



The Walker Dam – Its Past, Present and Future (William Sell, Vice Chair, Craigiebuckler and Seafield Community Council)

The Walker Dam, with which many Aberdeen citizens are so familiar, is only a fraction of the size it was when - in the 1830s - it was constructed in accordance with the plans drawn by Aberdeen's first City Architect, John Smith. From the second quarter of the 19th century to the early 20th century the dam was a deep and massive body of water which extended from its present location, eastward, to Springfield Road – then called Walker Dam Road – where its sluice gate would have been opened at the beginning of the working day to allow water to rush through a culvert under the road, then south-east through a deep man-made channel (which is still evident today) to feed the steam condensing ponds of the Rubislaw Bleachfield, the property Richards and Company, textile manufacturers.

Today this treasured green space is one of Aberdeen City Council's 'Local Nature Conservation Sites', the 'Walker Dam and Rubislaw Link', which is a 3.9 kilometre walk along a series of connected paths and streets. Popular with dog walkers, joggers and rambles, the future of this valuable charming landscaped area with its semi-natural habitats, has been secured by the initiatives and work of 'Friends of Walker Dam' who are registered with 'Keep Scotland Beautiful' - a Scottish environment charity – which, independent of governmental finance and influence, is committed to the improvement of people's lives and the places they care for.

The Friends of Walker Dam work in partnership with Aberdeen City Council to deliver the standards of maintenance and the plans for future improvements to this amenity site. Mr Allan Davidson, Treasurer of Craigiebuckler and Seafield Community Council who is also a member of Friends of Walker Dam, has frequent meetings with the City Council's Environment Manager. Those meetings have been very productive and improvements to the

site have already been achieved. For example, there has been a clean-up of the Dam and the burn which flows into it; improvements have also been made to the path on the South bank of the dam, which is part of Aberdeen's core path system. The Walker Dam sign has also been repainted.

In the near future, a bridge will be constructed at the East bank of the dam to connect its North and South banks - thus making both banks accessible for the enjoyment of visitors to the dam. This significant infrastructural improvement has been made possible by a final act of generosity by Aberdeen Greenspace Trust. Local Councillor Martin Greig is a member of Greenspace and worked to ensure a donation of £8000 from the Trust towards the upgrade of the Walker Dam which includes the construction of the bridge, new benches, bins and various paths and tree works. A further enhancement in the area is a community notice board.

Thanks to the Friends of Walker Dam, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeen Greenspace Trust and the work of many volunteers, we have much to look forward to. An Open Night will be held on Tuesday 21st March at 7pm to raise public awareness of these important developments at Walker Dam.

Craigiebuckler and Seafield Community Council

Anyone interested in local affairs is welcome to attend Community Council meetings. The Council meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 7.30 pm in the Douglas Lounge, Craigiebuckler Church.