

# Formal opening of new community café in Roseburn Park this weekend

Work is now complete on a formerly disused toilet block which has been converted into a community café in Roseburn. The opening ceremony will take place at 1pm on Sunday with a completion party afterwards until 4pm.

The Friends of Roseburn Park (FoRP) have spent 11 years planning and fundraising to refurbish the derelict building on the opposite side of Roseburn Park from Murrayfield Stadium. It will become a community café and the premises will offer a toilet for public use.

The Rosebean Café opens for business later in the summer, operated by Euan Hyslop and his Dower House Café team from St Margaret's Park.

Burgers and free buck's fizz donated by the local Masonic Lodge will be served on Sunday along with performances by Andrew Sharpe, stalls, games, a raffle and the film screening of the conversion work.

Cllr Euan Davidson will cut the ribbon at 1pm on Sunday, as council funding was key to getting the project completed. He had this to say: "After such a difficult period for Roseburn's small businesses and community as a whole, it is fantastic to

see this amazing project come to fruition. It is a great example of partnership working between the council, community organisations and small business which I would like to see much more of. The café represents a fantastic addition to the offering at Roseburn Park which is already one of the best in the city.”

FoRP Chairperson Jim McDonough said "At last! This is exactly what our community and park visitors have been waiting for. The refurbished building will be so better than the present eyesore- FoRP are returning the exterior to the way it would have looked when it was first built, 117 years ago- and the interior into a warm and inviting café. Visitors will have somewhere to go for a hot drink and a snack – maybe even a light meal- when the work is complete.

“It has not been a straightforward project, but working with experienced café managers FoRP have come up with a design that gives 30 sq m of floor space as well as a spacious public toilet, kitchen and storage.”

## **HISTORY**

The building is distinctive. It was constructed in 1903, designed by the office of the eminent City Architect at the time, Robert Morham, as the park’s pavilion. Later it was used as a bothy for the park keepers and was converted for additional use as public toilets in 1936, but it has been closed since 1982. The refurbishment came just as the roof was beginning to collapse and nature was taking over the interior.

The Friends say that it would have cost the Council £12,000 just to demolish it, and instead they agreed that the Friends would take it off their hands in return for a peppercorn rent.

A spokesperson for FoRP said: “The work could never have progressed beyond the initial concept in 2012 without the efforts of FoRP Trustees and members who have provided their skills, expertise and time on a wholly voluntary basis.

“In addition, the support provided by architectural designer Craig Proudfoot of One Foot Square and technical input by Paul Harding has proven invaluable in getting this project off the drawing board. The work was carried out by All Aspects Building & Construction Scotland Limited under the directorship of James Purves and was project managed by Craig.

“The plan is for the new operator to sell hot drinks, snacks and ice cream and endeavour to keep it open as much as possible throughout the year, making the toilet generally available for park visitors. FoRP knows from the Council’s footfall recording device that 1,800 pedestrians and 450 cyclists use the park every day, and believe that the café will attract even more users to enjoy the park, thus helping to make the cafe a year-round going concern.”

Pete Gregson, organised a crowdfunder with a leaflet delivered by a team of volunteers. He estimated that around 6,000 people live in the ward and that most use the park. The “buy a brick” scheme raised a total of £8,864 within four months.

This gave FoRP a strong foundation to attract additional grants from Baillie Gifford Investments (£1,000), Virgin Money Lounge (£2,000) and the Evelyn Drysdale Trust (£3,500). In February 2020, with £15,364 raised the Trustees proceeded to make application to a variety of public and private sources for the outstanding monies required to fund the project. This effort culminated in July 2021 with FoRP being awarded £66,000 by The City of Edinburgh Council Place-Based Investment Programme. This was proposed by the then Lord Provost, Frank Ross, and FoRP’s café project was approved for funding by the council in June 2021 although work did not commence until last year.



Roseburn – former toilets to become a café Photo © 2023 Martin P. McAdam [www.martinmcadam.com](http://www.martinmcadam.com)



Pete Gregson of Friends of Roseburn Park, John Shand (seated) who was a cycle messenger in the Second World War accompanied

by his friend from Darroch School in Gilmore Place, Margaret Smith whose father was Warden and the Rt Hon Lord Provost Frank Ross cutting the ribbon unveiling the mural. PHOTO ©2019 The Edinburgh Reporter