

**MINUTES FOR LEECHWELL GARDEN ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> October 6pm at the REconomy Centre**

**PRESENT:** David Mitchell (Chair), Roma Church, Jeannette Willington, Sue Holmes, Keith Rennells, Shirley Prendergast, David Martin, Philip Strange

**1. APOLOGIES:** Lu Overy, Frances Gilmore

**2. MINUTES:** The minutes of the meeting of the 30<sup>th</sup> July 2019 and of the 2019 AGM were approved.

**3. MATTERS ARISING:**

The committee thanked Keith for the new notices. Dave agreed to remind Pete about the notice for Susie's Gate. The wasp infestation has now gone. It was agreed that SHDC had done a neat job capping off the pipe that led to the leak.

**4. SANDPIT**

Shirley reported that she did contact Earthwrights but got no response. Since then she has spoken to Mark and left a message for Reuben which she will follow up.

**4. PATH REPAIRS**

Keith had arranged for 3 contractors (Stuart from SHDC, Gary Pilbeam and James Baron) to visit the garden and all 3 have agreed to submit estimates within the next week and will complete the work within a month or so. The garden will have to be closed for safety reasons while the work is going on. It has been agreed that the replacement edging will be made of recycled plastic rather than wood, so it should last longer.

**5. GARDENING MATTERS**

There has been deliberate damage to several of the trees – a rowan was damaged so badly it has been removed. It's not clear how we can prevent this.

Shirley suggested that:

1. We take over the cutting of the wild flower bank ourselves as it has been cut too early this year
2. That we plant more perennial wildlife/insect-friendly wild flowers
3. That some buddleias (none in garden at moment) in the back hedge of pool area would attract butterflies.

David reported that the birch trees near his house need trimming, some branches hang down to close to the path. Keith reported that SHDC now have a trained arborist and Keith, who is seeing Alex Whish this week, agreed to ask if SHDC could handle such tree maintenance.

**Action:** Keith to discuss with Alex.

**6. WILDLIFE IN THE GARDEN**

Everyone admired the photos that Philip had been putting on Instagram – it was felt they deserved a wider audience. Keith reported that a large group of slow-worms were revealed when the tarpaulin in the pool area was moved. It was agreed that we should ensure that the area continues to contain suitable habitats for them (piles of decaying wood, etc.) and that we should encourage wildlife by not tidying the area too much.

Philip reported that the bee house had been damaged again despite it being hard to get at. It was agreed that we should install one in the pool area too. There was some discussion of bat boxes and the hire of a bat detector, but this will have to wait until they emerge from hibernation next spring.

Philip raised the issue of the strimming of the wildflower bank by SHDC at a time when it was still in full flower and providing important habitat for insects. Keith suggested that in the

**MINUTES FOR LEECHWELL GARDEN ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> October 6pm at the REconomy Centre**

future the wildflower bank should be cut and raked in early spring and late summer/early autumn by garden volunteers (and not by SHDC). There was also some discussion about the Hogweed problem on the bank opposite the new houses.

## **7. POOL AREA**

Dave and Shirley described the visit by Phil (McMahon), Rebecca and Mark from Historic England and their interest in helping us investigate the path of the leat that used to supply the pool, including the possibility of a non-invasive geophysical survey. We expect them to contact us in the near future about next steps.

They also confirmed that we could go ahead with our plans to fence of the pool area (with a gate) and work on the area outside. Keith will be getting Alex Whish to sign off on our plans. He and Andrew (together with help from Shirley) have made an excellent start on clearing the area. They will be sowing the meadow with suitable native plants, erecting the fencing and preparing the area for the path repairs. They will not be cutting gaps in the hedge yet to safeguard the seeded meadow from being trampled. It was agreed that both the oak and hazel trees embedded in the hedge line should be retained.

## **11. FINANCES**

Jeannette reported that she and Dave had signed the necessary form to close the second bank account (Susie's Gate fund) and that a new sub-account – the "Leechwell Garden Pond Fund" – had been set up.

**NEXT MEETING:** Although the date of Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November was agreed at the meeting, the REconomy centre is booked until 8:30 that evening (and the week before and after) so Dave has booked **Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> November** instead. It may turn out that we could use the Bull Inn if it has opened by then!