

Friends of Denton Gardens

Public Meeting

Saturday 18th September, 11.00hrs – Egremont Public House, Brighton Road, Worthing

1 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Interim Chair, Krish Waran, welcomed everyone and introduced the outgoing Interim Committee (see below), as well as Anthony Read, Head Park Ranger, who has been working closely with the group and supporting our move to constituting.

Outgoing Interim Committee Members Present:

Krish Waran, Interim Chair
Nadine Barber, Interim Dep Chair
Louise Corcoran, Interim Secretary
Annie Waran, Linkage Officer
JP Rowe, Technical Advisor
Tony Barber

Outgoing Interim Committee Members Apologies:

Jools Owen, Interim Treasurer

2 Updates

Application for CIL Funding

- JP Rowe explained that the Friends are applying for £10K to replace the pergola which is in a poor state of repair, and to install a commemorative stone to mark next year's centenary of the gifting of the gardens to the people of Worthing.
- The deadline for submitting the application has been tight so finding time to consult widely on the idea has been difficult. However, the group has had very positive input from the Rangers, as well as the Worthing Society and local councillors, and feedback from the wider Friends community on Facebook has been overwhelmingly supportive.
- If the application is successful, the new pergola will be oak for longevity, built by the Park Ranger Team who built the fabulous new one at Highdown Gardens, and will incorporate south facing seating.
- JP appealed to anyone to contact the committee if they know a stonemason who might be able to assist with the commemorative stone.

Update on Planned Garden Improvements

- Anthony Read reported that the Worthing Mile Team now cover Denton Gardens. Four gardeners will now work in the Gardens once a week either Tue or Thu.
- Also a Craft Gardener is discussing the sunken garden – plan is to open up views, introduce colour symmetry with planting adapted to hotter summers and wetter winters, rather than traditional bedding. Now the group is constituted, planting schemes can be discussed with members.
- The existence of the group means future of Gardens can be community led, Rangers can facilitate task days for volunteers to do light grounds maintenance, eg deadheading, very successful at Marine Gardens. Not seen as free labour for the Council, rather it means more can be spent on things like the plants.
- Anthony also explained that there is a volunteer charter which sets out the expectations of volunteers from the council and vice versa, predominantly around health and safety, and insurance.

Response to Petition and Meeting with Council Leader, Cllr Humphreys

Petition –

- Krish Waran explained that although 500 signatures on the petition had been rejected, Cllr Humphreys did accept all 1,200 who signed were against the Council's plans.
- Cllr Humphreys took issue with the term "preserve" in the petition but agreed to substitute "protect and enhance in a way that retains the character of the Gardens", accepting it on this modified basis.
- He reported that so far no Councillors have written to him expressing support for the petition (even though several signed it). The committee will follow this up with our councillors.

Adventure Golf Plans –

- Cllr Humphreys reported that 2 contenders are under consideration following the marketing exercise: the current minigolf operator who plans to enhance the planting and add a petanque court, and a local couple proposing an enlarged, Worthing themed adventure golf course with a café in the existing beach shelter. This would cover the entire south lawn, include secure fences and low level lighting.
- Expressions of interest are now closed. Council officers are carrying out viability evaluation and consideration of business plans and will make a decision within two months.
- He stated that the café would be an adjunct to the golf.
- When questioned he said there would be a condition to restore the space to its original condition if the venture failed. He would notify the group of the planning process.
- Sue Belton, Chair, Worthing Society, contributed to the discussion stating that if the intention of a potential operator is to convert the building to a cafe this will require a Planning Application for 'a change of use', thus giving the public the opportunity to object. The shelter is included on the Council's Local Interest List. This means the building is a local heritage asset and this status will need to be considered if a change of use is applied for. This Art Deco style period building is also integral to the setting of Denton Gardens. Furthermore, Denton Gardens is recorded on the Council's own 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest' which is a relevant planning consideration. Depending on the scale of any proposed changes and encroachment into the gardens, a new scheme may require a Planning Application.
- Krish thanked the Worthing Society for all their ongoing support.

3 Discussion/Adoption of Constitution

Krish Waran talked the Friends through the Constitution which was circulated. The Constitution was adopted unanimously.

4 Election of the Officers to the new committee

Treasurer – Jools Owen
Nominated by Annie Waran
Seconded by JP Rowe
Endorsed

Secretary – Louise Corcoran
Nominated by Annie Waran
Seconded by Nikki Sheeran
Endorsed

Chair – Nadine Barber
Nominated by Anni Peake

Seconded by Louise Corcoran
Endorsed

Nadine Barber thanked outgoing Interim Chair, Krish Waran for all his hard work over the past few months for getting everything off the ground and to the position we are at now.

5 AOB

Shelter Repairs

- Sue Belton, Worthing Society Chair, reported that the WS has written to the Director of Economy, Martin Randall, at Worthing Borough Council regarding the damaged windows and poor state of the shelter. Martin advised he is seeking quotes from a specialist contractor regarding window repairs, which will probably be 'like for like' and will look at funding for redecoration next financial year. He was supportive of the WS's 2018/19 Campaign to upgrade parts of the South Street Conservation Area.

Website

JP Rowe demonstrated the newly created Denton Gardens website which will be going live very soon – address: www.friendsofdentongardens.org The committee thanked him for his hard work in developing and launching such a great site.

Communications

A member requested that not all communications be via Facebook – a list was circulated for Friends to give their e-mail address as an alternative means of communication. Minutes will be circulated to all on the list.

Congratulations

Anthony Read congratulated the group on constituting, and looked forward to working with everyone, and said he would send info on further funding avenues.