

Friends of Valley Gardens Gardening Volunteers Report 2017

In 2017 the volunteer gardeners helped the Council gardeners throughout the year. A major focus was working for the Japanese Garden Project, firstly in winter and spring doing weeding, shrub and brash clearance and dead wood pruning; secondly in the autumn with new planting, tidying of leaves and some rock work.

In addition, volunteers maintained the Peat Garden, particularly in preparation for In Bloom judging, and helped with the Scree Garden maintenance, annual flower beds, lawn twig raking, uncovering of the *Gunnera* winter protection, dahlia beds, edging, weeding and pruning of shrubberies and rose beds. Peat Garden bird boxes were cleaned by Harrogate District Biodiversity Action Group/RSPB and contained nuthatch and blue tit.

It has been demanding doing project and general maintenance work with a variety of people having health problems. Nevertheless, we had some new volunteers, and have worked in many parts of the Gardens. We had up to 11 volunteers, and usually 6 plus volunteers gardening per session. We tried some Saturday gardening in the Japanese Garden.

Dogs need to be on leads to avoid damaging plants and being a health risk due to faeces left on the ground.

In 2018 we will continue planting and developing our Japanese gardening skills in the Japanese Garden. We will also maintain the Peat and New Zealand Gardens and assist the Council gardeners with a wider range of gardening. There will also be the project work related to the King Edward 7th Memorial Gates Project in progress. So, it will continue to be a demanding year, and with In Bloom judging again.

Liz Chidlow
Volunteer Garden Coordinator
February 2018