

January 2023



A Revue of the last year in Valley Gardens

Dear Friends,

The Trustees thought that it was time that we got in touch to bring you up to date on what we have been doing during 2022. We are delighted to report that Paul has recently been promoted to Head Gardener following Steve's retirement, and wish him the very best of luck. Johnno has been appointed to Paula's position and there is a vacancy to be filled.

We are pleased to welcome three new Volunteer Gardeners; Jo, Pam and Peter who have joined the regular team and given us a much needed boost, so thanks to them. Both Pam and Peter have also joined the team who open the OMWPR on selected Sundays and seem to enjoy their interaction with the visiting public. We recently decided to invest in a card reader for the Pump Room open days as so many visitors are now not carrying cash, and this has been moderately successful.

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It is with great sadness that we mark the deaths of two of our staunch supporters; Cllr Jim Clark and David Mason. Jim has been involved with the Friends over many years, both on the committee and through his position as a Councillor when he gave money towards the pagoda in the Japanese Garden. David Mason was Project Manager for the King Edward VII Gate project which has greatly enhanced the upper entrance to the gardens. They will both be greatly missed.

- Paul's promotion
- Gold standard maintained.
- In Memoria
- World Tree Trail

Stop Press!! **A World Tree Trail** is being created by Liz Chidlow to complement Jane Blayney's recent book on Trees of the Valley Gardens. Liz realised that we can go around the world with the variety of trees we have from all corners of the globe!

Yorkshire & Harrogate in Bloom Awards

We are pleased to report that we maintained the gold standard for the county award in July as part of Harrogate 'Small City' entry and that the Japanese Garden was again awarded the Community Shield for Harrogate in Bloom.

Valley Gardens was also entered as a separate entry by HBC and was awarded Platinum, can't do better than that!

Working with HBC: We are all conscious of the fact that Harrogate Borough Council will cease to exist from April 1st but think that during the current year we shall see business as usual with the staff being responsible to the new unitary authority. A recent email from Kate confirms the improvements that they are planning for the gardens this year.

- A bright orange canopy is to be installed at the games Pavillion to give families better shelter during showers.
- The proposed small fountain for the boating pool is still controversial and we have already said that we feel the boating club should be consulted further on the issue so that a way forward can be identified.
- Three donation posts are to be installed for cards, we have been assured that all money received through them will be put back into the gardens.
- HBC are looking at alternative ways to honour memorials for families as there is no more space for additional benches. These are also a problem when vandalized as they are the property of the family who donated them. The current ideas are metal panels on which leaves/flowers can be engraved placed along the colonnades, or a compass style feature set into tarmac which can be engraved. This will not happen quickly as it needs more thought and possibly some form of planning permission.
- Kirsty has already implemented some garden improvements along the streamside and work on the footpath in front of the Sun Pavillion.
- Vandalism: We hope that the recent spate affecting Cold Bath Road & VG will be stopped soon.

In discussion:

1. **Colonnade;** We have had a joint meeting with the Civic Society where they have supported us in trying to get the colonnade improved. So far the iron window grills and the parlor roof have been repaired. Next job to paint the grills and metalwork.

2. **Smart Refuse bins;** Again the Civic Society supported us on this. Although we have agreed a better site for these large but unsightly 'smart bins' which have been put by the main entrance with a council representative, nothing has happened.

3. **New Project** We are considering spending money on cleaning the stonework at the front entrance, and possibly installing railings like the upper entrance, but are very reluctant to embark on any project until the bins have been re-sited.

FINALLY:

- 1) Date for a **Zoom AGM** at 6.30pm on Monday March 13th. Reports will be sent out in advance.
- 2) **New Trustee:** Ann Beeby plans to retire from being a Trustee at the AGM. She is happy to continue doing some volunteer gardening and manning the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room but would like to retire her position as Trustee and involvement in the detailed running of the Friends of Valley Gardens. Please would anyone who is interested to be involved get in touch with Anne Grange by email through the website.