

Llangammarch Riverside Garden Open Meeting Saturday 10th February 2024

Notes

The meeting had been called as the Community Council now have full ownership of the garden, and have a responsibility to provide and support a range of habitats across our patch (Llangammarch, Cefn Gorwydd and Tirabad).

It was important to collect ideas and suggestions from the Community as to how the area might best be developed to offer maximum benefit to residents and visitors and how these objectives might be reached, bearing in mind that much of the work will need to be done by volunteers.

It was noted that for many years the garden had been looked after by residents who had done a great job, it was also acknowledged that, in order for the area to flourish, this very willing and skilled band of people would need a few more bodies.

Thank you to the people who came along and contributed enthusiastically to the meeting, sharing ideas about the way forward. We looked at 6 key areas –

Community (Friends and family, local groups and activities, visitors)

The gardens need to be used, colourful and enjoyable. Somewhere for locals and visitors to sit, relax and enjoy, with flat accessible areas that are more user friendly. Create raised beds that don't encroach on the main communal area in the top garden.

The people living around the gardens want the beech trees to be removed. It was pointed out that a report from Oct 2022 said they were unsafe. It was also pointed out that they would need to be felled before the apple trees are planted on the slope.

More picnic tables and an updated barbecue would be appreciated possibly on the upper level with seating around. A sign directing people to the gardens on the toilets and at the post office would help visitors.

New fencing throughout – recycled plastic is suggested. Relocate the dog poo bin and provide more rubbish disposable units.

Green Things (plants, trees, flowers, herbs, shrubs)

The Council has recently attracted grant funding for supporting biodiversity, this fund has been used to purchase planters and plants for the three areas in our catchment with a focus on sustainability e.g. self-watering tubs, heritage Welsh apple and plum trees and plants and shrubs that will be as far as possible low maintenance. Harvests from the fruit trees could be shared by residents – possibly some group jam/chutney making??

At the meeting some suggestions were put forwards of what might be suitable thinking of berries, flower and foliage to get colour throughout the year – lilac, buddleia, leycestaria (pheasant berry), cotoneaster, mountain ash, hydrangea, mahonia japonica, flowering quince.

Several people felt that the bamboo needs to go but another option is to harvest the bamboo to provide plant supports. Chainsaw sculptures could be created from the trees that have had to or will be felled/reduced. A living willow arbour could be created around a bench.

Some colourful planting around 'Gwylims Bench' and cottage garden flowers on splitter Island at lay-by.

Wildlife and Creepy Crawlies (birds, bats, mammals, amphibians, bugs, butterflies, bees and beetles)

Butterfly garden near the toilets could be grown in a small raised bed, bumble bee boxes, untidy areas for butterfly chrysalises to develop in, nettle bank for Peacock butterflies (and foraging – soup!!), Bird and bat boxes, sparrow hotel, allow shrubs to develop to house nesting birds, beetle bank and brush pile for insects and beetles, rockery for beetles, solitary bees and amphibians). Rotting trees for woodlice and other crawlies

Wildlife corridors under shrubs for voles, hedgehogs and field/woodmice

Support (Who will help?, What can you offer?, Why Bother?)

Several people added their names to a list as being willing to help at a Planting Day to get some of the recently purchase plants in the ground as soon as possible – this was arranged for Saturday 17th February commencing at 1.30pm

Several people filled in personal disclaimer forms so that they can work withing the garden under the umbrella of the Community Council Insurance

It is hoped that, as we go forwards, we'll have a storage shed on site where volunteers will have access to equipment, but for now people were asked to bring along their own tools if they had them.

It was suggested that a Whats App group would be good to be able to share progress, ideas (and possibly gripes – but hopefully not too many)

Accessibility (Wheelchair users and the visually impaired, families with pushchairs, those with psychological impairment)

Remove the steep gravelly steps completely (use the gravel and wood in other areas) and design a path system that will not detract from the green-ness of the site but is accessible to walking with walking aids, safe for toddlers, suitable for wheelchair users and easily recognised by the visually impaired and those with psychological challenges.

Introduce some higher seating

Develop sensory garden areas with a range of scents, sounds, colours and textures

Health and Safety (Safe areas, use of tools and other equipment, manual handling, accidents)

Remove the rickety and uneven steep steps – re-use materials from this area within the garden itself and plant across the access to the steps with suitable hedging type plants.

Whilst wasps are very important pollinators care needs to be taken with wasps around fruit trees and wasps nests in rough areas

People working in the garden need to wear protective gear depending on the tasks being undertaken – for example suitable footwear (not flip flops!!), eye protection if using strimmers/hedge cutters etc., sturdy gloves for cutting back shrubs.

Disclaimer to be signed by all volunteers.

Location of First Aid Kit (Alexandra Hall) and Defibrillator to be made clear.
