

MINUTES FOR LEECHWELL GARDEN ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEETING (08/10/24) Held at Belinda and Rory's house (with thanks to both).

Present: David Mitchell (Chair), Belinda Batt, Lou Ovary, Claire Morley, Alicia Grace, Paul Church, Robert Vint, Rory Batt, Shirley Prendergast (Sec)

Apologies: David Martin.

A warm welcome was extended to Alicia who has been co-opted as a new member of the Committee.

- 1. Previous minutes:** The minutes of the meeting on 10/9/24 were approved.
- 2. Matters Arising:** *Following Daves request to SHDC:* Contractors have installed rat traps in the garden and SHDC gardening services have done a comprehensive Autumn cut back of external hedges, the internal dividing hedge by the lower lawn and strimmed boundary nettles- for all of which many thanks.
Arising out discussion of Woodland Garden: Paul has contacted Parklife to inform them of the decision not to proceed with a notice board for the time being. He will inform Sue.
- 3. Security, vandalism and anti-social behaviour.** Since the last meeting, Robin Lacey's water sculpture was found lifted out of the pool and deposited on the path. Despite its considerable weight, reports suggest children were involved, and (worryingly) that nobody present in the garden had attempted to stop them. The sculpture has been moved to safety and Dave has reported issue to SHDC. This follows a growing incidence of vandalism in the garden (especially in the new Woodland Garden) and raises urgent issues of what can/should be done about it.
- 4. Possibility of CCTV as preventive measure.** This was discussed at length with helpful input from Robert and Paul. On balance it was felt that CCTV raised more complications than it solved, including issues of cost, privacy and questions about monitoring and efficiency and would not be the right solution for the garden. A variety of suggestions were made (including contacting Grove School and introducing a newsletter for parents) -to be taken up at future meetings. The most immediate and viable intervention was, from now on, to restrict the inclusion of new, moveable and potentially damageable structures and objects in the garden.

5. **The proposed den in Woodland Garden.** In light of these issues, it was unanimously agreed that the den should not go ahead for now, and that Sue be invited to next LGA Meeting to discuss.
6. **Plastic Toys.** As part of discussion Alicia noted the large number of plastic toys scattered around the garden and suggested we try to implement a plastic free policy. Agreed to take up at future meeting.
7. **Pool Project. (see attached)** Dave reported that he, David and Shirley had written to Phil McMahon of Historic England, copied to Robb Sekula of SHDC (and now circulated to LGA members) regarding the immersion pool. The letter notes that it is no longer feasible or sensible for the three of them to undertake the time consuming, lengthy and complex work involved, and makes some suggestions about how this might be done.
8. **Draft Proposal for Publicity – defining responsibilities for LGA Committee Members, 2025. (see Attached)** Many thanks to Belinda, Claire and Rory for consulting committee members and drawing up a clear and comprehensive overview defining key tasks in running the garden. The plan is to use this as a way of reaching out, finding and encouraging new people to join the LGA Committee in 2025. Rory will use any feedback to amend for next meeting.
9. **South Hams Community Action membership.** Claire proposed that we join (at cost of £60pa) as a source of useful info on finding and managing volunteers and training, funding and other opportunities. All in agreement.
10. **Upgrade the LGA Committee-only contact/info list-** at the moment information has (accidentally) been sent out to a much wider group than it should be.
11. **Councillor Louisa Auletta’s comments and suggestions (dated 17.9.24).** Some of these have been picked up by Rory in his recent meeting with Louisa and the rest will be discussed at our next LGA meeting
12. **Treasurers report.** Paul reported that funds on account are £9872 with £313 having been spent on gardening services in September. Donations of £71 plus £87 via Paypal. Many thanks to Pam for looking after the plant table and banking money from the donation box.

Dates of forthcoming meetings:

Next Committee Meeting, Wednesday 6th November. 5.30. Re-Economy Centre. (Usually 2nd Tuesday of month at 5.30 pm).

