

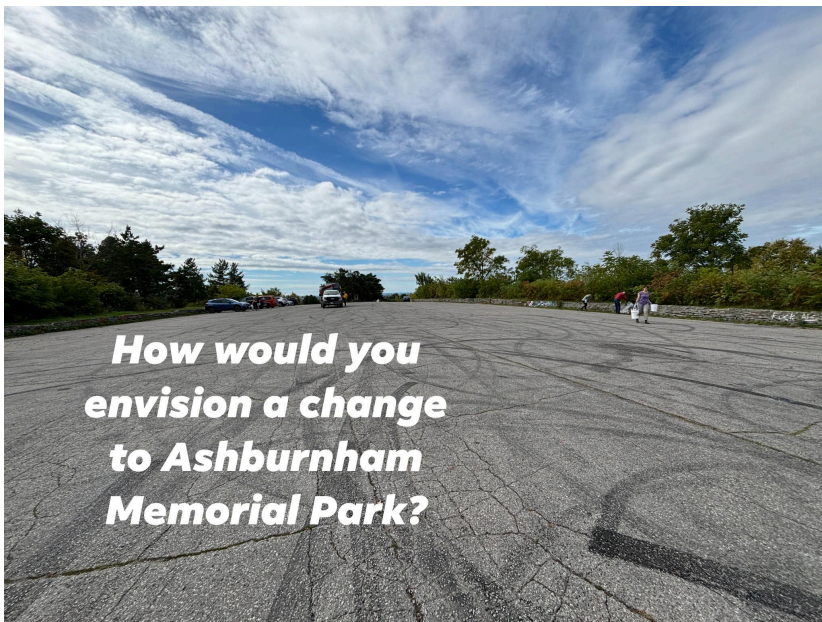


# 2025 Annual Report

The Ashburnham Memorial Stewardship Group (AMSG) is a grassroots volunteer-led community group dedicated to promoting stewardship and respect for the natural, historical and social aspects of Ashburnham Memorial Park (known locally as Armour Hill) in Peterborough, Ontario.

AMSG was founded in June 2021 and since then has been involved in park cleanups, nature hikes, bird walks, children's art projects, Trent University programs, bat research, community research, tree plantings and nature data collection.

## ***Our Major Project for 2025 - From a Parking Lot to a Park***



**AMSG envisions revitalizing the upper parking area of Ashburnham Memorial Park.**

Through surveys and public engagement in 2024–2025, the group is shaping a long-term plan that honours the park's World War One origins and its longstanding importance to Ashburnham and the wider Peterborough community.

*Dedicated to conserving, improving and appreciating Ashburnham Memorial Park  
in the city of Peterborough Ontario Canada*



### ***Findings for “From a Parking Lot to a Park”***

The public visits the park in all four seasons and it is increasingly an attraction for Peterborough’s New Canadians. As one of the highest points in the Peterborough Drumlin Field (246 m), Ashburnham Memorial Park is a unique geological feature of the city. The park was once located on the edge of town, and will soon be an island of green in an increasingly developed East City. Established residents, newcomers, and tourists will be seeking green space for recreation and leisure activities and will require more than the current crumbling parking lot.

After reviewing community feedback AMSG has identified three key priorities to guide the proposed changes:

- Reduce pavement, increase green space
- Improve safety and accessibility
- Provide internal way-finding and regional context

The results of our research were shared with [Basterfield and Associates Landscape Architects](#), to create a conceptual design of a re-imagined parking area in Ashburnham Memorial Park. We continue to work with the City of Peterborough to restore the park to a family-friendly, healthy environment for Peterborough residents, visitors and wildlife alike.

***AMSG is dedicated to realizing Ashburnham Memorial Park’s much needed renewal.***



*AMSG’s engagement table at the 2025 Annual East City Yard Sale garnered many comments and ideas for Ashburnham Memorial Park.*



### ***Basterfield and Associates Landscape Architects***

Brian Basterfield and team worked with Ashburnham Memorial Stewardship Group, reviewing comments and surveys from our public engagements and helped us to reimagine Ashburnham Memorial Park. Brian and his team donated many hours, as well as their considerable skill and knowledge to the project and we acknowledge and thank them.

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## **Trent University Community-Based Research**

Community-based research bridges the knowledge and priorities of local organizations such as Ashburnham Memorial Stewardship Group with the research expertise of Trent University faculty and students. For the past four years, AMSG Steering Committee has worked with Trent to further research into Ashburnham Memorial Park, hosting projects that benefit both communities and students. In 2025, three projects were undertaken:

### ***Bringing the Community Together: An Inclusive Park Initiative***

Trent student Emily Beesley undertook an undergraduate research project to identify user groups of Ashburnham Memorial Park. She found seven user groups that should be engaged in any future planned changes to the park: naturalists and recreationists, parents of young children, teenage girls, people of colour, people with disabilities, and New Canadians. The recommendations from Emily's research were shared with Basterfield and Associates for the *Parking Lot to a Park* initiative.

### ***Indigenous History***

Five Trent University students completed their community-based research project, "Indigenous History and Relations at Ashburnham Memorial Park." They report Ashburnham Memorial Park sits on the traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig Anishnaabeg and that the land and surrounding waterways historically holds deep cultural, ecological, and spiritual importance. The students concluded that the gaps in written records reflect colonial disruption rather than an absence of Indigenous presence, and emphasized that future stewardship and education efforts should be guided by Indigenous knowledge, respectful partnerships, and the principles of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

### ***Illegal Dumping***

Trent University Environmental Studies student Meghan Elliott is conducting an ongoing community-based research project titled "Understanding and Addressing Illegal Dumping: A Case Study of Ashburnham Memorial Park". This project will examine the psychological and sociological factors that contribute to illegal dumping in small towns, exploring why individuals engage in this behaviour and evaluating successful strategies used in other communities across Ontario and Canada. The research aims to identify practical, community-driven solutions that can be applied locally, with the goal of creating cleaner public spaces, strengthening community pride, reducing municipal cleanup costs, and promoting long-term environmental stewardship.

In response to increasing illegal dumping challenges in Ashburnham Memorial Park, the City of Peterborough installed a gate in December 2025, closing the upper parking lot to vehicular traffic and halting snow clearance beyond the gate throughout the winter. Pedestrian access remained open and many visitors continued to walk and snowshoe, enjoying the beauty of a quiet snowy lookout and an increase in animal sightings.

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## **Park Clean ups**

AMSG completed two cleanups of Ashburnham Memorial Park in 2025. Our scheduled spring clean up was postponed due to the March ice storm that caused tree damage throughout the region resulting in all Peterborough parks being closed until the city could render them safe. Eventually we were able to host the spring clean up on May 24, followed by the annual 'Before the snow flies' clean up November 8.

Over the two clean ups a total of 95 community volunteers participated and collected 51 bags of litter weighing over 220 kg from Ashburnham Memorial Park. Other refuse included discarded furniture, household appliances, sport and safety equipment, tires and many car parts. Five full bags of recycling were sorted, cleaned and diverted from landfill.



*New Canadian Centre's Youth Worker Irene Suvillaga (right) with park clean up volunteers*

## **Presentations**



Nancy Cockburn and Matthew Walmsley presented at the United Way Annual General Meeting on August 20. This event showcased the United Way's incredible community impact. CEO, Jim Russell commented, "It is hard to imagine a higher calling for a non-profit organization than the goal of bettering the community" AMSG was one of 11 community groups the United Way invested in through their Neighborhood Fund and Nancy and Matthew shared details of AMSG's completed *From a Parking Lot to a Park* project.

Jane Wild presented to the city of Peterborough Tourism Strategy study on behalf of AMSG in November. There are obvious tourism development opportunities and heritage tie-ins for a redeveloped Ashburnham Memorial Park with many neighbouring tourism and heritage attractions. Ashburnham Memorial Park could be a significant tourism asset that would attract visitors to Peterborough and power economic benefits.

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**In 2025, over 100 AMSG volunteers contributed 1,014 hours promoting stewardship of Ashburnham Memorial Park.**

<b>FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2025</b>			
<b>January 1 2025 opening balance</b>			<b>\$2,279.93</b>
<b>Revenue</b>			
United Way Community Grant		\$650.00	
<b>Expenses</b>			
Yard Sale Supplies	\$54.45		
Cleanup Safety Supplies	\$62.23		
Equipment for Engagement Activities	\$126.54		
Promotional Materials	\$189.62		
Printing Expenses	\$88.34		
Office Expenses	\$114.11		
Donation	\$100.00		
Bank Fees	\$36.00		
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$771.29</b>		
<b>December 31 2025 closing balance</b>			<b>\$2,158.64</b>

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## ***History of the Park***

The commanding hill in the ward of Ashburnham, Peterborough's East City, is known to local residents as Armour Hill. Its history from Armour's Hill to the present day Ashburnham Memorial Park is a testament to a small group of determined women.

In 1920 the Armour estate (1833) offered the land to the City of Peterborough for \$3000. It was a subject of great debate at City Council and in the local press. Many argued the investment would be worthwhile to create a war memorial and public park for citizens and visitors. The question was put to a public referendum in 1922 and was defeated.

The following year a group of 35 determined and resourceful women, the Women's Patriotic League of Ashburnham, negotiated the purchase of the land. Over the next 14 years they organized teas, bazaars, bake sales and other fundraisers to pay for the land. The League arranged for the planting of 4,000 Scotch Pine and 2,000 Jack Pine trees on the bare pastureland to serve as a memorial to those lost to the 'Great War'.

By 1937 the Women's Patriotic League of Ashburnham chose to donate Ashburnham Memorial Park to the people of the City of Peterborough to continue in perpetuity as a Memorial. On June 24, 1959, a memorial cairn and plaque dedication was held on top of the hill we know as Ashburnham Memorial Park.

**ASHBURNHAM MEMORIAL PARK  
THIS PARK WAS GIVEN TO THE CITY OF PETERBOROUGH BY  
THE WOMEN'S PATRIOTIC LEAGUE OF ASHBURNHAM  
IN MEMORY OF THE MEN OF PETERBOROUGH WHO FELL IN  
THE GREAT WAR OF 1914-1918**



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**2025 AMSG Steering Committee:**

Nancy Cockburn (Co-chair)  
Jenn McCallum (Co-chair)  
Steve Paul  
Matthew Walmsley  
Jane Wild



**United Way**  
**Peterborough & District**  
Change starts here.  
uwpeterborough.ca

Thank you to retiring committee member Matthew Walmsley for his service to AMSG over the last 4 years.



Re-joining AMSG Steering Committee for 2026, Jim Angel.

Web design for AMSG donated by Scott Adams of [Birchbark Media](#)



Learn More at [ashburnhamstewardship.com](http://ashburnhamstewardship.com)

Contact AMSG at [ashburnhamstewardship@gmail.com](mailto:ashburnhamstewardship@gmail.com)  
[instagram.com/armourhill\\_ptbo/](https://www.instagram.com/armourhill_ptbo/)



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Ashburnham Memorial Park  
Peterborough, Ontario

photo: Nancy Cockburn



[ashburnhamstewardship.com](http://ashburnhamstewardship.com)



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