

MINUTES FOR LEECHWELL GARDEN ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEETING
3rd September at Leechwell Cottage

PRESENT: David Mitchell (Chair), Shirley Prendergast, Sue Holmes, Philip Strange, David Martin

1. APOLOGIES: Keith Rennells, Lu Overy, Roma Church, Jeannette Willington

2. MINUTES: the minutes of the meeting on 7th July were briefly scanned!

3. MATTERS ARISING

None.

4. THE SANDPIT PROJECT

Dave apologized for failing to send the two letters (to the Totnes Trust and Cllr Jo Sweett) asking for funds. *(He has since done so and has received positive responses to both. He has sent in an application for £550 to the SHDC Locality Fund which Cllr Sweett will then approve.)*

Dave noted that SHDC have inserted drains across the pathway at the back of Heath Way so any water that escapes from the lower pool cannot find its way onto the path behind the lower 5 houses on Heathway.

Keith reported that Andrew has found a maker and installer of chestnut post and rail 'Sussex-style' fencing for the **Lower pond fence**. He's forwarded the price details to Rob Sekula for him to consider, and hopefully he'll be able to approve the quote and give the go ahead. Keith will keep the LGA updated when he hears something.

Shirley and David have finalised the details of what is needed for the fence around the sandpit. Dave has ordered (and the LGA has paid for) the larch cladding and Shirley will order the posts, rails, screws etc. in the near future.

5. GARDEN MAINTENANCE

This is a subject that Sue has raised several times in the past. One key question is exactly what we should ask SHDC to do. David reported that when the ops team were mowing the grass that day their manager Mark Capper) badly need new instructions on exactly what we want them to do in relation to cutting the grass and hedges, preferably with an annotated plan of the garden (something we believe they already have). It was agreed that Sue should ask Keith to produce such a document since he understands the SHDC mapping facilities needed (for which we would pay Keith).

Action: Sue to contact Keith

There was some discussion about the basic problem of maintenance by the LGA. Where we once had volunteers and members who were prepared to do the work – weeding, plating etc – that is no longer quite so true. We cannot afford to pay for Ross, Keith and Andrew to do **all** the work so we have to get SHDC to do more of it. We did agree that we should set aside an annual maintenance budget of £300.

Sue pointed out (with a coloured map) that much of the garden periphery was not used by visitors who tended to congregate in the central area – leading to real problems with crowding and damage to the garden. She wondered if by mowing and the provision of more seating and tables we could encourage people to use some of the underused areas. There was talk of 'crown lifting' to reduce the shadiness of some areas.

6. WILD FLOWER BANKS

Sue had recently distributed a photo of a 'wild flower garden' in Paignton and wondered why the Leechwell Garden wild flower areas did not look so attractive. Philip pointed out that the Paignton garden was not really full of wild flowers but almost certainly had been seeded with annuals that would need replacing each year. He pointed out that the wild

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flower banks were a longer term project and we should not expect immediate results. He also said that they had not been looked after much (another side of the maintenance problem).

7. A TOTNES TALE

Dave reminded everyone that Helen Sands "Totnes Tale" project (see <https://www.visittotnes.co.uk/whats-on/a-totnes-tale/>) would culminate in the Leechwell Garden in the afternoon of Sunday October 3rd. It was felt we should use the gazebos to offer light refreshments and provide information about the garden (*not sure about this – I didn't take any notes – Dave*)

8. AOB

Keith and Andrew are looking to cut and rake **Pool area/wall bank meadows** on 15th or 17th September (date to be confirmed). Not big jobs requiring masses of volunteers, but a couple of helpers always welcome!

NEXT MEETING: No date was agreed at the meeting.

Action: Dave to circulate date