

**MINUTES FOR LEECHWELL GARDEN ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2014 6pm at Leechwell Cottage**

**PRESENT:** David Mitchell (Chair); Shirley Prendergast; Elizabeth Warnes; David Martin; Louise Overy; Susie Boyd; Ed Vidler; Keith Rennels; Jeanette Willington; Marsha Cummings

**1. APOLOGIES:** Catherine Munroe; Jim Carfrae.

**2. MINUTES.** the minutes of the meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> August 2014 were agreed.

**3. Matters Arising:** With regard to the water supply, there was no further news. Dave Mitchell has contacted Dan Bailey but has heard nothing further. He will contact Dan again.  
**Action: Dave**

**4. SHDC Update, new signs and grass cutting**

Keith Rennels gave an update about the third access. He had had an update from the Council's solicitor who says that the land transaction involves a complex process of altering the deeds. They are now close to completion. When the completion has taken place a memorandum of understanding can be completed which allows the third access to be used. Keith will keep us informed of progress.  
**Action: Keith**

With regard to the grass cutting, Keith was surprised that the meadow had been cut. It was agreed that on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October in the morning when volunteers will be available in the garden, Keith will attend with rakes so that the cuttings can be raked up. It was confirmed that the instruction was to cut the grass up to the gate to the pool area but not the wild flower bank.

Keith asked if the Yellow Rattle was showing and was told that it definitely was. There is also lots of thistle on the bank which the volunteers have tried to cut back.

The question arose about where to put the cuttings. The compost bins are full. Keith suggested that it be put in the same place as last year, next to the compost bin area. Lou said that it didn't look very good there but Keith suggested that we continue to use this place for the time being. Compost could be used round the trees or in the herb garden to free up the compost bins. David Martin will check the bins. The existing three bins are full.

Dave Mitchell mentioned that the Council will take one green sack of garden waste from homes when they collect refuse. The once-a-year cut of the meadow makes the most cuttings. Keith will make some inquiries about disposal.

With regard to the signage, Keith circulated the proposed signs and it was agreed that the worded sign can stay the same size but the sign with the picture prohibitions needs to be A3 size. We need a "No Skateboarding" picture and if there's a better symbol for the prohibition of barbecues, that ought to be used. The one shown indicates "No fires". In addition, the white lettering against the green background needs to be changed to black lettering to show up better.  
**Action: Keith**

Shirley asked about the knotweed. Keith said it was being treated and Shirley asked if there had been a second treatment. Keith is not sure but will check and let us know. Shirley said she has looked and it looks as though it has disappeared but the rest of the

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garden round the pool area is a mess and needs spraying. Brambles are growing there. She asked how long it takes before we know that the Knotweed is completely clear. The rhizomes live for years. We need to look again next Spring. Keith is not sure how we would assess whether the knotweed was gone. Shirley will check the original report which was given to the Association about the knotweed and its treatment.

**Action: Shirley**

**5. Grove School:**

Ed said that there was not much to report. There had been exchanges with the school and there needs to be someone to run the proposed classes.

Ed said there were two main questions:

- a. Is there a willingness on the part of LGA to have these groups in the garden?
- b. What activities/learning should be done?

Catherine is discussing this with the school. Someone from Gardening for Health will be there at the sessions.

After some discussion it was felt that while the LGA has no objection to the groups using the garden, actual gardening could be a problem. Someone would have to water and harvest the plants. If the groups are of seven or eight year olds, they would need a lot of supervision.

Shirley said that the garden offers a nature study opportunity without cultivation and thought that the use by the groups should be educational-only.

There will be four-weekly rotation of the groups (four groups of fifteen in each group) with a member of staff and volunteer in attendance at each session and it was agreed that we could not offer them gardening. The school needs to come up with ideas about how the garden could be used for nature study or other educational purposes.

**6. Future of the Play Structure:**

Keith said that the existing structure is inspected regularly by Tim who is the play area inspector and also by the insurance inspector who carries out more of an engineering inspection.

The Council has had to carry out some remedial works in the last 18 months. At the moment the structure is OK but the Eucalypt will probably come to the end of its useable life in the next two years.

Could Earthrights come and talk to the Committee about other options for what's there and maybe incorporate the parts of the play structure that are OK? It would be better to have something specifically designed for play.

Dave Mitchell said that as long as the structure was not "industrial" looking the Committee wouldn't mind it being replaced by something other than a tree.

Shirley suggested that the structures at Paignton sea front might be a model for ours.. Keith could find out who did them but perhaps Earthrights could do something similar.

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Shirley said that there was concern about fungal growth and slime on the existing tree structure. If the winter is wet, the structure could deteriorate.

The insurance runs out next October and then the Council would take over the insurance.

Shirley asked if there were fundraisers at SHDC who could help with this and Keith said that the Communities Team could monitor funding opportunities. It was agreed that we should look at the Paignton structures. **Action: ALL**

**7. AGM – date and location**

Lou suggested that the AGM could perhaps be held in the December meeting and members could bring things to share. Dave Mitchell said that the problem with that is that it may be quite expensive. If there are 30/40 people we would need a venue which would have cost implications. In the end no firm decision was made about the AGM.

**8. 2015 Calendar of Events**

The Spring fete should be April/May and the summer one perhaps in September. It ought to take place when the weather is likely to be warmer.

Dave Mitchell thought that the events should coincide with the Food Market. It was decided to hold it on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

The question of the Pub Quiz came up and whether or not it had been booked. Dave will ask Jim to check. **Action: Jim**

**9. Any Other Business**

Shirley said that Scheduled Monument Consent application for the Leechwell has been submitted and she has received the acknowledgement of this today. We should have a decision by early to mid-December. Shirley will start setting up the process for the general application for the pool.

Shirley mentioned that the income this year was £2,900 and the balance is £3000. She asked if it would be acceptable to spend some of that for Oliver Bosence, who produced the schedule of works for the Leechwell application) to do the Pool Area one. Lou asked how much it might be likely to cost and it was thought it should be considerably less than £300 (the Leechwell cost).

There was a discussion about moving the bee-box but Shirley thought that we ought to leave it and put netting over the front to stop the children removing the items in the box.

Dave said that he and Janet would like to host a committee get-together before the end of November. We've done this in the past - partners would be invited too and everybody would be asked to bring something to eat or drink

**NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting of the Association will be on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> November in the Fire Station.