

LEECHWELL GARDEN ASSOCIATION
Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 24th July 2012 at Totnes Fire Station.

1. Present; Jim Carfrae; David Mitchell; Liz Warnes; Roma Church; Ed Vidler; Shirley Prendergast; Lorette Logie; Jill Tomalin; Robert Vint; Susan Taylor

Apologies: Stephanie Parker; Laurel Ellis; Keith Rennells; David Martin; Catherine Munro

2. Minutes of the previous meeting: Confirmed as accurate.

3. Matters Arising

Lantern Event, 1st September: Jim still to send email contact details to Catherine to follow-up.

Action: Jim, Catherine

Dandelion Tool: Ed's still not tested by others, Shirley to email details of the more expensive version.

4/5. PUPA and Wild Flower Bank

Susan (invited to discuss the matter), who has been a member of entomological and botanical societies for some years has been managing at the 'Sunny Bank' along the wall to the left of the Herb Garden with a view to encouraging/protecting wild life - particularly insects - grasshoppers, bees and butterflies. A newt (or lizard) and a grass snake have both been spotted there recently. They are attracted to the area because it's sunny and well drained. She feels that it's best not strimmed but left as it is (with a few more plants (e.g. daisies) to add colour. She's happy to look after it (as well as the wildflower bank that abuts the garden of Leechwell Cottage). The notes from/about PUPA were discussed.

It was decided:

- not to put an explanatory notice there - it might attract too much attention and interference
- to ask Keith to ensure that the area is **not strimmed**
- it would be best not to put n 'insect palace' or 'wild beast mansion' there
- Catherine was to be asked to invite PUPA to the next meeting if they were prepared to run sessions (e.g. for children) in the garden for free

Action: Catherine

6. Pool Project

Jill's mentioned that there had been little progress but a meeting of the Pool Group was scheduled for August 1st (see brief report attached). If we do not receive guidance from EH soon the group would produce a proposal showing in detail what was planned for the pool itself and outline the design/planting of the surrounding area. We could probably do this without the expense of hiring Charlotte Rathbone to do any more work. Jill felt that given a decent proposal it was highly likely EH would give us the go-ahead.

7. SHDC Report

In Keith's absence, Jim went through Keith's report (attached). Among the points arising were:

Litter and waste bins: Keith's report made it clear that SHDC were unlikely to fund any more bins on the grounds of cost (of the bins and emptying them). It was agreed that the LGA should write to Totnes Town Council asking them to raise the matter with SHDC (since litter is a problem throughout the Southern Area). It was also agreed to put a small notice on the picnic table reminding people of the litter bin outside the garden. Catherine was asked to investigate this (since she had done signs for the Lamb Garden).

Action: Catherine

The Licence: a three-way meeting between LGA, SHDC and the Heath Way residents was planned for 27th July. It was hoped this would finally put the matter to rest.

Replacement for the Magnolia: Catherine is dealing with the Totnes Caring proposal to donate a tree to the garden. Replacing the Magnolia would seem an ideal solution.

8. Activities

Roma felt these were running very well at present.

9. AOB

Shirley asked about the trellis structure along the wall to the left of the Herb Garden. It had been planned to grow Sweet Peas there, but this was not a good spot and the trellis looked untidy and out of place. It was agreed to remove it.

Action: Susan

There was some discussion of the need for monthly meetings. It was agreed to switch to holding a meeting every 8 weeks.

NEXT MEETING: 7pm, TUESDAY 18th September, Totnes Fire Station.

Jill Tomalin's Pool Project report.

Still no progress with EH. Propose to leave with John C to pursue until after the planned Pool group meeting on 1st August, but will then have to take up with him, this delay is so frustrating. I think we may have to submit an application with minimal information and await the feedback about what is missing as an alternative to waiting on Phil McMahon. I have been offered Phil's direct number/mobile number via a "mole", but do feel reluctant to use it.....

The Pool group is meeting on Wed 1st August at 5.30pm in the garden. The plan is to fix exactly where we want the boundary, seats etc while standing there. Then to discuss putting together a more detailed planting scheme. I have invited Jeannette to join us as she has such knowledge and interest, it would be good to have her ideas too.

Updates (in bold) from South Hams District Council – 24th July 2012

Keith Rennells – Greenspace Projects Officer

Project	Actions/position
Site safety	Option of 'soft' rather than 'hard' landscaping solution to H&S concerns agreed by SHDC. New plan agreed on site 21-06-12. (Rob Harkness and Mark Capper from grounds maintenance team present); GM team will spray off vegetation when dry spell, follow up after 3 weeks. Then membrane can be put down to suppress weeds. 21 rosa partridge have been ordered and will be delivered Nov for planting. Mahonia can be planted earlier, and GM team will attempt to move stones into position as well. Rosemary will be planted along length of wall. Update: have requested spraying, hopefully this week, now that weather dry and warm!
Bird and bat boxes	Proposal from Tim Pollard for 2 tit boxes to go on taller trees and sparrow box to go on end of shed; Mark Capper (GM team) will install in due course – autumn/winter task
Herb garden information panel	Final version agreed 21-06-12 and currently being printed (at A3) onto vinyl, attached to dibond backing and mounted onto timber 'lectern' frame for installation on site. A4 version circulated at meeting. Panel now printed and mounted onto timber frame. Will be installed asap.
Natural play timber structure	2 no. pegs have been broken off play structure (possibly by youngsters using it for parkour - moving through their environment by vaulting, rolling, running, climbing, and jumping.). The pegs will be replaced by Property Services team.
Hedge tree	The leaning tree in the new hedge line adjacent to the lawn near the entrance to the site will be re-fastened with a taller stake by GM team.
Compost	Request for information on compost uses. Alex Whish suggests put docks to one side to be 'scorched' dried...can then be added to compost later. Suggests rotted compost can be used in garden for (ie) rose planting/ subsequent mulching etc. Use 'locally' if poss.
Path maintenance	Following last autumn chemical app. checked again with GM team on 21-06-12. Some regrowth, so decision for stronger application now. Once weeds all knocked back, then Property team will be asked to come in and top dress and roll the path where eroded.

Japanese knotweed	Already in the annual schedule for treatment– gradually being eradicated
Apple tree	Have received expressed concern that children playing in apple tree will result in injury/damage to tree. SHDC happy to allow children to climb/explore/discover but will inspect tree to ascertain stability/condition. Last check was fine.
Grounds Maintenance plan	Latest version circulated at last meeting. Key elements at Leechwell include 1(a) high quality grass; 1(b) amenity grass; 1(e) informal grass; 1(f) wildlife grass; 2(a) formal hedge; 2(c) hedge bank; 3(c) herbaceous planting; 4(a) formal water feature; 11 hard surface
Grass cutting and meadow diversity	<p>Wet Spring/early Summer has contributed to lush growth in the ‘wild’ meadow area. This area was designed and subsequently scheduled for an annual cut (late Summer) but woodchip path is closing up with luxuriant growth. Agreed on site 21-06-12 that path could be cut back a little on each side to maintain access, and this adjustment to be made to GM plan. In terms of the grass triangle in the SW corner, which appears less floristically rich and dominated by coarse grasses, this area currently falls within the ‘wildlife’ meadow. It could be enhanced by adding yellow rattle seeds, a Parasitic Herbaceous Annual that gains some of its nutrients from the roots of neighbouring plants. Encouraging Yellow Rattle to grow in hay meadows greatly increases biodiversity by restricting grass growth and thereby allowing other species to thrive. The seeds are spread very effectively by traditional hay-making practices.</p> <p>It can be cultivated by scarifying the surface of the ground with a fork or similar, then sowing onto short grass, 0.5 to 1 gram of seed per square metre. Yellow Rattle seed is short-lived and should always be sown in the autumn, using seed harvested that year. Then, keep grass short for beginning of March when seedlings establish. Thereafter, the grass should not be cut until the end of July to allow the Yellow Rattle to flower and go to seed, then cut short.</p>
Hedgerows	The natural established hedge at the south (far) end of the garden and the newly planted hedge along the west side of the garden are thriving, and fall within the GM plan as ‘hedge bank’, with an annual trim at the end of the season.
Willows	3 no. willows planted in SE corner are poorly staked and leaning, so will be re-staked appropriately. These are due to be pollarded this autumn/winter so as to minimise the loss of view from Heathway West properties.
Magnolia	The magnolia tree on the lawn has died – the ground conditions may be too harsh. This tree is ‘out of contract’ now, so is not the responsibility of the contractors, so can be removed. However, given that this is the third such tree planted, SHDC will not be replacing.