

**MINUTES FOR LEECHWELL GARDEN ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016 6pm at the REconomy Centre**

**PRESENT:** David Mitchell (Chair), David Martin, Lu Overy, Keith Rennells, Jim Carfrae, Shirley Prendergast, Frances Gilmore

**1. APOLOGIES:** Marsha Cummings, Jeannette Willington

**2. MINUTES:** The minutes of the meeting of the 21<sup>st</sup> September were approved.

**3. MATTERS ARISING:**

Keith provided a padlock for the pumping shed that can be opened using the same key as the gates, shed and pool area gate.

Jim had contacted Alice (see 4 below) and Shirley had contacted the Mayor (see 5 below).

**4. HEDGE LAYING**

Jim had arranged for Alice Wood to visit the garden to discuss laying the hedge around the pool area. Jim, Dave and Shirley met with Alice in the garden and Alice subsequently submitted a brief report (attached at the end of these minutes). In Alice's view the hedge will not be ready for laying for a few years, but in the mean time we should thicken it by planting hazel whips. Lu, Frances and Shirley agreed to examine the hedge to determine how many 45-60cm whips were needed to fill the gaps and meet Alice's criterion of 4-6 trees per metre. They will then arrange to purchase them (from Hill House Nursery or Trees for Health?). Keith noted that November is the right time to purchase whips. It was also agreed that SHDC would be asked to trim the existing hedge to a maximum height of 2 metres.

**Action:** Lu, Frances and Shirley re whips

**Action:** Keith to ask SHDC to trim the hedge

**5. APPLICATION TO MAKE THE GARDEN A 'LOCAL GREEN SPACE'**

Shirley has produced a detailed document about this (with illustrations mainly provided by Dave) and will hand it over to Tony Whitty who will submit the application. It was agreed that the document was a valuable resource and copies should be made available (e.g. in the library).

**6. REPLACEMENT OF PLAY STRUCTURE**

Following the site meeting in the garden earlier in the afternoon with Mark Renouard and Reuben Woods of Earthwrights and Alex Whish of SHDC, Keith noted that:

- Earthwrights plan to do some preliminary work (e.g. removal of nettings and bolts) on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> October
- 'volunteers' from EarthWright's will chop up the eucalypt on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> and remove it, leaving two large sacks of logs for locals
- two protective fences will be erected – one around the sandpit area, the other around the site of the new play structures (roughly the footprint of the existing structure)
- work will start on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> and is expected to last 3 weeks (but may take 4 depending on the weather)
- the new equipment should not be used for several weeks after completion to give the new turf time to bed in properly
- Alex was hopeful that Rob Sekula could arrange to transfer the full grant to the LGA in the near future (rather than waiting for invoices from Earthwrights)

It was agreed that the official opening should be postponed until early January 2017

**Action:** Shirley to renegotiate with the Mayor

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Shirley agreed to draft a Press Release and the text of notices and Dave agreed to print and laminate the notices.

**Action:** Shirley and Dave

Dave also agreed to contact Santander to see if they wanted to publicise their £4335 grant (e.g. by attending the 'opening').

**Action:** Dave to contact Santander

**AOB:**

Lu noted that the volunteers had planted a load of bluebell, cyclamen and snowdrop bulbs and would be planting more at the next two Monday sessions.

David Martin mentioned that he had made a temporary repair to the fence behind the donation table and box – the posts had totted. It was agreed that Keith would ask SHDC to do a proper repair job.

**Action:** Keith to contact SHDC

**NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting of the Committee will be on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November at 6pm at the ReEconomy building in Leechwell Street.

**Action:** Dave to reserve room (**DONE**)

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## The Leechwell Hedge

At the hedge stands at the moment, it is too sparse to lay.

There is a small amount of plants and trees planted on either side of the fence.

What we need to create is a thicker hedge of trees that are easy to lay and manage on one side of the fence.

This needs to be done by planting Hazel whips to fill in the gaps. Hazel is one of the easiest trees to lay, its native and will withstand being trimmed.

I suggest planting is done on the outside of the fence (the lower side) as this is where the majority of the trees are. It will also get more light, which will help the new whips grow. When we eventually lay the hedge we will lay it up hill, to the left, so planting on this side of the fence will make that easier (for right handed people!).

Ideally you want to have 4 to 6 trees per metre so planting whips can fill in these gaps. Some trimming of the existing trees may be necessary so give enough light to the new plants, and this might need to be done for the first few years.

The existing trees could also be trimmed if they are getting too tall, taking them down to around 2m high. This will also encourage the tree to bush out (and create a good habitat for nesting birds).

The larger the whips the better as they will be more established. 45cm to 60cm is good, but larger would be even better.

Realistically we are looking at a good few years before the hedge is established enough to lay, but it can be trimmed in the meantime to encourage the hedge to thicken.

A Midland Style hedge suit this situation well. As there is no Devon bank, we can create height by weaving the hedge in and out of stakes (which we could harvest on site). We will be able to create a hedge that hides the fence and naturally replaces it as it eventually rots away.

On the inside of the fence more native hedge plants could be planted, like honey suckle, and these can be woven into the hedge when we lay it. I suggest using things that have no prickles!

Hope this helps!