

## **2017 AGM Friends of Valley Gardens Officers' Reports**

### **Anne Grange: Treasurer**

Once again we have had a busy year. The 1940s day was our major fundraising event, raising £8000. It is difficult to visualise how we can increase our income from it without a great many more helpers. We need more people to walk around the gardens with collecting boxes on 18 June. Another good way of raising funds, and our profile, is by opening the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room on two Sundays each month. These open days raised £1500 and gave us the opportunity to meet potential members.

After a lot of hard work, we have received a major grant of £89,200 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the restoration of the Japanese Garden. We are also raising money to restore the Green Park Entrance to be renamed the King Edward VII Memorial Gate. It will cost in the region of £57,000 and we have been awarded a grant of £10,000 by the Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation. Our fundraising continues in earnest.

We received a bequest of £5000 and a further £500 donation; both anonymous. Our membership has increased to 100, raising a total of £870.

We did not have any major expenditure in 2016, so our bank balance at 31 December was £33,215. £4,000 of this figure has been allocated to the restoration of the Japanese Garden. A large part of the remainder will be used to fund the work on the King Edward VII Memorial Gate.

All in all a successful 2016.

### **Liz Chidlow: Volunteer Gardeners Co-ordinator**

A busy and successful year. Five new members have joined with up to ten attending regularly.

In the Peat Garden eight bird boxes were installed by HBC's Tree Team, supported by the Harrogate District Biodiversity Action Group and Horticap students who also constructed the boxes. The plant cover is beginning to mature in spite of thefts. The Western School bug mansion has been replenished.

The Peat Garden and the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room were granted a hard-fought Platinum Award in the Open Spaces category for Yorkshire in Bloom. We met the Britain in Bloom judges.

In the New Zealand Garden we have helped with pruning, winter protection and replenishing the path and there is now a lovely garden seat in memory of Tony Sissons, our previous Volunteer Gardeners Co-ordinator. The Scree Garden has been weeded. As part of the preliminary work for the Japanese Garden Restoration Project we mapped existing trees and shrubs. The award of Heritage Lottery Funding triggered volunteer activity by Friends of Valley Gardens, Horticap and Grove Academy volunteers. The volunteers have also helped the Council gardeners with a multitude of other tasks. All work was recognised by Harrogate in Bloom who awarded us the Harrogate in Bloom Shield for 2016.

Many thanks to our volunteers. New volunteers are always welcome.  
Contact: [liz.chidlow@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:liz.chidlow@hotmail.co.uk)

### **Ann Beeby: Japanese Garden Project Leader**

This project is now fully funded by Heritage Lottery and volunteer gardeners have commenced work on the site pruning and removing shrubs where necessary. The scheme's main contractor will be appointed and should be on site after Easter. During this period the site will be closed off for the use of heavy machinery to manage the watercourse improvements and install new rock arrangements.

The community elements of the project are all underway: Grove Academy and Horticap students are already working on site, and Harrogate High School GCSE Art students will be commencing their Art modules after the Easter break.

We are indebted to the Japanese Garden Society for their support and enthusiasm for this garden restoration, which is the only public garden available to the Society in North Yorkshire and Humberside.

### **David Mason: King Edward VII Memorial Gate Project Leader**

Planning permission was granted for the project In June 2016.

Some minor changes have had to be made to the design of the upstand wall either side of the gates requiring level changes to be introduced. The revised drawing has been submitted to the council for approval but problems are not envisaged.

We have also asked for the condition in the planning permission requiring the railings and gates to be painted black to be relaxed and allow them to be painted in their original colour, pale green.

We have been in contact with North Yorkshire County Council to try and resolve the outstanding permission for the paving of the footpath outside the gate which is under their control. We believe this has now been resolved.

Fund raising continues with a recent big grant from the Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation. We now have about 50% of the required funding of £60,000.

### **Jon Iddon and Steve Watkinson: Acting Publicity Officers**

Advertising literature has been distributed to the major hotels near the Valley Gardens (A5 flyers) and the proprietor of the Camberley Guest House will distribute to members of her Association.

A combination of A5 flyers and A4 laminates have been circulated to the Mercer Gallery, Tourist Information Office, Royal Pump Room Museum, a number of outlets in the town centre and also to many businesses on Cold Bath Road, Royal Parade and Jennyfield. Other outlets are for advertising: The Harrogate Review (monthly), WOW section Harrogate Advertiser, both are free. We can keep entries updated while in France. Visit Harrogate's website has a separate page for OMWPR, see Landmark and View Points.

Harrogate International Festival can display posters around town targeted at specific events: Easter Sunday Egg Hunt, 16 April, 1940s Open Day, 18 June, Halloween Sunday, 19 October, Santa days, 17 and 23 December.

We have been thinking of a choral event in the week prior to Christmas. Management would keep the cafe open.

Views and comments are welcome.