

MINUTES FOR LEECHWELL GARDEN ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEETING
3rd May 2022 in the Leechwell Garden

PRESENT: Sue Holmes (Chair), David Mitchell (Secretary), Paul Church (Treasurer), Shirley Prendergast, Roma Church, Lu Overy, Robert Vint, David Martin

1. APOLOGIES: Philip Strange

2. PREVIOUS MINUTES: the minutes of the last meeting, on 5th April 2022, were approved.

MATTERS ARISING

Sue noted that SHDC will not be paying ParkLife for any future meadow maintenance - they argue that the costs outweigh the benefits. We (Ross) will therefore have to do it ourselves. Sue will ask Keith exactly what he was planning to do if he had got funding. We need advice from Philip about wildlife (insects etc.) protection from strimming/scything.

SHDC have so far done nothing about the pool leaks.

Helen Sands sent Sue details of the Totnes Times article about the short (30 minute) version of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" performed in the garden by 5 Grove School children on 12th May at 10am and then again at 2pm. Chiefly for audiences from The Grove but all are welcome.

Dave noted that the solar-powered watering system is not filling the water butt in the shed. It needs Guy Metcalfe to fix it (probably a blockage at the pool end of another pump failure). Unfortunately Guy is away until the end of May so watering cans will need to be used.

Paul has contacted Carpenter Oak about repairing the pergola and constructing a replacement for the picnic table.

3. TOTNES DIRECTORY

David Martin took photos of the rest of the committee to go in the edition of the directory (selected photo attached below).

4. 2022 PLAN UPDATE

Sue asked us all to enter the garden as if we had never visited before and make a note our reactions. Here are some of the pointes that were raised:

1. There's no obvious information about the garden that visitors can read - nothing to tell them why it's here or even what's in it. While the sand pit and play facilities are pretty obvious, the 3 Guardians, Suzie's Gate and the Immersion Pool are not. Roma felt that this was a good thing – it encouraged people to explore.
2. Do we need explanatory leaflets in the plastic box by the entrance or a sign (like the one in the herb garden)?
3. Do we need to identify the trees, shrubs and plants – e.g. with little wooden labels?
4. The area along the Maudlin Road fence looks rather dead, should we plant things there to brighten it up? (Sue noted that she has earmarked funds to buy 3 trees)
5. The area above the waterfall (which is very popular with children) should be somehow made much harder to get into. brambles to be allowed to re-grow. Note: since the meeting, SHDC have said they do not have capacity to remove dead trees. Sue to ask Ross if he could reduce them, and ask SHDC to take away all the cut branches.
6. The ground around the play structure is largely bare earth (but attempts to protect it using rubber matting are likely to be expensive and not likely to last).
7. Lu thought the Japanese Knotweed might have returned to the pool area

Re. items 1, 2 and 3, Sue reminded Dave he had promised to update the original garden plan produced by Charlotte Rathbone.

5. FINANCES

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Though there are still no web donation buttons Roma noted that we get around £100 a month in donations.

6. AOB

Sue is waiting to hear back from ParkLife re costs and funding for improvements to the area around the felled lime tree, called the Wildlife Garden on the plan.

Use of Leechwell Garden appears to have returned to its more manageable pre-Covid levels, although no survey has been carried out to confirm/contradict this.

After the meeting, Robert and Sue discussed replacing existing sign and noticeboard at the main entrance to Leechwell Garden with a wall-mounted information board (see 3.1). Sue proposed adapting the existing design and layout of the Totnes Garden Trail information board in Heath's Garden. Sue, Dave and Shirley to progress.

A comments book would be useful, perhaps positioned in the leaflet holder.

GARDEN PARTY

No time to discuss, Lu and Sue to meet but more help is needed. This is LGA's opportunity to showcase the Garden and its recent improvements, raise funds and get more volunteers involved, as well as participate in a major art and culture festival.

NEXT MEETING: will be on Tuesday June 7th starting at 5:30pm. It will be held in the garden, weather permitting, or at the REconomy Centre (Dave has already booked the room).

