

MINUTES FOR LEECHWELL GARDEN ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday April 2nd 2014 6pm Fire Station Community Room, Totnes

PRESENT: David Mitchell (Chair); Shirley Prendergast; Jeanette Craig Willington; Louise Overy; Susan Taylor; Jim Carfrae; Elizabeth Warnes; Marsha Cummings, Rachel Rafiqi

APOLOGIES: David Martin; Susan Boyd; Keith **Rennels**; Ed Vidler; Catherine Munro; Robert Vint

2. MINUTES: The minutes of the LGA Committee Meeting held on the 5th March 2014 were agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING:

Jim was to speak to Cathy to arrange the next opportunity for the LGA to have a quiz at the Bay Horse. We do not have a date yet but Cathy has said she will put the Association on the list. Rachel will follow up on that and check with Cathy
Action: Rachel

Dave Mitchell has agreed to pay the Fire Service £3 per hour as the fee for the use of the meeting room. The Association has paid £21 for the rent up to the end of August 2014.

4. SHDC Update:

Keith has sent an e-mail to update us on the situation. He is not happy about the way the path has been resurfaced as it has not been done as expected and the contractors have used a dusty gravel. Susan said that two employees of SHDC had visited the garden and have said that it will have to be closed if any strimming takes place [because of the danger from flying gravel?]. Susan said that the landscape architect had used "**Breedon**" gravel. It is hoped that Keith will sort out this problem and that the path can be re-treated. We will need to check on this.

The willow pollarding has been done.

As regards the licensing, SHDC say this is in the hands of the Management Company. Lou confirmed this and said that not all the householders had returned the necessary information yet but the solicitors have started working on the deeds. The only immediate concern is about the opening of the gate.

The issue of funding should be clearer in the next few weeks. The Council acknowledges that we are working on a shoestring and Keith's letter sounded positive. SHDC are reviewing the budget.

5. TTT Play Event

Catherine has e-mailed Sophie that the event can go ahead. Some members are concerned about control over games activities. Lou read the latest e-mail from Catherine on the subject which was sent today. There will be a trained Forest School Leader and the event will be a one-off with no ball games. TTT will let the play scheme know that children will be told not to play on the wild flower area. Rachel said that Dan would be doing whittling and poetry pebbles.

It was felt that as long as the event is properly supervised and the children are told where they should not play, it should be all right. We should see how it goes and follow up.

Liz asked why we were requested use of the garden for this event at the last minute - Rachel said that this was because permission to use another location had been refused. Shirley thought that we could invite the children back to play quiet games another time (when the new "chess bench" has been installed)

Shirley thanked Liz for dealing with the KEVICCS schoolchildren who had recently caused problems in the garden. Keith had acknowledged that the problem had been dealt with very well.

6. Kid's Corner

Rachel said that the volunteer sessions have been changed to 10am to 11am every two weeks. She asked if there were any other activities that the Kids' Corner could be involved with as some of the older children wanted more involvement. Susan suggested that they might be able to weed the creeping buttercup in the pathway. They could also collect up the sticks which have recently been thrown around the garden or do some dandelion digging. Even if they just take the tops off the dandelions it would help prevent their spread. We could make a list of things they could usefully do.

The children should be shown around and have explained to them what we are doing with the garden and the areas which are particularly sensitive.

Rachel said that she would now be going to the garden once a week. In the past there has been excess watering and some plants have failed. There was black fly on the beans and they could not be sprayed.

A discussion took place about the best place to relocate Kids' Corner because it's in the wrong area at the moment. Rachel said the area could be reduced if a raised bed would not work and the children could be given some other activities.

Liz suggested that the area where the compost bags are might be used and it was thought that that area could be a possibility.

One problem generally is watering. Rachel said that they were digging in seaweed to help hold water.

The problem with watering was further discussed and the members considered a number of options including moving the water butt and James Bellchamber's gadget. Could SHDC be formally approached to ask for help with ideas about a watering solution?

Rachel asked whether we could have a plastic cold frame in the garden and whether there was a "no plastic" policy. There is not. Last year the children did seed saving and seed bombs and this could be useful if done in conjunction with the garden's fundraising table. Rachel will water their area. There will be more permanent flowers for RHS In Bloom.

Rachel will now be able to come regularly to meetings and was welcomed and co-opted onto the Committee.

7. Benches/seating update

Shirley outlined the areas where the three new seats would go. The big bench will be near the birches with the back of the seat to the path so parents can see easily if they are sitting there. The snake will go in the gap to the right of the table and down towards the pool near the houses. The bench with the chessboard will go by the bridge above the drain in a quiet, high position. The existing circular grassy area will be left undisturbed.

Mike the builder of the seats is planning to install them soon, probably before Easter. We need to have a celebration afterwards and invite the member of Devon County Council who provided funds. This could be combined with the Spring Event. Shirley will let the Committee know when the seating is installed.

Action: Shirley

8. Pool and Leechwell – English Heritage and Scheduled Monument Consent

The Pool Group (Shirley, Jim, Dave and David) have decided that we should go ahead with work on the Leechwell – the chamber behind the grill needs to be 're-puddled' and the sign which used to hang above the well should be re-instated. We will be applying for Scheduled Monument Consent to do the work. There should be funds available from the Town Council and hopefully Totnes Preservation Trust and TotSoc.

9. AGM and Committee Changes

Robert Vint has resigned and Rachel has been co-opted onto the Committee. A discussion took place about who else could be asked onto the Committee and it was thought that Carol Wellwood (a Town Councillor) would be a good addition if she were willing to stand. Jeanette will make some inquiries of Carol.

Action: Jeannette

The date of the next AGM does not need to be fixed before the next meeting, but it was agreed that we should hold a Spring Event some time in May (to celebrate the new benches and publicise the work on the Leechwell).

10. Volunteers.

Susan had mentioned previously that we might need funding for heavy digging if volunteers were not available to do it. Ed Vidler had said that we might be able to get some help funding this and he was going to make inquiries.

Jeannette and Shirley employed Douglas Aitken, a gardener, who worked for four hours on Wednesday on the Herb Garden (directed by Jeannette), preparing the ground for planting: splitting herbaceous clumps, digging in grit and compost and doing away with deep perennial weeds. Some new planting will go ahead at the next volunteer meeting. Shirley and Jeannette will send an e-mail Keith outlining what has already been done and giving an estimate of what the new planting will cost. **Action: Shirley/Jeannette**

11. AOB

Due to lack of time there was none!

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Association is at the Fire Station on Wednesday **30th April 2014.**