

Queen's Gardens Committee of Sedbergh Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2018 at 7 pm

Present: Kevin Lancaster, Ian McPherson, David Parratt, Robin Archer

The meeting opened with the discussion of the agenda provided by David Parratt.

1 - Gardener's hours

The view was expressed that the three paid hours per week for Mitch the gardener in Queen's Gardens are insufficient to keep on top of his present role and make effective progress in the growing season. DP suggested that the council consider paying him two extra hours per week, for the two or three months of the summer growing period, and after some discussion it was accepted that this met with approval by the committee and KL said he would make this recommendation to the Parish Council at their meeting on Thursday the 12th of July. DP confirmed that Mitch would be willing to work the additional hours.

2 - Weed control

After the general acceptance of the Parish Council that this is an issue, KL confirmed that authority to make a decision on this has been delegated to the Queen's Gardens committee. DP has made a strong case for a limited and selected use of Roundup Proactive on the main path areas in the gardens and has an offer of free labour from Graham Milburn to make two applications, one now and one in the autumn. Graham Milburn already carries out work on behalf of SLDC in various amenity areas in Sedbergh and uses this product. This will result in a cost of approximately £20 per application for the chemicals, which KL stated would be borne by the Parish Council.

A strong case was also made by IM for the use of an organic alternative, which is part of a discussion that has taken place over the last few weeks. He proposed that a trial should be made to use an organic alternative in one area of the gardens to compare results with the roundup. The feeling of the other three members of the committee was that Graham Milburn's offer should be taken up immediately, as the weeds are currently out of control. IM proposed a motion to take up his organic trial option but this was not seconded so the decision was made to press ahead with roundup. IM specifically asked for his opposition to this to be noted in the minutes. DP stated that he would be in touch with Graham Milburn to make arrangements as soon as possible.

3 - Trees and walls

DP raised the issue of the Parish Council arranging a tree and wall survey, to confirm that they are at least safe from the aspect of the Parish Council's duty of care to the public. This was recommended in Hilary Taylor's Report. KL said he would raise this with the Parish Council and recommend a narrow survey to cover

the issue of legal care, probably involving the tree survey staff from the District Council, but this may change.

KL feels the trees issue falls into three areas which again are covered in Hilary Taylor's report:

Area 1 being the legal care issue mentioned above.

Area 2 is the smaller side of the aesthetic issue, in other words, areas the Friends are able to deal with such as the careful removal of ivy and weeds/small self-seeding trees. On this it was agreed that the Friends should continue as they have been.

Area 3 is the larger side of the aesthetic issue, the pruning and potential removal of larger trees and shrubs which would need professional intervention to achieve. It was agreed that initially the Friends/Parish Council sub - committee could make a list of trees and areas which need attention and flag these up on a walk around the gardens, before there is any need to involve paid professionals. The identification of the areas to look at is the key to begin with.

On the subject of walls, KL has stated that with regard to the West, East and South boundary walls the Parish Council policy will remain as before; when an issue arises with a section they will reinstate the wall to a high standard, gradually improving the overall condition of the wall as they go. Due to budgetary restrictions it is not envisaged that more than gapping will take place.

The northern wall is a separate issue due to the different nature of the construction and the fact it faces the road. KL feels the wall should be rebuilt back from the road so a pavement can be installed and the three main gates brought back into use. IM and it seems the majority of the Parish Council is in favour of rebuilding the wall in the current position for reasons including the proximity of the large trees and the listed nature of the gardens. This is a long term issue that is not possible due to lack of funds at present so this is an ongoing discussion.

4 - Sedbergh School challenge week

Sedbergh School pupils lead by Simon Arnold will be installing and restoring benches in the gardens, creating a small floral bed on the slope near the bowling club, reforming and improving the gravel path from the side entrance near the main road and hopefully painting the gardeners shed. This is part of the school's community engagement involvement and is much welcomed.

5 - Work by the Friends

The group will continue in their voluntary work of pruning/weeding and small shrub removal as previously agreed and other minor work as recommended in Hilary Taylor's report.

6 - Friends events

Following the successful fund raising and awareness event held with the town band, DP and the event sub group are looking at potential further events, perhaps based around Halloween or the Easter Egg season. A certain amount of funds have been raised so far which are being held by the Parish Council to be used at the discretion of the Friends group in support of Queen's Gardens related projects.

7 - Potential fund raising, grants

It was agreed that there is no harm in looking at potential sources of funding, such as the Yorkshire Dales sustainable development fund, and IM has said he is happy to try and use his contacts there to promote our agenda. It was also agreed that to have a plan for future works before making applications will be key, so they can be checked off as funds become available.

8 – Friends Annual General Meeting

The AGM for the Friends group is due to take place on 23rd July at 7 pm in the Rawthey Rooms above the Sedbergh Information Centre. It has been publicised to the members and KL expressed his hope that he will be able to attend.

The meeting came to a close at 8.15

