

FRIENDS OF VALLEY GARDENS HARROGATE: GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Jubilee Room Bramall Centre RHS Harlow Carr October 21st 2017 10.00am

Present: Jane Blayney Chairman, Anne Grange Treasurer, Peter Blayney Secretary, Liz Chidlow Volunteer Gardening Organiser, David Mason Project Manager (Gate), Ann Beeby Minutes Secretary and 14 Members

1. Apologies received from: Jane and Andrew Kingscote, Jim Clark, Kate Dawson Martin Fish (President) Patrick Kilburn, Barbara Stone, Mike Hine, Malcolm Neesam, Jon Iddon and Steve Watkinson
2. The Chairman welcomed the members to the first meeting at Harlow Carr Bramall Centre and noted the Fire regulations.
3. Minutes of last General Meeting approved, Proposed Christine Booth, Seconded, Jenny Travena and agreed unanimously.
4. Matters Arising: None
5. Chairman's report: The Chairman thanked the members, volunteers and Committee for their input during the year. She mentioned:

The Opening of the Pump Room. This was open twice a month but over the winter months will

open only once a month. over the summer. Gratitude was expressed to all of the marshalls for

their time and promotion of Valley Gardens and monies raised.

6 Events

- i. The Platinum award from Yorkshire in Bloom. The volunteer gardeners were thanked for their extra shifts to attain the Platinum Standard again, keeping up with last year's standard. Jane Blayney thanked all the volunteer gardeners for all the extra shifts put in to achieve this award.
- ii. The Streat Food Festival; recent publicity concerning this was discussed, and the fact that there is no plan to hold it in Harrogate again was noted.
- iii. The Sunday Fun Run is involved in raising funds for another defibrillator near the entrance to Valley Gardens. The present defibrillator which had been provided by the Community is fixed to the railings near the children's playground sports hut. An Awareness Training Course for the defibrillator is to be held Saturday January 20th January 10.00am at the Bramall Centre Harlow Carr, for members, volunteers and HBC staff. If the places are not all taken in the next few weeks the vacant places will be offered to other community groups.
- iv. The transfer of 40's Day to Harrogate International Festivals; there was discussion concerning this and the mechanism of the transfer was explained. The 40s Day has been a great success for the last 7years, raising £8,5000 this

year and just short of 40,000 visitors attended. Andrew Jordan did an excellent job with managing the extra security siting the stalls, attractions and the marshalling. He was assisted by the Harrogate Lions on 40s Day. This event has largely been organised by 5 people over the last few years and it was decided that it was the time for a larger organisation to run it. Other volunteers supporting groups were the RAF cadets and WI Sweethearts. Peter Blayney and Brian Dunsby referred to rising costs of running large events. We are delighted that Sharon Cavanar, Harrogate International Festival has added 1940s Day to their portfolio.

- iv. Simon Collier, the Head Gardener, was thanked for the funds he raised on his sponsored 84 miles Coast to Coast walk. The funds which were divided between Starbeck in Bloom and the Friends Of Valley Gardens raised £675 for each group.
 - v. Father Christmas's Grotto and Easter Bunny Hunt were organized and sponsored by Steven Watkinson and Jon Iddon. Jane Blayney thanked them for their time and support.
- 7 Working with other Groups: FOVG is a member of Team Harrogate and CVS. Jane thanked Andrew Jordan, Steven Watkinson and Jon Iddon for both attending and representing her at their meetings.
6. Finance: The treasurer stated that 40's Day had raised £16,500 in funds over the last two years, Magnesia Well Open Days another £3,000 although Heritage weekend was down this year. The bank balance now stands at £57,178 which should be sufficient funds for the King Edward VII Gate Project provided the tenders were similar to existing costings. The Japanese Garden Restoration project has a separate bank account, the final invoices for the contractors are due for settlement and following this there will be a balance of just under £15,000. An additional source of income is the ability to claim Gift Aid on money deposited in collecting boxes and £2000 has recently been claimed for a period from 2015 to the present.
7. Volunteer Gardeners; there are 4 new volunteers, Liz stressed the need for regular maintenance for all areas of the garden and thanked all volunteers and HBC staff for the hard work which resulted in the Platinum Award. An additional Volunteer gardening group is being set up for occasional Saturdays in the Japanese Garden with a view to attracting younger people. It is hoped that this will improve continuity of volunteers into the future. All volunteers are invited to become members of the Friends. Jane Blayney thanked Liz for all her hard work.
8. The Park - report from HBC: PB had written to ask questions from HBC on various issues;
- i. Dogs not on Leads, and dog fouling; HBC report stated that their signs indicate that dogs should be under control, although Dog Wardens are aware of the problems it would take a Public Open Space Protection Order to increase restrictions, but enforcement is still an issue. Open discussion led to the fact that there are two versions of notices; Dogs on leads and Dogs under Control within the park and this causes confusion for dog owners. It was agreed that PB

should write another letter to HBC asking for the notices to be rationalized,
Action PB

- ii. Damage to grass and excessive noise at the Streat Food Festival; Members agreed there was no need to pursue this further.
- iii. Vandals on the Sun Colonnade and Palm Houses roofs; HBC stated that the Police are fully aware of all Antisocial behavior in VG and are looking for ways to reduce it.
- iv. Update on Nursey Site and impact on the VG. HBC stated there would be no impact on VG.
- v. No cycling and boarding enforcement; HBC stated that the Ranger does his best in relation to this.
- vi. State of the shelter by the Dahlia Bed where there is rust appearing; **Action KD will raise this with property services team.**
- vii. PB had reported that a bonfire had been lit close to a special young Giant Redwood in the Pinetum. **KD will report to the Arboriculturalists who will take a look at it in due course.**

9. Resignations and appointments:

- i. Jon Iddon and Steve Watkinson have resigned from 'Publicity Officer' due to ill health.
- ii. Peter Blayney is resigning as Secretary. There were no concrete offers of replacement. Ann Beeby will continue to be Acting Minutes Secretary. It was suggested that a notice for the post could be put onto the CVS online page for volunteer posts in the area.

10. AOB:

- i. Peter Lilley raised a discussion about the way FOVG is perceived within the Community and the difficulty of increasing the membership and volunteers.
- ii. The perception is that we are a Fund Raising Organisation, and members of the public are not interested to be part of this activity. Could the Friends move towards a local community Residents Association, and more Social activities. Points were made about the wide area from which our visitors are drawn not just local to the gardens and the amount of additional work to move in this direction. It was generally agreed that when these large projects are completed Fund Raising would be less necessary. JB said that perhaps FOVG should approach the Pinewoods for a stronger link between the two charities.

11. Dates of Next Meetings:

AGM Saturday March 3rd 2018 10.00 a.m. Bramall Centre Harlow Carr.

Defibrillating Awareness course Saturday January 20th 2018 10.00 a.m. Bramall Centre Harlow Carr

12. Reports from Project Leaders: David Mason and Ann Beeby gave short slide presentations about the progress of both projects. JB thanked them for all their hard work.

The meeting Closed at 12.00hrs and was followed at 13.30pm by a walk around Harlow Carr gardens led by Angela Henson, who gave a very interesting tour on the development and maintenance of Harlow Carr.

Addendum; Since the meeting Anne Grange has agreed to be Membership Secretary
Andrew Jordan has agreed to organize the Pump Room
marshalling.

The above roles previously came under the role of the secretary.

Thank you, Peter for performing these roles on top of the secretarial role for the past five years.

Ann Beeby is temporarily taking the minutes of the meetings but a permanent volunteer is still needed for this role. Thank you, Ann for temporarily performing this role. Ann as Project Leader of the Japanese Garden Project, already has a large work load so a volunteer for Minute Secretary would be much appreciated.

Jane Blayney (Chairman Friends Of Valley Gardens)