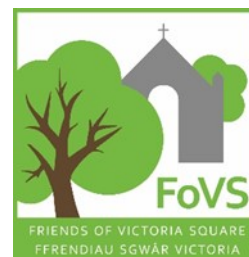


NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2020



Friends

Good news—Our Heritage Lottery / Welsh Government ‘Community Woodlands’ bid



for funds has been accepted Most of the project elements have been approved and will be funded. We were told however that we would not receive funding for additional seating and the provision of a shed for Gardening Club tools. We have already started to think about alternative ways of providing these two elements and have included some suggestions in this letter.



However, we will be able to start work on the following elements as soon as is practicably possible:

PUBLICITY - We will be publicising the project as widely as possible including press and media releases, on our website, on Facebook, in the Glamorganshire Voluntary Services newsletter, and leaflet drops. Please pass the word on to as many people and organisations as you can.

Let us know of any ideas you may have to increase publicity.

TREE WORKS - Vale Council have completed some of the very high priority works. Ambler Tree Experts will attend to the other trees identified in the survey as requiring attention. We expect them to start in January. The surveys did unfortunately identify that, for either public safety reasons, or where they had self seeded and were overcrowding native significant specimens, some trees would need to be felled. However, there are a number of self seeded saplings, that are currently struggling to survive, and we will be re-planting these in more suitable locations to at least maintain current tree coverage.



DRAINAGE - This will be delivered by Terrain Aeration. We expect this to take place, ground conditions permitting, during February. Using machinery (pictured right) Terrain Aeration will aerate the Square by drilling one metre deep holes throughout the Square, other than the area reserved for our bog garden. These holes will then have compressed air blasted into them causing a network of fissures, which create a comprehensive drainage network. This improves natural drainage throughout the Square and enhances soil composition. The process is environmentally friendly as it limits excess water draining into local drainage systems. Click the link to see the machine in action [Terrain Aeration](#)



THE HORTICULTURAL PLAN— this has been developed during a process of wide public consultations and by seeking advice from David Clements Ecology, who conducted the initial ecology survey. Ideas and proposals resulting from these consultations were discussed with Catherine Etchell Associates, landscape architects, who developed a plan to reflect ideas from the consultation process, together with additional proposals for our consideration. A resulting Landscaping Proposal Plan, was sent to all



members, and has been on display on the noticeboards in the Square, and was used to determine costs for applying for a grant and to draw up an implementation plan.

The main elements of the plan includes a bog garden, wildflower planting, community garden, hibernacula, bee house, bug hotel, stumperies, variable heights of grass cutting and re-planting self seed-ed saplings.

HORTICULTURAL WORK—A Gardening Group has been formed to implement and oversee the Horticultural Plan. The Gardening Group committee, Cathryn Mayo, Judith Marquand, Sophie Buchaillard and Barbara Blackburn, met for their first meeting on 28 August. They discussed the Heritage Lottery / Welsh Government 'Community Woodlands' grants and what monies they needed to apply for to implement much of Catherine Etchell's landscape architectural plan.

All these features are being carried out with the prime aim of creating a wonderful place for wildlife, where they can thrive and grow with the help and involvement of the community.

While they were waiting for the HLF and Community Woodlands bid to be assessed and granted, two members of the Gardening Club committee took the opportunity to use the dead tree stump and trunk, near the Victoria Road noticeboard, to create a mini stumpery (right). As this letter is being written plans are being made for how the main stumpery, and possibly other smaller ones, can be made from a considerable pile of wood made available from initial tree works



Stumperies and log piles mimic dead and fallen trees, providing food and shelter for a wealth of wildlife.

Now that the HLF and Welsh Government grant is available, the Gardening Group will be able to meet and plan to implement all of the Horticultural Plans in the Landscape Architect's proposals.



If you want to become a member of the Gardening Group and you are already a member of FoVS, please contact black-

burn.peter1@sky.com If you are not a member of FoVS please go to

our website www.friendsofvictoriasquare.org and complete the 'Join Us' process indicating your desire to be part of the Gardening Group. If you are not an experienced gardener do not worry, there will be plenty of people on hand to give some additional guidance. Join us and find out how fulfilling and satisfying gardening can be.

ARTISTIC IMPRESSION OF PLAN

We have commissioned an artistic impression, copy attached, designed by Andrew Coslett, a Penarth based artist, to reflect many of the proposals in the landscape architect's plan. We have accommodated an allowance in our budget to amend and update the plan in line with any amendments that become necessary during implementation. This artistic impression has replaced the landscape architect's proposals on the noticeboards and will be used in Press Releases and publicity materials.



Incidentally, Andrew was so impressed with our plans for the Square he has now become a member. Welcome to the Group Andrew.

NATURE TRAILS – Towards the end of the Horticulture element, we will be asking David Clements Ecology to lead two professionally led nature trails. Our intention is that FoVS volunteers will take part in these with a view to leading trails for other groups, including schoolchildren, parents with children, youth groups, care home residents and the general public.

Please let us know if you would like to be considered as a Volunteer.

PROJECT EVALUATION – We will need to evaluate the progress and completion of the project to feed back to our funders. These evaluations will take place on the Square and a part of these will be to conduct structured questionnaires with members of the public. These will be conducted mainly on weekends on at least three occasions—at the beginning, during and at the end of the project.



If you would like to volunteer in delivering these questionnaires, please let us know.

WIDER PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT – In order to be considered for funds to deliver our proposals, we are committed to making the Square and its enhanced environment and biodiversity, available to as many people as possible. The following is the statement made in our successful bid to Heritage Lottery, which we are committed to deliver.

‘As the project develops and following on from it, we will use the enhanced natural environment and stronger community support, to reach out to the wider community to encourage engagement with nature and gardening, in accordance with ‘Welsh Government’s Wellbeing of Future Generations’ Act’.

We will need to engage with other groups in the area, schools, youth groups, care homes, and groups of people who may benefit by being a part of the Friends group, or may just be able to benefit from visiting the Square. We have recently met with our ‘Local Nature Partnership’ Coordinator for the Vale, and look forward to developing contacts with other groups through this organisation.

Please let us know of any clubs or groups you feel we should contact.

BENCHES – As we mentioned earlier, we have not been funded to provide these. However, having discussed this with our very cooperative Vale Council Parks and Open Spaces Officer, we agreed with the council the following arrangements. Some of the existing benches sited along the eastern side of the Square and facing Victoria Road, will be re-sited and renovated by the Council. FoVS have committed to providing the concrete bases for the installations. It is possible that over the next few months a few more benches may become available for renovation and we have said that we could provide appropriate bases for up to a total of five newly sited seats.



We will need volunteers to help with re-siting the bench seats and will send out a message with details nearer to the time, which will probably be towards the end of the project.

We will also have to raise funds to pay for the base installations – donations and/or in kind contributions would be very welcome – we will update you all on fund raising ideas. IDEAS WELCOMED

PROJECT SCHEDULE

We will be working on a detailed implementation schedule, much of the horticultural work in particular will rely upon volunteer input. These details will follow in the New Year

If you haven't already registered to be a volunteer please let us know if your able and willing to, either via the website contact facility or directly to: Blackburn.peter1@sky.com

and finally.....



We hope this letter finds you all well in these very challenging times. Much of the planned work by the Gardening Group will be taking place after the tree works and aeration has taken place. At this point in time we can not be sure how Covid restrictions in place at the time may affect the horticulture work. We will keep you all informed as and when we can start the volunteer works. The gardening group also have a WhatsApp messaging service so Gardening Club members will be updated using this.

And for those of you who may have picked this Newsletter up from a dispenser in the Square - if you wish to learn more about us go to:

www.friendsofvictoriasquare.org

If you wish to become a member click on the 'join us' facility.

BEST WISHES TO YOU ALL

