



Friends of Valley Gardens, Harrogate



Charity No: 1148369
President: Martin Fish

17.3.17

Chairman's Report 2017

1. **The Old Magnesia Well Pump Room** is now opening on the First and Third Sunday of the month in its new capacity of an Information and Education Centre. Father Christmas and his elf were a great attraction and more events in the Pump Room are planned for 2017. Very supportive Visitors Books have been completed.

Restored interior of Pump Room



Santa Visits the Pump Room



2. **The Peat Garden received the Platinum Award in Yorkshire In Bloom 2016 and Yorkshire In Bloom Shield 2016.** The gardeners have met once a fortnight but now, due to the commencement of the clearing and restoring of the Japanese Garden, they are meeting weekly. **(Report from Liz Chidlow Volunteer Gardeners' Organiser.)**
3. **Restoration of the Japanese Garden** (Project Leader Ann Beeby assisted by Liz Chidlow.) Heritage Lottery Fund awarded £89,200 and together with £4,000 from FOVG funding events, the project was launched in January 2017. **(Report from Ann Beeby)**
4. **Restoration of Green Park Entrance** (Project Leader David Mason.) £30K has been secured towards the £60K needed for the restoration of the entrance, which will be known as the King Edward VII Memorial Gate. The gate and pillars were originally sited at Kings Road entrance to the Rose Garden have been sourced. £10K was awarded by the Liz and Bramall Foundation and other funding is from events including the annual 40s Day, monies raised from donations received on Pump Room Opening Days and Presentations. **(Report from David Mason)**

5. **Trustees 2016**

Jane Blayney (Chairman), Jon Collins, Anne Grange (Treasurer), Peter Blayney (Secretary), Jim Clark, Liz Chidlow (Volunteer Garden Organiser)

Executive 2016

Jane Blayney (Chairman) Anne Grange (Treasurer) Peter Blayney (Secretary) Maisie Wilkinson ((Young Persons Representative) Jane Blayney (Marketing and Publicity retiring 2017) and (40s Day Bookings) Liz Chidlow (Volunteer Gardening Co-ordinator), Tom Holleman Web Manager

6. **Membership** The Present Membership, following review, is 100.

7. **Funding/Grants awarded**

- Heritage Lottery Grant £89,200 (for Japanese Garden)
- Liz and Terry Bramall Charitable Foundation £10,000(for Gates Project)
- HBC Small Grants £890.00 for projector & screen
- Asda, Morrisons and Waitrose Green Disc sponsorship.

(Report from Treasurer Anne Grange)

8. **Events**

(a) 40s Day £7,900 raised for ongoing projects and estimated 30,000 attended. An excellent community day with many returning attractions including, the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Spitfire flypast.

(b) National Heritage Open Days The Pump Room was opened for 4 days but donations were down on 2016

(c) Presentations/Displays Harrogate Civic Society, Crest Home, Tag House Ladies.

(d) Garden Tours Harlow Brownies, Western School (4 groups which included 120 children)

(e) New Zealand Morris Dancers Display

(f) Consultation on Future Usage of Valley Gardens for events in Valley Gardens The consultation, open to all, was attended by 50 people.

The attendees were supportive of events which were of 1 day duration. However, opinions were mixed on the usage of Valley Gardens for events of longer duration and the potential environmental damage to the site. The Streat Food Fest, an event running for 6 days including setting up and taking down, raising £3,081 for HBC, in comparison with 1 day for the Forties Day which was an event raising, £7,900. For 9 weeks grass was being re-seeded following the Streat Fest and some areas had been covered in cooking oil. Many consultation attendees expressed a desire for the event to be moved to a hard standing site. FOVG is supporting In Bloom in its bid to achieve the accolade of Champion of Champions 2017, repeated damage will put their chances of success at risk. Michael Harrison (Deputy Leader) states that the administration has not yet decided whether or not to book the Streat Food Fest for August 2017. The Streat Food Fest has been issuing booking forms for August 2017 in the Valley Gardens from before Christmas and states they have a high number of reservations. Now 6 months since the consultation HBC states that no decision has been made by the Administration. Thoughts are at the time of writing on February 10th that HBC's decision will be after the Stray Consultation result or after the North Yorkshire County elections. FOVG has no input into the decision.

9. Media/ Marketing Jon Iddon and Stephen Watkinson have promoted the 2017 events round the district, hotels and businesses. Also they have secured some tombola prizes. Jon and Stephen are jointly nominated to 'officially' become Marketing and Publicity Officers for FOVG from the AGM.

Harrogate Borough Clerks Of Works and Supporting Officers

Friends Of Valley Gardens wish to express their gratitude for the support of Jenny Love and Mark Coston (Gates Project), and Kate Dawson and Jo Ryder (Japanese Garden Project) and Simon and Paula Collier (Gardening support and advice)

Our gratitude to Graham Hardman Vice Chairman of the Japanese Garden Society UK for the design for the restored Japanese Garden and Dr Andy Bolton, Organiser of the North Eastern Japanese Society Yorkshire and Humberside Region, for his support and guidance.

The Way Forward 2017

1. Continue with Fund Raising and Restoration of the Green Park Entrance to be known as King Edward VII Memorial Gate.
2. Further increase publicity and awareness of FOVG.
3. Open Pump Room for more events and make greater use of the building. Presently Easter Egg Hunt, Halloween Event, 2 Visits from Father Christmas arranged. Arrange Carol Concert in Bandstand. All proceeds of events to the Gate Project. Stephen Watkinson and John Iddon thank you for your support.
4. Increase number of presentations and garden tours.
5. Continue maintenance of Peat and New Zealand Garden and support for all areas of Valley Gardens.
6. Enter the whole area of Valley Gardens for Yorkshire In Bloom
7. Archive the History of the Development of Valley Gardens, its Spa History and Present Projects and Completed projects, has commenced. Thank you Andrew Jordan and Malcolm Neesam for your support
8. Itemised records to be kept on volunteer usage of time both for our records and supporting funding applications' usage.

Once again the Valley Gardens volunteers have been very active and the praise for their endeavours has been recorded by the hundreds of visitors in the Visitors Books on Open Days. The team work, time volunteered and expertise has been exceptional.

Jane Blayney (Chairman, Friends Of Valley Gardens)

Further information:

Visit FOVG website www.friendsofvalleygardens.co.uk

Or jane.blayne23@gmail.com, 01423 505231