

**MINUTES FOR LEECHWELL GARDEN ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**10<sup>th</sup> November at Leechwell Cottage**

**PRESENT:** David Mitchell (Chair), Sue Holmes, Philip Strange, Lu Overy, Roma Church,

**1. APOLOGIES:** Keith Rennells, Jeannette Willington, Shirley Prendergast, David Martin

**2. MINUTES:** the minutes of the meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> September were agreed.

**3. MATTERS ARISING**

None.

**4. DATE FOR THE AGM**

It was agreed that the AGM should be held sometime in the first two weeks of December on a weekday evening – starting at 6pm. The location will either be the REconomy Centre or a room at the Mansion (which Philip will investigate). In the past less than 15 people have attended but given the number of committee members retiring it would be good to get more.

**5. STATUS OF THE SANDPIT, PICNIC TABLE AND WATER PUMP SYSTEM**

All three have been completed. The committee wish to thank Shirley for her immense efforts on the Sandpit Project. Both Miles (Picnic table) or Guy (watering system) refused to accept any payment – Dave thanked both of them. Sue raised the question of repairing the pergola – Dave gave here Tim Crowley's phone number.

**6. WILDLIFE AREAS AND TREES, WILDFLOWER AREAS**

Keith had sent a comprehensive note (attached) about these topics. The committee would like to gratefully accept the offer of funds to maintain and enhance these areas.

The proposed gaps in the hedge around the 'pool area' were discussed. It was agreed we should have a site visit to discuss whether paths should be established and if so whether steps were need coming down from the hedge to the main path that goes by the waterfall.

**7. ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

Roma noted that though this was a problem 2 or 3 times a week in the summer, it had been much less frequent lately. As well as climbing over the wall from the footpath youths had also climbed over the wall by the main entrance. Sue noted that the problem was much worse at the Lamb Garden and at the Guildhall and the Town Council were considering CCTV as a deterrent. We agreed to see how that progressed before doing anything similar.

**8. MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT**

Sue had done a great deal of work on this, much of it documented in exchanges of emails with Keith and Rob. The summary which she discussed at the meeting is attached to these minutes.

**9. NOTICES**

The small gate sign had been rendered illegible due to graffiti – it was agreed that Keith should be asked to get a replacement from SHDC.

**Action:** Dave to contact Keith

Unfortunately Day Signs on the Industrial Estate (who had most of the signs in the garden) have shut down (due to retirement).

**10. HANDRAIL FOR LOWER STEPS TO SUSIE'S GATE**

Given that SHDC constructed the steps and have accepted responsibility for much of the garden maintenance it was felt that they should add a second handrail (there already is a handrail for half of the steps).

**Action:** Dave to contact Keith



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## **11. LEECHWELL PLAQUE POSITION**

Following a suggestion from Sue, Dave has agreed to move this sign so it is more obvious to visitors. The wooden backing will need replacement.

## **12. AOB**

Philip raised the question of volunteers – how could we recruit more? Dave suggested that perhaps we should create a list of members and asking them to contribute a token amount (£1 or £2 a year?). This would make it much easier to contact people about garden issues and ask for volunteers for particular task as well as long-term maintenance. It was agreed that this was something that that should be raised at the AGM.

**NEXT MEETING:** date will be set at the AGM.

## **Sue's Notes on Maintenance**

### **NOTES FOR LGA 10.11.21**

#### **MAINTENANCE**

- Areas not used/unusable
- Imbalance in maintenance responsibilities betw SHDC and LGA
- Improvements: more garden, less park

#### **1.MAKE BETTER USE**

- a. Changeover 'wildflower meadow' (Google) and pool area. Protect heritage and wildlife. Remove sections of hedge/fence (cost?) and replant as orchard. Note: 3 wildflower areas will be maintained by Keith under 10 Totnes Meadows funding – t o include replanting?
- b. Additions to top and side area of garden – bench, wood sections, wildlife habitats. Funding?
- c. Have reduced hedging, partic by compost bins and underplanted

#### **2.RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a. Plan – maintenance team – when? - who?. Plus 2 one-offs of waste and pergola. Same schedule for all 3 gardens on Trail
- b. Future – same volunteer group (G4H?) for all 3 gardens for beds, ornamental areas and wildlife

#### **3.IMPROVEMENTS (budget £300, £100 remaining)**

- a. 3 beds: mediterranean, herb and 'romantic' + snake. Climbers, most scented, all year on pergola. Green corridor along wall (wisteria and cotoneaster?)
- b. Additional planting under internal hedges, around guardians, along hedgerows
- c. Trees – replace dead + some left in hedges? Queen's Jubilee

#### **Notes:**

Proposal to TTC for Garden and Art Trail + Discussion on Castle Meadow

Question: restrictions on triangular pool and area for wildlife and planting?

Gardener: plan expects LGA to fund gardener for maintaining SHDC areas?

Membership: 10 max, not benefit financially

Sue 10.11.21



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**Keith's Notes.**

**Wildflower areas.**

As I previously reported, ParkLife has secured funding from the district and county councillors for the Ten Totnes Meadows project. We are creating or enhancing ten meadows in and around town, so there are some existing sites, and we'll be finding some new meadows too.

We'd like the three Leechwell meadows to be included as 'existing' sites, which means we'll have funds to maintain and enhance for the next few years. I hope that is acceptable to the committee.

We've been thinking about how we go about enhancing the appearance of the pool garden meadow. As I also reported previously, it was created as a 'perennial meadow', as encouraged by Plantlife and the County Wildlife Trusts, as such meadows contain the native UK flora best suited to our insect pollinators. It takes a few years for such meadow to establish with a balance of flowering plants and grasses. It's still early days for the pool garden perennial meadow.

However, I appreciate that some find this approach to be scruffy and less visually attractive than an 'annual meadow', which tends to be more colourfully showy straight away with its taller 'cornfield' type species. These annuals are still good for insects but less so than an area of our native perennials.

We would therefore like to propose an adjustment to the management of that area which we hope would retain the integrity of the perennial meadow, but would add more colour in part, whilst more regularly tidying the visual appearance of the pool garden meadow site:

**We can increase the number of cuts, with an early March and midsummer July 'topping out' of those plants that have gone over and seeded, allowing the later flowering plants to flourish. That will help the perceived scruffy appearance. We can also 'frame' the meadow by more regularly cutting the path edges, so that it becomes more apparent that the taller wilder grassy vegetation is deliberate and not down to neglect. We can also add some annual seed mix into the front strip for additional colour, leaving the perennial meadow intact behind.**

There will be differing views on the subject, so I'd like to offer the above as a compromise, embracing in part both approaches, and the pool garden meadow becomes part perennial, part annual.

Finally having cleared the section of hedge at the bottom of the pool garden in readiness for fence removal, we can now do this and make that visual and physical connection with the rest of the garden. I think we need confirmation that the LGA still wants this to happen.

**Maintenance**

I'm endeavoring to get hold of Rob Sekula on three fronts:

- To check he's happy with our revised grass cutting schedules for SHDC GM team
- To have another conversation about the maintenance of the tall boundary hedge, including who will do the work, and how to approach it (my view – a mix of coppicing, pruning – to retain the overall screen)
- To remind them to cut the pool garden hedge, which is long overdue

I am still hoping to talk to him today, in which case I will feed back before the meeting. If not...I'll keep trying and feed back when I can.



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**Other business**

Likewise, we're working with Rob to get the Heath Way West pond fence extension constructed asap. We've got the supplier and installer ready, so it's a question of logistics, but also a final check with HWW residents and LGA members on site for the fence line is needed.