

# 2010 Public Consultation on the new Leechwell Garden

## Report of March 2010 Public Consultation

*To support the Leechwell Garden Association grant application to Community Spaces for Phase 2 funding for the new Leechwell Garden*

Shirley Prendergast  
March 2010

**Background and November 2009 consultation.** The Leechwell Garden Association, and before that Design Our Space (DOS) have undertaken several public consultation exercises, over the last six years, asking the community about the general design principles and special features they wished to see as part of the new Leechwell Garden. Community wishes were incorporated into the final garden design which was exhibited at the three day *Exhibition of Designs for Leechwell Garden* in November 2009. At that time, public response to the designs and features of the garden was overwhelmingly positive. In line with DOS policy, feedback on the 2009 exhibition was written up, distributed and made available on the LGA Website.

**Funding the garden.** Funding for Phase 1 of the garden (the general design and basic hard landscaping) is already in place and work began on this phase of the garden in February 2010. The LGA is hoping to fund Phase 2 (specific features of the garden) with a grant from the Community Spaces stream of The Big Lottery Fund. Understandably, the funders need to be sure that the local community are still happy with the garden features they requested two years ago, and the ways in which the LGA have interpreted them. Therefore, on the advice of Community Spaces and to meet conditions of the final round of the grant application, additional public consultation was undertaken in March 2010.

**March 2010 Garden Consultation method:** The consultation exercise took place over 10 days from March 8<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>. Invitations were sent out to a significant number of town centre residents and parents of younger children.

The invitation [1] encouraged people to view the garden designs at the local library or on the LGA Website and then give their views in a simple feedback form (online or in printed form) Printed forms could be returned at three different locations between the top and bottom of town.

About 1400 invitations went out to the local community in the week before consultation began. Invitations went out in several ways:

- By hand to 550 households in town centre, the church and the senior residents drop in centre
- By email to about 600 members of local groups
- By email to Totnes Town Councillors
- By email to friends of the Leechwell Garden
- Via school newsletter to 180 parents of children at the local primary school
- Via letter to 100 parents of children at local pre-school groups
- Via an invitation and article in the local newspaper

The garden designs were displayed in the entrance to the local library in the town centre - a small display, prominent and easy to read and understand. Feedback forms were available and LGA members were in attendance to answer questions for many hours over the course of the exhibition. Likewise the LGA Website offered a

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very clear display of garden plans, information and an online feedback form, [www.leechwellgarden.org](http://www.leechwellgarden.org)

The feedback form [2] was essentially the same as was used at the 2009 exhibition. Following advice from Community Spaces, a few minor changes were made so that it was easier to fill in and up to date (indicating that Phase 1 of the garden had now begun and that public feedback would support the LGA in their Phase 2 grant application)

**Analysis of the 2010 consultation.** This has been undertaken by Gill Dunne (and Paula Pitman who typed up all the comments). Dr Dunne, a sociologist from Plymouth University, also reported on the November 2009 consultation. As the LGA requested, her independent analysis compares and combines data from both the 2009 and the 2010 consultations. The LGA is indebted to Gill, and to Paula, for such a speedy, careful and comprehensive overview of the consultation feedback.

Gill's report shows that, overall, comments on the proposed new features of the garden are overwhelmingly positive. Where general questions and concerns are expressed they tend to be about issues that already *have been addressed* in the plans- for example, dog-free garden, provision of litter bins, places to sit, issues *that will be addressed*- planting more trees and shrubs, alcohol-free zone or issues *which have no other solution*- removing the very many (sadly) diseased trees or levelling paths so that the garden is accessible to all.

Her analysis also shows that while satisfaction with the garden is higher now, a very small number of *very negative responses* have been added since the 2009 consultation. A few want **more** features in the garden while others want **less or none at all**.

Phase 1 construction of the garden had just begun when the 2010 consultation took place. Gill's report echoes what happened during the consultation itself, when many people expressed a palpable sense of excitement that the garden was actually happening and were eagerly waiting for it to be open. Many also told us how much they appreciated that this garden was being planned for, and would still be benefiting Totnes residents, 20, 50 and a 100 years into the future.

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[1] Invitation to take part in the 2010 Consultation

[2] Feedback form

## Exciting news: work has started on the new Leechwell Garden!

**We now need your help to get extra funding for the special features that the community wants-** the informal play area, herb garden, pergola, benches, gates, public art and more trees and plants.

### Please help us with your feedback on the garden design.

You can do this in two ways:

**1. At the Totnes Library:** from Monday March 8<sup>th</sup> to Saturday March 13<sup>th</sup> see the garden designs, collect a comments form and leave it at the Library, the Mansion House or the Town Council Offices at the Guildhall.

**2. Online:** <http://leechwellgarden.org.uk> : see the garden designs, reply online or print a comments form and return it to Totnes Library, the Mansion or the Town Council Offices at the Guildhall.

**Closing date for returns March 17<sup>th</sup>**

### Thank you for your help.

The Leechwell Garden is being developed by South Hams District Council Landscape and Recreation Team (01803 861234), in partnership with the Leechwell Garden Association and Totnes Development Trust.

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## LEECHWELL GARDEN FEEDBACK FORM

**Background.** Totnes is a town with little public open space. In 2004 the community decided that the Leechwell Garden (located just off Heath Way, within easy walking distance of the town centre) should remain as open space in the Totnes Southern Area. The design of the garden is the result of many years of public consultation by the community group, Design Our Space, (DOS) working with South Hams District Council and Totnes Town Council, and drawn up by landscape architects, Rathbone Partnership.

**Implementation of the garden, now begun.** Implementation is in the hands of a partnership between SHDC, the Leechwell Garden Association and the Totnes Development Trust. The new garden is being funded in a variety of ways. **Phase 1**, community wishes for the *paths, walls, boundaries, trees and water management*, is being funded from S106 money from Midas (developers of the Southern Area) and from SHDC. Grant funding for further major features, a *herb garden, more trees, a play area for younger children, benches, gates and natural planting* is now being sought as **Phase 2** of the project.

**Your Feedback.** As part of the consultation required for Phase 2 grant funding, we welcome your responses to the questions below. From 8<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> March 2010 **you can see designs for the new garden and return completed feedback forms at the Totnes Town Library (High St).** Forms can also be returned to the Town Council Offices (Guildhall) and the Mansion (Fore St).

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Garden designs can also be seen and forms filled in or downloaded from the Leechwell Garden Website, <http://leechwellgarden.org.uk>

Thank you for your time.

**1. PHASE 2 MAJOR FEATURES OF THE GARDEN** During the garden consultation people said they wanted the following features: a herb garden, more trees, a play area, benches, gates and natural planting. We would like to *know how satisfied you are with the way these features have been interpreted in the design.* (Tick boxes below)

How Phase 2 community wishes have been interpreted	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Don't know/not sure	Not satisfied
a. <b>Herb garden:</b> designed to be a sunny, wheelchair- accessible sensory garden with seats and raised beds to encourage involvement for all.				
b. <b>Adjacent pergola:</b> locally made of sustainable wood, forming a shady walk with fragrant climbers. Marks entry to main wheelchair- accessible path and herb garden.				
c. <b>Trees:</b> locally sourced mix of ornamental and indigenous varieties of woodland, fruit and nut trees. Enhanced planting on eastern (road) boundary of garden.				
d. <b>Informal play features:</b> incorporating natural materials to encourage imaginative games. Trickling water and very shallow 'paddling' area nearby.				
e. <b>Benches and gates:</b> these will be locally designed unique, attractive <i>functional art</i> .				
f. <b>Natural planting:</b> emphasis on sustainability, wildlife and minimal maintenance, to include wild flowers, bulbs, meadow grass, bark and mown paths.				
<b>Comments welcome (please number a-f, continue overleaf)</b>				

**YOU AND THE GARDEN** (Please tick all that apply)

## 2. ABOUT YOU

Are you a resident of South Hams? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Are you resident in Totnes? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you live within walking distance of the new garden? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Are you a regular visitor to Totnes? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Other – please specify

## 3. YOU IN THE GARDEN

Have you seen the garden plans? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Are you/members of your household likely to visit the new garden? Yes [ ] No [ ]

DK [ ]

How would you get there? Walk [ ] Bike [ ] Car [ ] Other [ ]

**IF YOU/YOUR HOUSEHOLD ARE LIKELY TO USE THE NEW GARDEN**

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How often? More than once a week [ ] Once a week [ ] Once a fortnight [ ]  
Once a month [ ] Occasionally [ ] Never [ ] DK [ ]

How many visitors (you/household) each time? One [ ] Two [ ] Three [ ] More [ ]  
Would you/anyone in your household have special access needs? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Number of visitors in each of these age categories: Under 10 [ ] 10-19 [ ] 20-39 [ ]  
40- 59 [ ] 60+ [ ]

## WHAT WOULD YOU/YOUR HOUSEHOLD ENJOY DOING IN THE GARDEN

Walking [ ] Relaxation [ ] Play [ ] Helping care for the garden [ ] Other [ ] please  
write here:

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**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS.** Include contact details if you would like a response to your  
comments.

**Thank you. Your feedback will help support our grant application for Phase 2 of  
the garden. Please return this form to the box at:**

Totnes Library, High St, Totnes  
Totnes Town Council Offices, Guildhall (behind the Church)  
The Mansion, Fore St, Totnes

**CLOSING DATE FOR RETURN: Wednesday March 17<sup>th</sup> 2010**

The Leechwell Garden is being developed by South Hams District Council Landscape and Recreation Team (01803 861234), in partnership with the Leechwell Garden Association (01803 863739) and the Totnes Development Trust (01803 865609)