

2017

Updates on your Park.



JOHNSTOWN

PEOPLE'S | PARK

***Important information for all
property owners living or letting
property in,***

***Millbrook, Spire View, Boyne View
& The Priory***

***(Tenants, please pass this to the property
owner)***

www.johnstownpeoplespark.ie

Where are we now?

JPP is now entering into its' third year. We have had an unprecedented increase in support over the past two years and we are confident that this support will continue to grow in 2017. During this time, we have literally taken and made thousands of phone calls, and double that for emails. We have been here for every question or query. We are now ready for yours. At present, we now have approximately 2 thirds of our members contributing to our park. This is about 412 of our 633 homes (or 2 out of every 3 homes). It has involved a massive coordinated amount of work to get this much participation, but the results are well worth it. We do now finally have a community united in a project that will shape our future and you should all be proud of yourselves and your neighbours for making this happen. We have discounted 25k (approx.) of aged arrears in 2015 and a further 30k (approx.) in arrears in 2016. However, this does mean there is still a way to go to get everyone signed up. The uncollected fees for 2016 amounts to €12,000 and if you double this to include 2015, this means €24,000 has not been paid on time. To be completely frank, had this been paid, we would have 9 gates installed now instead of 4, more of our projects would have been completed or at the least, started. We have had a rapidly growing upward trend of support and we would stress again how important it is to get on track with your fees to help us create and maintain our park for now and for generations to come. Inspired by your commitments we will remain dedicated to voluntarily overseeing the collection of maintenance fees and ensuring these fees are spent purely on the improvement of our park while impacting positively on our neighbourhood. If you are paying your fees, you will get a "Park Paid" window sticker. Put in on your window, it shows you've paid, it shows you care about where you live.

No money of any description has been paid to any volunteer or director of JPP since its creation, and it will stay this way. We have halved the fees going forward and we have offered to half any arrears going backward. We have given our members every fair opportunity to come on board and do the right thing by your community. Our 2015 accounts are available on our website to explain where exactly the money is spent and our 2016 accounts will be available by this summer. We are as transparent as they come. Please don't put it off any further, set up your fee payments. You owe it to all your neighbours who are paying their fair share! Let's break it down! €60 fees per year is €1.15 a week. This is one of the cheapest management fee structures in Ireland. However, due to some residents still to set up payments over the past two years we are down €24,000 that should have been spent on your park. That is half the cost of our perimeter walking track, this is the rest of our gates! We need every one of you on board to achieve these goals.

If you are not currently paying your fees or do not intend to pay for whatever reason, we would love to know why. Is there something we can address?? Please let us know.

Let's talk about money!

The 2017 fees of €60 are now due to be paid again, unless of course you are already paying by monthly standing order. We would prefer the monthly standing order for €5 to avoid us having to try and collect the single payment each January, and it also helps us to budget. This form and our account details along with anything else you need are on our website. The full €60 for the year can be paid by cheque or bank transfer if you insist.

Our debt restructuring deadlines have passed on 31/12/16, hence any account in arrears which did not take advantage of the offer now has the full original balance outstanding, and interest on top of that. We know there are still people who have simply not gotten around to setting it up and there are others who are paying their monthly fees but have still to address the arrears. However, our debt restructuring scheme has been available for 2 years now, and we have no choice but to assume that if the scheme has not been accepted by now that the owners don't want to pay or don't want to address their arrears (if we are mistaken, a phone call or email to us will sort this out). Due to this, we have now applied interest to these accounts. We knew from the start that there would be a percentage who refused to engage. This is where the interest charges come in. We don't mind collecting the fees on property sales along with the accumulated interest and associated fees. 2015 & 2016 combined saw us collect 40k approximately in arrears during sale processes. In future years, we will now have interest on top of this. All arrears on the 31st of December 2016 have now had 8% interest applied (before the 2017 fees were invoiced). This interest will continue to accumulate going forward.

Lots of us remember 2013/14 when this park was bordering on becoming an absolute magnet for antisocial behaviour. Indeed, if the management company had collapsed in late 2014 (as it almost did), what would the park be like now? What anti-social problems would we have now in and around the park? Would houses have even sold if the park went unmaintained? Well, we have come a little way since then but we still need you all on board to get to where we are going or things will drag out.

What the fees were spent on in the last 2 years

The fees and older arrears collected during 2015 and 2016 have gone toward,

- ✚ Grass cutting (15-20 cuts yearly)
- ✚ Weed spraying around walls & trees
- ✚ Installation of some of the perimeter gating
- ✚ Deep cleaning of perimeter walls and railings
- ✚ Deep cleaning of hard surface court area
- ✚ Deep cleaning of pedestrian entrances
- ✚ Graffiti removal throughout the year
- ✚ Park signage and information
- ✚ Pest control measures
- ✚ Rear hedging control
- ✚ Rubbish removal (large items)
- ✚ All trees pruned to six foot and above
- ✚ Flyers, communications & postage
- ✚ Public liability and Directors Insurance
- ✚ Cleaning supplies and equipment for clean ups
- ✚ Daily mobile security patrols
- ✚ Halloween bonfire prevention measures
- ✚ Spring flowering bulbs planted
- ✚ Accounts & administration
- ✚ Level and re-sowing of grass at the rear of the park
- ✚ Hedge removal at rear side entrance
- ✚ Existing pathways & edging redefined
- ✚ Our legal fees to date are courtesy of Steen O'Reilly

Security Patrols

Our mobile security patrols are still in force on a nightly basis. Over the weeks leading up to Halloween 2016, these patrols were increased dramatically to ensure that no unwanted activities took place in or around our park. This combined with our bonfire dismantling volunteers, our flyer and signage campaign and our vans on standby, all had the desired effect and we will be repeating all these measures in 2017 (with your help)

Gating the park

We got 4 of the pedestrian gates installed during 2016, 2 single gates at the side of the park and 2 double gates at the rear of the park. These are 4 sturdy gates, designed for purpose and made of galvanised steel. We have 3 double gates left to install at the rear of the park. We hope to have these completed by this summer. We are however missing supports on these entrances so we need to address this first. Once the 7 pedestrian gates are installed we will get to work on designing a functioning gating system for the two vehicular entrances located in the Priory. Once all gates are completed we can open and close the park at reasonable hours, thus adding to the overall security of the park and any facilities within. We will then be in a position to restrict access at key times or dates.

Playground Proposal

The much talked about playground proposal is, as expected, still a work in progress. We have had numerous meetings with MCC and they are still very positive of the plan to lease an area of the park from JPP to supply, fit and insure a small section of our park for a gated children's playground. This playground area would fall under the council's remit for the duration of the lease. It should be noted that JPP does not need planning permission to build (or allow to be built) a playground as a single project. We do however need one for the car park. This car park is deemed by ourselves and MCC to be essential to the future of the park in terms of its use in conjunction with a playground or any other events that may be held in the future. JPP are acutely aware of some objections to the car park and indeed the proposal in its entirety, but we must try to facilitate those that want this proposal to go ahead and those who voted for it to go ahead at the EGM in April 2015. We are honestly trying to deliver what we were asked. If a car park planning application was refused due to viable objections, this may cause irreversible problems with cars parking on local streets after the playground is installed. We were honestly trying to do the right thing by anticipating parking problems that exist now, have existed in the past and will continue to exist in the future. We are trying to accommodate for these inevitable problems now. To this end, our architect has officially met with MCC in November 2016, at their request, and an official planning application is in the process of being filed for the playground proposal and the adjoining car park. We would strongly urge you to weigh up the potential positives from this proposal. We are trying to bring positive things to our park to outweigh the negatives over so many years.

The scenario we face now is this - In the event of a car park causing any serious problems in the future, we will be here to address them – we can monitor it, restrict access or close it if absolutely required. We can also consult with MCC for assistance with interventions. We cannot however materialise a car park out of thin air if one was needed after a playground was installed and/or events were being held (which are both highly likely)

This is the dilemma that we must face together, objectively. We are planning on having an open discussion specifically about this proposal at our AGM in April. We would encourage everyone to attend so the arguments for and against the playground proposal can be addressed openly, so that suggestions can be taken on board and any fears or concerns hopefully allayed. We do absolutely value everyone's input. That's what got the whole idea going.

Remotely Monitored CCTV

In October 2016, an issue was raised by MCC regarding our utilisation of the existing street lighting to mount our wireless CCTV system. While the council had given us their full support initially and indeed absolutely encouraged the idea from the start, there has recently been some conflicting feedback from MCC which, to be honest, has us puzzled. The fact that the streets in question have not been taken in charge by the council has only now presented as a problem. Although they do concede that the lights themselves are taken in charge. It seems we are now in a grey area. We are still seeking clarification prior to our application for planning permission. We will continue to work with the council in an effort to find an agreeable process for this project to continue. The project itself is ready to go. It is just navigating the red tape that is causing the delays. We feel this CCTV system is integral to the future security of facilities in our park and more importantly, to the security of its' users, and we will continue to explore options for this system or consider viable alternatives.

Please be assured that this project remains a priority as further projects depend on the secure monitoring of the park. Once the CCTV system is live, we can install benches and bins etc., safe in the knowledge that should intentional damage occur we will have the footage to prosecute. Just to clarify, these cameras will not cover any person's private property as is the law. They will simply cover the interior and exterior of the park grounds to include estate entrances. They will have night vision and zoom capabilities.



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Park Usage for Sports & Community

Johnstown football club (JFC) held a mini summer soccer tournament in summer 2016. JPP had taken every precaution possible to ensure it passed off successfully. The day did prove a great success and all going to plan there will be a repeat this summer, hopefully over a few days. Walterstown GAA club have also expressed an interest in using our park for events geared at our younger generations. We hope to accommodate an event or two from them this year also. We will keep you posted.

Regular litter Volunteers

We would like to especially thank these volunteers for regularly giving up their free time for picking up the rubbish in and around our park and indeed our streets. This is a thankless job and one that deserves recognition. Please be aware that Johnstown has only recently formed a Tidy Towns Committee and would welcome all volunteers who would like to get involved in their regular clean ups in the Johnstown area. Further information can be found on the Johnstown Tidy Towns Facebook page.

Spring Cleaning the Park

On Saturday the **8th of April**, next we will be organising our Spring Clean. We skipped a clean in Autumn 2016 as the park wasn't too bad (thanks to a considerable amount of help from regular litter picking volunteers), but a lot of rubbish has accumulated in the bushes over the winter. We will have a skip arriving at 10am and collected at 1pm. So, if you can spare an hour to help, please come along. Gloves, bags and litter pickers will be provided as always. Please do try to spare an hour. If we get 30 - 40 volunteers, we will be done in an hour.

Our 2017 AGM

Formal notice is hereby given that we will be holding our AGM in the Ardboyne Hotel on Saturday the **29th of April 2017 at 2pm**. Please email any item you wish to add to the agenda. If you are unable to attend and wish to vote on a ballot if any, a Proxy form is available on our website or by contacting us. As mentioned earlier, an open debate will be held on the Playground proposal at this meeting.

Thank you

Just a final note to all of you who have taken the time to set up your payments and deal with your arrears. Thank you most kindly. We would be nothing without your support. Hopefully (and maybe with your help) we will soon get the rest of our neighbours on board in the very near future.

Membership Loyalty Reward Cards



There are almost 50 local companies accepting our JPP membership cards and offering discounts on products and services. This list will only grow into the future as more companies play their part in our local neighbourhood. Please register for your membership card on our website. The card also enrolls you into the Lyonesse Cash Back Club, the largest loyalty card operator in the world, which offers discounts and cash back with local businesses, major high street and online stores worldwide. This membership card and smart phone app will save you money so please register on our website for yours today. Every member in each household can have their own separate card. For a full list of all discounts on offer to JPP members, please visit our website.



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