

MINUTES FOR LEECHWELL GARDEN ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday 27th July 2016 6pm at the REconomy Centre

PRESENT: David Mitchell (Chair), Shirley Prendergast, Jeannette Willington, Frances Gillmore, David Martin, Marsha Cummings, Keith Rennells

1. APOLOGIES: Lu Overy, Jim Carfrae

2. MINUTES: The minutes of the meeting of the 29th June 2016 were approved.

3. MATTERS ARISING:

Dave and Jeannette reported on the RHS Pennant visit – the inspectors were bowled over by the garden, though one of them pointed to a bolt sticking out of the play structure that could be dangerous. Keith agreed to contact SHDC about it. **Action:** Keith to liaise.

4. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Jeannette confirmed that we currently have around £8000 in our account.

5. REPLACEMENT OF PLAY STRUCTURE AND AUTUMN EVENT PLANS

Keith will check with Mike Jones at Earthwrights to get a firm date so that SHDC know when they should plan to remove the existing structure. We are still expecting the replacement to be installed by late October or early November. It was agreed that the 'opening' should be a celebratory event in the garden, which will require some planning. Shirley agreed to contact Helen Raphael Sands (who organised the memorable opening ceremony back in 2010) to see if she could help. **Action:** Shirley to contact Helen

6. WATERING THE GARDEN

Dave reported on the visit to Powderham Sawmills (Dave, Jim, Shirley and Jeannette) to investigate a shed/storage unit for the solar-powered watering system to be installed near the pagoda. Steve Kingdon at Powderham agreed to make us a small shed (approximately 5' by 3' by 5' high) from untreated douglas fir for around £400 (including delivery and assembly on site). No date was given, but it will be ready well before October. Dave agreed to ask Jim to contact Steve in the near future for more information.

Action: Dave to contact Jim

Dave had used the pump to fill the water butt (pumping from a bucket under the waterfall) earlier in the week, so the system will definitely work. Jeannette reported that the butt was now only ¼ full – the tap was leaking. David Martin agreed to see if the leak could be fixed and Dave said he would refill the butt as soon as possible.

Action: David to investigate and Dave to refill asap

7. GARDEN NEWS

Jeannete reports:

The wildflower areas and the herb garden have been in full summer bloom. On the pergola the roses have been spectacular; thanks to Keith for his expert pruning earlier.

There was a suggestion that SHDC might be induced to take on the annual pruning of the pergola roses.

Volunteers are responsible for those areas looking so good. They put in a big effort prior to the visit of the judges for the RHS Pennant Award, including clearing much of the overgrown plants from the pools. SHDC had cut the grass and spread new bark on the paths, so the garden was looking very cared for when the judges arrived. They made appreciative comments and obviously enjoyed their visit, so the signs were positive. We

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are thankful to have a new, effective volunteer. Thank you to all volunteers who, since March, have been so committed.

The watering is still a difficult chore, especially as we've had so little rain; in places the ground is cracking. The team are grateful to David and Dave for improving matters by installing the water- butt and are eager to have the system fully working as soon as possible. Various plants are showing signs of stress, the clematis and newly planted herbaceous in particular. During drought, more help with watering would be appreciated; it needs to be regular.

Plants below the Leechwell Lane wall continue to be damaged by children jumping over.

The team are about to review the garden needs and planting for next year. Spring-flowering bulbs will be ordered wholesale, to be planted in the grass under and around the sycamore tree near the Guardians. This might be arranged as an activity for school-children.

At this time we do not have so many plants for sale on the table; the supply is running down gradually and there will be a rest period. The donations for these and Shirley's book sales have contributed enormously to our funds. Thank you to all involved in this.

8. AGM PLANS

Dave pointed out that we had not had an AGM since December 2014. Given that the AGM is a largely formal affair – financial report, re-election of officers, admission of new committee members – with relatively few attendees, it could be held at the REconomy Centre. It was agreed that we should set the date at the next Committee meeting in August when dates for the shed installation and Play Structure replacement were more definite.

AOB:

Dave belatedly welcomed Frances to the committee and she was formally co-opted (and will become a full member at the AGM).

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting of the Committee will be on Wednesday 24th August 2016 at the ReEconomy building.

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