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**Project Update - What's been happening on the Square** Since our last news letter in December volunteer work on the Square has been very much focused on maintenance and general tidying of the area. Strong winds during January resulted in a number of branches being torn down, creating a good stock for replenishing the deadwood hedge. During this period a large oak near the church halls unfortunately succumbed to the storms. Volunteers are now creating a large log pile around the remaining stump and roots and this will be planted up during the next few weeks..

Apart from general maintenance we have created a much larger mini-pond area, made improvements to the rain garden with additional plants and made the area much larger. We will shortly be increasing the size of the three smaller wildflower areas during April.

We wanted to add some native hedging to the Square to promote bird habitats and thanks to a donation of hedging whips from the Vale Local Nature Partnership we have been able to do so. We have already planted a semi-circular hedge near the yew tree that we de-brambled last winter and 3 clumps of hedging near to Victoria Road. We have further hedging available and are considering where else in the Square to plant them, to enhance its appearance and promote wildlife. We have planted dog-rose, damson, Welsh apple, blackthorn and hawthorn.

**Stop Press** We are pleased to report news of the imminent arrival and planting of 3 "cut leaf" Alder trees kindly provided by Vale Council. These fine specimens prefer boggy soil conditions and will be ideally suited to the wet area on the east side of the Square facing Victoria Road.



## Work continues with Log Piles - (our 1st log pile right)

Log piles mimic dead and fallen trees and provide a habitat for a variety of wildlife. They are a major feature of the Square attracting very positive comments from visitors. Volunteers are constantly maintaining these features by weeding and adding seasonal plants as and when necessary. Pictured right is the very first log pile created, which has now matured to be one of the most attractive on the Square. A foretaste of things to come when later established log piles and planters mature.

## Events for 2023

**Tai Chi in the Square 29 April**

**Plant & Cake Sale - 13 May**

**Lunch on the Square - 3 June**

**Ghost Trail - Oct 31**



**Further planting in the Square.** We have several areas in the Square which need planting with appropriate plants; we have some funds for planting but if you are dividing herbaceous perennials in your garden in the near future we would welcome donations of the following:

**Gravel garden** - Verbena Bonariensis, Blue and white agapanthus, Salvia of any kind, bergenia both pink and white, Iris Unguicularis, Sedum especially pink leaved

**Rain Garden** - Persicaria bistorta, pink and red, Lysmachia, Ligularia The Rocket, Canna lilies, Gunnera Rogerisia

**Tai Chi in the Square 29 April 10.30 —11.00** An introduction by Master of Tai Chi, David Rogers of Rising Crane School in Penarth. David will be joined by some of his students to demonstrate some of the physical and mental health benefits of this popular form of gentle exercise - improving strength, balance and flexibility. You might want to give it a try? And do join us for a Stol coffee and chat afterwards.

**Plant Sale Sat 13th May 10 –12.** This is now one of our major fund-raising events. Donations of any herbaceous perennials and redundant house plants would be welcome . If you are sowing seeds for vegetables and annuals, then think about planting some extra that we can sell. Details of how to donate to follow.

**Lunch on the Square - Sat 3rd June** from 1200, bring your own picnic lunch, meet your neighbours and our volunteers. Guided tours and other events on the day details to follow.

**Ghost Trail - Oct 31** from 6pm for children F.O.C. A scary ghost Story trail around the Square for children up to 12 years old - more details to follow.

**Carols on the Square 12 Dec** - Join us and the Sound Women Choir for open air carol singing after Mulled Wine and Mince pies - more details to follow

**BAT WALKS** on the Square, weather permitting, will be approximately 40 mins long starting 10/15 mins before sunset on the following Wednesdays:

15 March (17.15) 22 March (18.20) 5 April (19.40) 12 April (19.45)

For further information after these dates and for other venues go to our website:

**BUG HUNTS** on the Square. If you know of a school or group who may benefit from this facility please contact us



After a considerable amount of TLC from our volunteers the partially uprooted Cherry Tree is still in bloom

**Water on Victoria Square** During 2022 we installed, in collaboration with All Saints Church, a 2000 litre water butt. This natural source of water was an extremely important addition to our water supply enabling us to maintain plants and young trees recently introduced to the Square. However, during long dry spells our current water sources are unable to provide sufficient water, especially to young trees and plants. We are currently considering a number of options and are discussing these with church authorities and Vale Council. We will hopefully be able to update you on any progress in our next News Letter.

**Working with Schools and Local Groups** As the improvements we have made to the Square have matured it has made the space an ideal venue for people to appreciate and learn about local nature. During 2022 we hosted a number of children's groups and schools in the Square. We have already agreed dates for 2023 with two local schools and will hope to be able to offer activities on the Square to other schools and groups during this coming year.

**If you are aware of a school or group who could benefit from an activity on Victoria Square please ask them to contact us on our website.**

**PROJECT GIANT** "Project Giant" is the planting of 10 Sequoia Giant Redwoods in Penarth as a statement of intent to galvanise and maximise our efforts in relation to climate change. The project is led by our good friends Penny Daw, of Penarth Tree Forum and Jon Greatrex of Vale Council. The young trees have been acquired through donations from Penarth Tree Forum Volunteers (almost £2,000) with the intention to plant them in suitable locations across the town... including a splendid avenue of 5 Giants in Alexandra Park. We were hoping to provide a home for one lovely specimen in the Square but alas our ground analysis indicated it just wouldn't be suitable. However we are now in discussion with Stanwell School with the hope of finding a suitable location in the school grounds for two Giant Redwoods. The School has been awarded "Platinum Eco School" status and is keen to work with us to find the right spot and to develop a management plan for their ongoing care. Fingers crossed!

**Tree Identification** We are very proud of our fine and varied trees throughout the Square. Through the course of the year we will develop a project to provide specimen name tags and information for a number of our key specimens – we'll be looking to use QR codes and other digital media as well as pyrography pens and various tools and materials. If you have an interest or skills and would like to be involved please contact Peter or Haydn

**ABOUT US - FoVS** are a sub group of Penarth Civic Society. We are not affiliated to All Saints Church or any other religious group. We work in partnership with Vale Council and All Saints Church to support the Square and our community. We welcome all into our group and activities.

**& Finally - OUR THANKS FOR SUPPORT FROM**—Vale Council (especially Jon) for their help and collaboration. Our funders "The National Heritage Lottery and Welsh Government Community Woodlands Fund. To All Saints Church for their collaboration with the project. Our members and wonderful volunteers for all their hard work in implementing the improvements to the Square

**We hope you enjoyed this News Letter. If you have any comments please contact us through our website by email or fb.**

