

Chair: Jennie

Notes: Rebecca

1. **In attendance:** Anne D, Becca, Bob, David L, Jennie, Joseph, Julia, Julian, Peggy.
Apologies: Barbara, Betty, Clare H, Emma J, Ester, Gill M, Hsin-Liang, Immy, Ingrid, Jill, Josephine, Keith, Lois, Macu.
2. **Minutes from the last meeting 13 March 2022** agreed.
3. **Elections:**
 - a. **Re-elected:** Rebecca Jones (Secretary, including Membership); Julian Hickling (Treasurer); Jennie Brandon, Bob Billingham (Co-chairs).
Standing down: Keith as Membership Secretary; Lois as Co-chair.
 - b. **New nominee elected:** Julia Leong (co-chair).
4. **Annual financial review 1 May 2021–30 April 2022:** Brief Treasurer's report from Julian. Summary of accounts circulated by e-mail and on website. In brief: Gardeners' current account (on 30 April 2022) had: **£1,095.89. Balance from allocated grants: £371.18. Balance from Friends memberships and donations (unallocated): £724.71.** Agreed we are in a good position.
5. **Non-gardening volunteering, including working with local families.** Activities and opportunities in the garden are evolving, as a result of the pandemic (more people using the garden), with better infrastructure (especially covered areas) and different people being involved, who come with their own ideas and experience – which is all great! The garden has evolved distinct groups of volunteers and users (including Friends), partly because they are free at different times, who overlap already (including at social events) but they could be encouraged to do so more.

Examples are (i) Julia starting up informal meet-ups of local families (Little Nightingales) and being especially creative at events reflecting the cultures she knows, and with Hsin-Ling and her group (ii) David starting mindfulness in the garden (iii) Jill, Terry and Becca starting up garden sketchers.

When the pavilion is finished, this is also likely to attract more people/groups to use the garden. We'd like to be open to collaboration with incoming groups but also not overwhelm volunteers and also not change the nature of the garden for garden users.

Currently, the constitution of the group and insurance cover is very focussed on community gardening: it allows events and other activities, with risk assessments.

We have evolved the following principles, partly for practical reasons:

- a. People will use the garden for all kinds of activities (including parties) without asking us for permission or us knowing about it. This is fine as long as they are respectful of the garden and other garden users. It is easier if we know about it to prevent scheduling clashes. But mainly, they can move to the park or playground.
- b. The activities we arrange should be free to access and welcoming to all (unless there is a good reason why not). Most don't need booking.
- c. All activities (we know about) should happen alongside usual garden use and not bother neighbours.
- d. If a group wants to use the garden (including for birthday parties) they should invite other garden users to join in (where practical).
- e. Volunteers can decide to help incoming people and groups but only if they want to and have capacity.

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- f. Activities should not adversely affect the regular gardening sessions and enjoyment at them.

As for all park areas, if activities are for profit, we need to refer them to Parks at City Council and they might need to pay a fee to the Council.

- g. **Action: Becca consult with the whole group on the principles above.** Do they seem OK now? Will they stop us doing anything we'd like to do? Are there any worries about them?
- h. **Action: Becca review and redraft the current constitution** to make sure it reflects what we do now and what feels important now (circulate by e-mail).
- i. **Action: Becca to send to group by e-mail the following proposal to develop activities in these areas:**
 - i. **For families with small children:**
 1. Bring some of the informal 'Little Nightingale' meet-ups under the garden's insurance with Julia as the group's lead volunteer. These need to be risk assessed (with Becca's help). For safeguarding reasons, a parent (etc) needs to stay with the child.
 2. Encourage the families to join the Friends group (they don't need to pay to do this) – info is on the garden website. This is one way for them to find out about the garden activities via e-mail. And it builds ownership if they also help fund the garden.
 3. Make sure the activities don't become too popular (or frequent), wear out the volunteers, and impact adversely on the garden and garden users. Review often and not be worried to stop them.
 4. Encourage volunteering by adults from the families in other garden activities – it has worked well at Learn and Grow events. If they are regular volunteers, invite them to join the constituted group and come to meetings but make sure this doesn't take over from the need for group members to discuss, create and maintain the garden too.
 5. Tap into their creativity, even if it happens outside the garden (e.g. the painted minibeasts and eggs).
 - ii. **Events that reflect the cultures of garden users**, especially working with existing groups, where we act as hosts but do not need to provide most of the volunteers.
 1. Ensure they are equipped to run the event safely and have their own insurance and risk assessments.
 2. Make sure the events don't become too popular (or frequent), wear out the volunteers, and impact adversely on the garden and garden users.
 3. We'd like to repeat St Martin's Day (the garden was magical in the dark), might think about a pared-down Moon festival (but without the cakes), want to do a Midsummer evening get together. Look for other interesting events.
 4. Be very wary about large events in the Winter – cold/wet weather makes them more stressful for everyone.
 - iii. **Activities about wellbeing including mindfulness.**
 1. David would like to repeat the very successful mindfulness session and also explore developing the concept for groups of people who might especially benefit from it and having access to a garden to practise.

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2. Becca is keen to work with incoming groups who would like to use the garden for wellbeing-associated activities, especially where the garden brings something extra.
 3. Need to make sure the events don't become too frequent and change the experience of usual garden users or wear out the volunteers.
- iv. **Nature connectedness/biodiversity.**
1. To expand what we do, including using the expertise from others.
 2. We have a bat and moth weekend coming up on early July.
 3. The pond-dipping at Learn and Grow has been very good (and easy), especially when Gill is there.
6. **Status report for 8 May 2022:** see agenda and send comments to Becca: some points that arose:
- a. **Friends newsletter:** fine to do them less often.
 - b. **Time credits.** Fine to review this.
 - c. **Corporate volunteering.** Good to do this via SOS who can manage some of the paperwork and might provide a staff member. Pursue for a day later in the year, focussing on benches and picnic tables.
 - d. **Gate opening:** three households is OK at the moment and others have volunteered as backups. Thank you!
 - e. **Decorating the 'playhouse'.** We have a plan and aim to involve the families at least. Becca to write it up in the newsletter.
7. **Next meetings:** Sunday 18 September 2022, planning meeting in the garden, 2 to 3pm with social afterwards.
For 2023 (avoiding school holidays), pencil-in Sunday 19 March (planning meeting, before Easter), 21 May (AGM; before half term) and 17 September (planning meeting).