

MINUTES FOR LEECHWELL GARDEN ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEETING
November 6th 2013 6pm Fire Station Community Room, Totnes

PRESENT: David Mitchell (Chair) Jeannette Willington, Susie Boyd, Liz Warnes, Lu Overy, Susan Taylor, Ed Vidler, Jim Carfrae, Shirley Prendergast (acting Sec).

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES: Keith Rennells, David Martin

It was agreed to co-opt Jeannette and Lu onto the Committee

2. MINUTES: LGA COMMITTEE MEETING 10.9.13 Agreed
LGA POOL MEETING 18.9.13 Agreed

3. MATTERS ARISING: repairs to the bench in the herb garden, Jim will investigate. **JC**
Re EH: Shirley has written twice to EH for confirmation of plans for the pool area and will follow this up for third time **SP**

4. SHDC Update from Keith (see below). Among several items Keith noted that:

-the knotweed/bindweed has been sprayed

-the fallen apple tree has been cleared. Keith suggests, and LGA agree, that replacement apple trees would be appropriate which SH will pay for. Liz will investigate. **LW**

-SHDC have treated areas of the paths before resurfacing- bark chip paths will also be topped up

-following agreement with residents three willows in the far/shed corner will be pollarded

-SHDC solicitor is working on the MOA for third access point to the garden.

5. TDT/LGA Relationship and Finances (see attached PDF)

Dave outlined recent discussions with TDT about the high level of charges and overheads we have been paying TDT as our accountable body and about the high cost of insurance cover for assets in the garden. This was not sustainable and LGA would have to do additional fundraising on top of this amount if there was to be any income to spend on the **garden itself**.

The Trust have agreed to refund the LGA £330 for disputed items for 2012 and to a lower fee for 2013. Ed noted that TDT auditors insist that TDT projects equally share TDT's costs, although this had not been explained to the LGA. This will mean that the LGA will pay about 1/3rd of TDT's overheads and audit costs which (with insurance) will amount to £1100 for 2013, as opposed to the £1400 paid in 2012.

If the LGA decide to remain with TDT as our accountable body until 2015, Dave discussed two possibilities for further lowering LGA costs:

A) Reduce the cost of insurance. The main item is asset insurance at £594pa, which covers the items bought with the Lottery Grant. Asset insurance is probably a condition of the Lottery Grant -in place until 2015. However we might be able to negotiate a lower asset value because some items may not be worth so much (the play structure) and thus reduce our premium. Ed will investigate this. **EV**

We will also check again with SHDC over the question of doubling up on Public Liability Insurance (we pay £59pa)- what does SHDC PLI cover- do we need both?) **EV**

B) TDT say we could lower our share of the audit fee (now £250pa) by using an Imprest system whereby TDT allocated specific amounts to the LGA which the LGA spent themselves in their own bank account. We still have a viable DOS Lloyds bank account. Jeannette has offered to manage it. **JCW/DM/SP**

We will investigate these issues and discuss at a further meeting.

6. BENCHES FOR THE POOL AREA. (see below) Shirley explained that we have £1500 ring- fenced to spend on the pool area. Following extensive discussion a visit was made to Woodmanship and two benches were recommended- made of green oak- one 3-seater with a back and arms and one smaller bench without back or arms. The two benches should be within our budget, including delivery, installation and VAT. It was agreed to get a formal quote for these and also for a low toddler bench using an unusual piece of oak we saw in the yard. **SP**

7. AOB

-PLAY STRUCTURE: this is showing signs of fungal decay and we need to investigate how long before it should be replaced. We probably can't claim insurance for what is natural decay. It was noted that safety and maintenance (and insurance?) of the play area is SHDC's responsibility. It was agreed to check when the next annual safety review was being done and for LGA to be present if possible, otherwise obtain the written report. Then we will contact the makers, Earthwrights, for their assessment and advice (the entire structure cost about 10K and is only 3years old, so has not been good value for money) **SP**

-WILLOW HOOPS. In reply to Janet's (Mitchell) enquiry: we have asked Keith to save the pollarded willow stems and these will be used to mark off the area around the The Three Guardians (no date as yet)

- BROKEN SHEARS: Susan noted these came from B and Q. Dave will investigate. **DM**

- PUB QUIZ: We have a LGA Pub Quiz booked at the Bay Horse Inn for **Monday 13th January 2014**

- PROBLEM LOCKING THE MAIN GATE: David Martin had mentioned that it was no longer possible to lock the gate just using a padlock – because of movement the holes no longer lined up. Currently a padlock and chain was being used. It was agreed that Jim should contact John Churchill about fixing things. **JC**

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Wednesday 11th December 6pm at the Fire Station as before

DOCUMENTS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING

NOTE FROM KEITH RENNELLS Apologies that I cannot attend this evening, but by way of update:

1. many thanks to the volunteers who turned out on Friday 11th October to help rake the meadow area - a nice morning, lovely company, and the meadow is looking very good - cheers!

2. the pool area has been treated with chemicals this week, as previously discussed. This is both the knotweed as well as the wider vegetation within the fenced area. Fingers crossed it has knocked it back!

3. the stone paths were previously chemically treated - I'm not sure how successfully - but this is in advance of SHDC Property Services team resurfacing eroded sections - I'll keep you posted on a date - it should be soon

4. following agreement from residents (thanks) the three willows in the shed corner are now earmarked for pollarding this winter...at a height of approx 6' - 7' tba. This will produce a nice growth form, height, shape and is the traditional way of managing willows in such 'natural space' locations.

5. I have asked our PS team to top up the bark chip path at the same time as re-dressing/rolling the stone paths

6. The additional bird boxes have not been forgotten!

7. Apple tree - Alex and I discussed the fallen and removed apple. Would the group like to consider replacing it with a small group of traditional fruit trees (or another idea?) - it would be nice to keep that link to the orchard past! We should be able to find some £ for this.

8. Third access point - quick update on this complex matter - SHDC & HWWMC have reached tacit agreement on what needs to be included in land transfer, and what needs to be included in Memorandum of Understanding outside of the legal agreement. Our solicitor is working on this at the moment.

I hope you have an interesting and fruitful meeting,

Regards

Keith

POOL GARDEN BENCHES. As you know, we have £1500 ringfenced for the pool area, and decided it should be spent on 2 benches. We visited the Woodmanship workshop near Dunsford and also saw benches at Dunsford cricket ground. Consensus was:

Look of the benches: we felt that the benches were attractive with nice solid arms and would look right for the pool area, particularly those made of green oak (Mike also supplies them in sweet chestnut) Mike sources the wood locally and has some wide oak planks in his wood yard that would be very suitable.

Comfort: the benches need to have wider seats and for the back to be slightly angled to be really comfortable. The grain on the base would be positioned so as to throw off water. All of this can be customised as we wish.

Security: Mike could install the benches (initially in the main garden) so that they were secure but can be moved to the pool area at a later date.

Conclusion

1. We think two oak benches would be appropriate- one 3- seater with a shaped back (for the top of the pool area) and one small 2- seater without a back (for under the apple tree) Janet suggested that we get a chess board carved into this one, so it can be both seat and/or games table. Both benches in green oak -from the same tree- with comfort factors as above. We had a rough costing from Mike which suggests that our budget should cover both, including delivery, VAT and installation.

2. If there is money over I suggest we use it towards the new boundary hedge around the pool garden (planted at the end of 2012) or possibly for an extra children's bench.

Dave posted images of the benches on the website a few weeks ago

Location in the Garden: I spoke to Keith about possible locations and he said that we should look at sites on the very edge of areas of mown grass so that mowing could take place as before.

Shirley