

Royal visit to Starbank Park

This week the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, or the Duke and Duchess of Strathearn as they are known in Scotland, have been on a visit, principally for HRH to attend the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland as Lord High Commissioner, but this morning the royal couple went to the lovely Starbank Park in the north of the city.

While there they learned about the work of Fields in Trust, who are running a pioneering initiative to reduce inequality of access to green spaces in the UK.

Their Royal Highnesses met with local volunteer gardeners, led by Chair of the Friends of Starbank Park, Janet McArthur, who work so hard on keeping the gardens as beautiful as they are, and have quite literally transformed the 125-year-old park over the last seven years.

They met other local people who use the space including local families, nursery groups and Duke of Edinburgh Award participants. The Duchess of Cambridge also dropped off a copy of *Hold Still* at the park's little free library.

Chair of the Friends of Starbank Park, Janet McArthur, said: "It was a huge privilege to welcome the royal couple to Starbank Park. The friends of Starbank were delighted to show

off our beautiful park. The park essential to so many people during lockdown and currently. Fields in Trust launched their Greenspace Index at the event this morning. Edinburgh City Council announced their commitment to protecting 25 new greenspaces in association with Fields in Trust. Duke of Cambridge planted a Bramley Apple tree and sunflowers with the Duchess.”



27th May 2021 Edinburgh – Prince William and Kate visit Starbank Park in Edinburgh as part of their visit to Scotland. Here Prince William is chatting to the Rt Hon Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh PHOTO Live Edinburgh News

The Duke of Cambridge has been President of Fields in Trust since 2013, when he took the role on from his grandfather, The Duke of Edinburgh, who had been involved with the organisation since 1948. Today, Their Royal Highnesses heard about the organisation’s Green Space Index, which is an annual barometer of green space provision and distribution across the UK, and heard from volunteers and families how crucial the park has been to the local community.

In one of the photos below you will see that the Friends are proudly displaying the front page of our May issue – which featured them. You can read the whole issue [here](#) and see the front cover below.







At the event in Starbank Park, the Rt Hon Lord Provost, Frank Ross, announced that The City of Edinburgh Council would be using the Green Space Index to determine strategic green space locations.

He said: "Edinburgh is already a wonderfully green city, and we want to ensure it remains that way for generations to come.

"I'm extremely pleased to announce that the City of Edinburgh Council will be looking to partner with Fields in Trust in protecting in perpetuity a further 25 green spaces – adding to the 34 already protected. This will mean that almost everyone in Edinburgh will be within a ten-minute walk of a protected green space, ensuring that for years to come citizens are guaranteed a lifetime of opportunity for activity, play, learning, recuperation and community.

"Scores of volunteers across the city work alongside the Council to support our parks, green spaces and cemeteries. We are very grateful to Friends of Starbank Park their ongoing hard work and dedication and we will continue to work with them to make sure these important areas are preserved for the benefit of our future generations."

The Green Space Index is an analytical tool that identifies inequities of green space provision and consequently enables the planning and protection of green infrastructure that can help mitigate climate change at a local level. This year's report has found that over 2.77m people live further than a 10-minute walk from a local park or green space and only 6% of all parks and green spaces are protected in perpetuity.

Starbank Park is protected by Fields in Trust and run by The City of Edinburgh Council. On the visit, The Duke and Duchess heard how the council have used the Green Space Index developed by Fields in Trust to ensure that almost all of the population are within a ten-minute walk of a protected park or green spaces.



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