

Save Inverleith Park – deputation at Council meeting

✘ A large delegation of campaigners turned out before the council meeting today to make their views about selling off the park, or even a small part of it, abundantly clear.

We spoke with the two Councillors who presented the motion to the council about Inverleith Park this morning before the meeting of the Full Council and this is what Councillors Hinds and Whyte had to say

[Councillors re Inverleith](#) by [PMStephen](#)

We also met with some prospective MSPs who were supporting the campaigners:- You will hear from the Independent Candidate Ken O'Neill, Green Party parliamentary candidate (and Edinburgh Councillor), Alison Johnstone, and Labour parliamentary candidate for Edinburgh Central, Sarah Boyack (in that order).

[MSPs on Inverleith](#) by [PMStephen](#)

SNP candidate, Shirley-Anne Somerville, and Conservative candidate, Iain McGill, also turned out in support of the campaign. We spoke to Ian McGill about the rezoning of part of the park as a commercial site:

[Iain McGill about Inverleith Park](#) by [PMStephen](#)

Convenor of Friends of Inverleith Park, and Coordinator of the Save Inverleith Park campaign, Tony Cook, delivered an eloquent address to the Council meeting this morning, on their proposals to consider selling off part of Inverleith Park for development. He also handed over the group's petition against any development of the site.

He explained that the key issue is the re-designation of the piece of the park and the lack of consultation on this in

2010. He said:-" In my capacity as Convenor of that organisation I knew nothing about this and I consider it to have been underhand."

The petition with 8,600 signatures on it was handed over to the council. 3,000 people have also signed up to the [campaign's Facebook page](#).

Cook explained:-"Inverleith Park was bought for the citizens of Edinburgh in 1889. It had a wonderful open aspect preserved unrivalled views of Edinburgh. Since then we have trusted the council to look after the park for the benefit of the people of Edinburgh. Local plans have always respected the park as a great green open space.

The Scottish Government Open Space Audit, (PAN 65), was intended to preserve public parkland for the health and wellbeing of the Scottish people. It was drafted to protect the existing open space and designate any new open spaces. It was also introduced to protect areas which are valuable and valued.

All previous local plans have opposed any development of open spaces, but this changed in 2010. The City of Edinburgh Local Plan 2010 removed the site from open space designation.

Your former Council employee, Dave Anderson, Director of Economic Development, had been in contact with GVA Grimley as long ago as September 2009 to consider selling this site with outline planning permission for commercial development. He considered it had already been rezoned.

It is vital this piece of park is not sold. It would be a most damning precedent if this piece of park was sold. I cannot believe that one councillor here would condone such a sale.

We have a lot of support from people in all walks of life, including property lawyers and QCs. Even when out campaigning in Stockbridge for signatures to our petition we

received support from foreigners as well as locals.

This is a premier Millennium park recently awarded Green flag status, and we hope we can rely on you to protect it”

We spoke with Mr Cook after the deputation and here is our short interview with him before the Council decision was announced.

[Tony Cook at Council Meeting](#) by [PMStephen](#)

The Council passed the motion put before them by Councillors Hinds and Whyte which was:-““Council notes the deep concern of the local community regarding the proposed disposal of the depot site within Inverleith Park. Council therefore instructs the Director of City Development to report to the Policy and Strategy Committee setting out the current position with regard to the proposal to dispose of the site; the Planning status of the land and the details of any community consultation undertaken or planned on this proposal.” So there will now be a report to the council on the future of the park, and in particular the depot at the southeastern corner.