of a Friends group is to work with the local council (or sometimes another authority) to maintain and improve the physical environs of the particular area. FoNL does go beyond that at times to a more general promotion of the park and environmental issues (for example our current photo competition, snake information evening, bat night etc) but the extent to which we can do this is limited.

We currently have a website, facebook page and quarterly newsletter, we regularly send information to members and we have a notice board in the park. Given the committee members are already doing lots of work we are currently not in a position to extend these activities. A non committee member helps with the facebook page. We will try to add more content from now on.

The numbers who attend our working bees have risen over the past few years.

**Younger members needed:** Over the years the FoNL committee has worked to attract younger members and/or volunteers to our working bees. A number of younger people regularly attend the working bees and there are a number of younger members. We regularly encourage younger people to consider becoming more involved. If you are a 'younger' person please consider joining us.

**Monitor the biota of the lakes:** In the past one of the FoNL working bees each year was water monitoring and some checks of the fauna in the lakes. Very few people attended these so they are no longer part of our regular calendar of events. Council continues to monitor the health of the lakes and we have assisted students who are interested.

**Academic collaboration:** FoNL responds to a number of requests from tertiary students who are studying environmental issues. The FoNL committee has also discussed investigating whether any academics are interested in some aspect of the lakes and park that come within our remit. To date nothing has aligned.

**Apply for grants:** FoNL applies for a number of grants (usually about one a year) and has been successful on many occasions. There are a number of grants for which we are not eligible since Newport lakes is not a natural waterway.

**New leadership and ideas:** The FoNL committee has had a vacancy for a number of years and we encourage new committee members to join us. The committees over the past few years have been elected unopposed. We would welcome you to join us and stand for the committee at our next AGM.

**Encourage schools to use:** Members of the FoNL committee have worked with both school and scouts groups when they visit the park and accompanied them to point out flora, fauna and history. When appropriate we also let schools know about issues or events.

**More events in the park eg movie nights, drama:** FoNL can offer some advice to anyone who wishes to organise events such as these but they are not directly within the brief of FoNL. We do however organise (often with HBCC) events that happen in the park (as mentioned above, the snake information evening, bat night etc)

**Replant trees in dried areas:** FoNL's main focus is our monthly working bees where planting is one of the activities we do. (Most planting working bees result in about 150 plants being put in the ground – these are usually grasses and small bushes.) HBCC has the ultimate responsibility for deciding what gets planted, when and where. This comment has also been passed on to HBCC.

## **The following suggestions have been passed on to Hobsons Bay City Council**

**Drinking fountain at Kingham St gate; Water fountain at Bruce/Kingham st:** These are quite expensive and the FoNL committee would not necessarily consider another one the best use of limited resources for the park when there is one not too far away.

**More shade trees; Shade trees on NW plain:** Unfortunately the north west plain area (dog off lead area) was the site of the tip when the quarry itself closed. Hence there is only a very thin layer of soil on the plain and large shade trees will not grow there.

**Seats in shady area of dog off lead parts:** Great idea if it is possible to situate some seats in more shady parts.

**Light in NW plain (6-9pm); More light in car park and on path to off lead area:** There was divided opinion on this at the FoNL committee. Some consider that adding to light pollution for the benefit of the few and the detriment of the animals and birds that call the park home is not warranted. Others consider that the idea has merit. The park is currently closed from sun down to sun up so the car park itself is not open after dark.

**Replant trees in dried areas:** see comment in section above

**Dog access to lakes area; Dogs allowed top path of eastern side for safety;** The Newport Lakes reserve was established as both a park for the community and a reserve for native species in a highly urbanised environment. The primary aim of the lakes area is to allow habitats for native wildlife. The dog off lead part of the park is about 10 of the 33 hectares. The issue of feeling safe was the reason that FoNL placed the garden seat on that path.

**Proper path along Pavey park / arboretum area:** The FoNL committee agrees it would be nice to have this informal track improved.

**Less 'scraggly' flora:** The Australian bush is a little 'scraggly'. Exotic species have been planted in the arboretum.

**Allow more development near the park:** The FoNL committee would not like to see further development on the edges of the park.

**Colour of water from fountain near trees:** Thanks for pointing this out. HBCC are investigating.

**Families 'adopt' areas:** Great idea that I know has been used successfully in country areas; not sure how the details would work at Newport Lakes but if you have ideas on this you could send to us and we will pass on to HBCC.

**Other issues and ideas we have passed on:** Poo bins: Charlotte st; top of park; More appealing and obvious entrance to the park; Cafe at nursery; Better playground equipment; Open gates earlier; More dog litter bags; Connectivity to Ducrow Reserve; Plan for the next 20 years