

Newsletter Dec 2022

Friends of Victoria Square

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During the year we spent the majority of the HLF/Welsh Government Community Woodlands grant, with only the extension of wildflower areas to be sown during 2023

See [Volunteer Activities](#) for details of our 2022 activities

Volunteer Activities - During the year volunteers have been engaged in a number of activities including creating; new log piles, planters, wildflower areas, bog and rain gardens, a composter, and maintaining all the additions to the Square from the beginning of the project.

A significant additional facility in the Square during the year was the installation of a large, 2000 litre, water butt. Thanks to Peter, Richard, Jimmy from All Saints, and Howard for enabling this. We hope during 2023, in partnership with Vale Council, to have mains water connected to the Square, in the form of a drinking fountain.

A big thank you to our volunteers on Saturday mornings, and other occasions for creating new features and maintaining the Square. Here's what some of them have said about their experiences.



"I started volunteering in January this year and since then have been involved in many different projects and I have learnt loads!

Most recently I have been involved with creating the bog garden at the other end of the square. This has been a fascinating project and now near completion it really does look fantastic. My memory of this will be one of our volunteers articulating beautifully how we needed to create 'undulations'.

I can honestly say that nearly every week, a member of the public will comment on how beautiful the square is looking. Over the past year I have seen so much growth and progress. I'm really proud to be part of this project and thank you all for being so welcoming" Lisa Osmond



Our very first Log Pile

"There are now seven log piles and four planters being maintained by a team of enthusiastic volunteers. Log piles mimic dead and fallen trees, providing a habitat for insects and a wealth of wildlife.

Log piles and planters generally look after themselves but require weeding, deadheading and trimming surrounding grass, and occasionally topping up with seasonal plants.

Most of the plants chosen are evergreen perennials, which provide all year round interest—and keep the financial director happy!

We receive lots of enthusiastic remarks from visitors to the Square" Barbara Blackburn



PLANT & CAKE SALE

On a Saturday morning in May 2022 we held a plant sale in the Square and sold home made cakes and tea and coffee; we knew that we were coming to the end of the HLF funding and needed additional funds to continue to add to the planting in the Square. The sun shone and Friends generously provided vegetable seedlings, herbaceous plants from their gardens and amazing house plants; most were sold and together with the sale of refreshments (and some donations) we raised £770. We hope to do it again in 2023, as though plant sales are popular in Penarth it was also a good opportunity for us to show off our work in the Square and socialise with those who use it.

Sue Olley

Other events held on the Square - Big Jubilee Lunch Sat 4th June - The long weekend celebration for our late Queen's Platinum Jubilee included our now annual Eden Project Big Lunch. Although the weather was cooler than we would have liked, it remained dry and we were able to put out the bunting, lay our blankets on the ground and mark this special occasion with some fizzy drinks. With a great mix of ages – from 9 months to 92 years – there was a family feel to this important community celebration.

Open Day Aug 20th—when we invited the public to visit us for refreshments and cakes and to meet the volunteers and discuss with them the work being done on the Square.

Unfortunately our Ghost Trail scheduled for Nov 2nd had to be cancelled due to bad weather. We hopefully will be able to re-schedule the event in December.

UPCOMING EVENT - Carols in the Square December 13th 6pm . Join us to sing carols in the Square accompanied by 'Sound Women' Choir.

ENGAGING WITH THE WIDER COMMUNITY

The most significant example of connecting with the wider community is the increase in membership, which now stands at around 140 members. At events we are regularly supported by approximately 50 people. Our volunteer group now comprises approximately 25 people, with a regular weekly turnout of 12 or more volunteers.

MAKING THE FACILITIES OF THE SQUARE AVAILABLE TO OTHERS

We have held a number of BUG HUNTS on the Square and this Summer Victoria School sent 3 groups of 20 pupils with their teacher to enjoy a mini beast hunt. Bug Hunts were aligned to the school curriculum and aimed at enhancing awareness of environment, habitat and biodiversity.

We have also accommodated All Saints Church tots group for a bug hunt, and they have already booked a date for next Spring.

The Sunday School group of All Saints church have a dedicated area on the Square for planting.

We hope to strengthen these connections during 2023 and will look to engage with more schools and groups.

SUSTAINABILITY & PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

By Spring of 2023 the very last Heritage Lottery and Welsh Government grant funded element will be implemented. Our plans at this stage are to ensure that all of the improvements made to the Square over the last two years can be maintained for the enjoyment of all. We do have a very strong volunteer base and are confident that with their support this can be achieved.

In the immediate future we will not be looking for additional grant funds for capital expenditure. However, we will of course find it necessary to generate funds to sustain the group and Square. With this goal in mind we have already, during 2022, made a start with fund raising. We have held very successful plant and cake sales and have had some very generous donations for two dedicated benches. We will continue to look to raise funds from future events, and look forward to your continuing support.

Autumn reflected in a Log Pile



Tribute to Boudier Family

We would like to thank the Boudier family for their generous donation for two dedicated benches for the Square in memory of Harold and Rhona Boudier who were members of All Saints Church and Friends of Victoria Square.

Thank you also to Vale Council for refurbishing the bench seats. They look absolutely marvellous, were very much needed, and have been a very popular addition.



Our flourishing first Bog Garden

EVENTS TO LOOK FORWARD TO

Carols in the Square - 13 Dec 2022 6pm

Spring Time Tree Walk date to be confirmed

Plant & Cake Sale - Sat May 13 2023 - plant and cake donations welcome

Eden Project Big Lunch - Sat June 3rd 2023 from 1200 - bring your own lunch

Events for Autumn and Christmas 2023 TBC

PENARTH CIVIC SOCIETY - Friends of Victoria Square is a sub group of the Society and formed in 2019 to "celebrate, conserve and enhance Victoria Square" in response to the work of one of the Society's other sub groups, The Penarth Tree Forum. FoVS has become an important and integral part of the Society working with and supporting the development of a growing number of community sub-groups whilst benefitting from the energy and expertise of the Society and those leading the various groups. The Society has an increasing role in bringing together the many community groups across our Town for common purpose and good. www.penarthsociety.org.uk .

& Finally - OUR THANKS FOR SUPPORT FROM:

Vale Council (especially Jon) for your help and collaboration. Our funders 'The National Heritage Lottery & Welsh Government Community Woodlands Fund'. **All Saints Church** for their collaboration with the project, and also our **members and wonderful volunteers** for helping with its' delivery . Thank you for all the **generous donations** received.

ABOUT US - FoVS are not affiliated to All Saints Church or any other religious group. We work in partnership with Vale Council and All Saints Church to care for the Square and our community. We welcome all into our group and our activities. For more information go to:

www.friendsofvictoriasquare.org

see us on facebook

Wishing you all a

*Very Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year*