

MINUTES FOR LEECHWELL GARDEN ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEETING (10/9/24)

Held at Belinda and Rory's house (with thanks to both).

Present: David Mitchell (Chair), Paul Church, Robert Vint, Rory Batt, Shirley Prendergast (Sec)

Apologies: Lu Ovary, David Martin, Belinda Batt, Claire Morley

- 1. Previous minutes:** The minutes of the meeting on 30/07/24 were approved. No matters arising.
- 2. SHDC Issues (reported by Dave). Rat problem:** Following on from the 2023 treatment plan, and sightings of considerable numbers in the herb garden area this year, Robb Sekula has asked a contractor for quote for a further 12-month action plan (baiting/traps etc- paid for by SHDC). Suggests that the situation and complaints/sightings are monitored and logged. Robb says that, unfortunately, the garden offers 'perfect harbourage for rats' and it is probably unrealistic to expect to get rid of them totally. **Hedge cutting:** SHDC services are in grass cutting mode for another 6 weeks. Robb will get in touch then to discuss the hedges. (Lu reported that the hedge adjoining the backs of upper Heathway houses and the lawn area needs urgent attention).
- 3. Plant Table and donations.** Pam, who looks after the plant table and banks cash left in the donation box, is concerned that plants are being taken without payment. (Dave says it's hard to know if small donations made via the QR code are payments for plants or are general donations). We will look into adding the QR code and a more strongly worded request for payment on the table itself. Committee thanked Pam for her long-standing contribution on this front.
- 4. Transition Town implementation of 30X30 global initiative.** Idea is for private and public open spaces to devote 30% of them to wildlife friendly gardening by 2030, which will help to support wildlife and create wildlife corridors through the town. Sue has noted that the new Woodland Garden provides this 30% criterion for the Leechwell Garden. Robert has offered to draft a response to Transition Town's letter, including a map of the wildlife areas within the garden, for approval by the Committee.
- 5. Contact list of people who regularly work in/maintain garden or provide occasional services.** A useful suggestion from Claire. This should include volunteers and contacts in SHDC and any relevant local businesses. (In discussion it was noted that Paul Chambers is no longer

running the SHDC Totnes Maintenance Depot). Paul (Church) has offered to set up a Google Drive where names/contacts/roles can be added.

- 6. Woodland Garden.** Sue has updated the committee on the work completed so far. Sue and Ernesto were thanked for how much they had achieved in this area.

Remaining work includes a new lectern style A1 noticeboard (for which an estimate of £840 has been submitted) and a den/wildlife observatory (to be located behind the copse?).

The Committee asked for more info on both of these items. First, because the den/observatory was a recent addition to the Woodland Garden, the Committee would like to know more about its purpose and design and how it might be used. Second, it was felt that the new notice board was very expensive and such a high cost could not be justified. Something simpler should be possible, more in keeping with other notices in the garden and far less costly than proposed.

- 7. LGA Communications.** More generally, communications regarding decisions, plans and the care of the garden seemed to have become more complicated, disjointed and time consuming over the course of this year. As a start, the Committee decided that from now on all discussion/decision making will take place at Committee meetings rather than (as it has sometimes seemed) piecemeal by email. This would be less confusing, with the advantage that Sue could come and discuss her plans in person if need be. The Committee asked Paul, as Treasurer, to contact Sue about items 6/7 above.
- 8. Treasurers report.** Paul reported that to date there was a total of £10,185 in the LGA Account.

Dates of forthcoming meetings: Next Committee Meeting: 5.30, 8th October
(2nd Tuesdays of month: 5.30 pm, Belinda and Rory's house, unless otherwise informed, 41a Fore Street - blue door next to Crew Clothing).

