

Park Improvement Sub-committee
Minutes of Meeting held on 20th July 2023 in Llanferres Village Hall

Present:

Cllr Allan Morgans
Ann Catherall
Cllr Lyn Gibson – via TEAMS
Sean Thomas
Margaret Narburgh - Clerk

Members of the Public:

Hugo Watts

31. Apologies

None

32. Meeting Open to the Public

Mr Watts was invited to join in the discussions during the meeting given his in depth knowledge of the maintenance requirements of the park.

33. Declarations of Interest

None

34. Approval of Minutes from Meeting on 15th June 2023

Cllr Gibson proposed accepting the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting subject to the correction of a typographic error in item 27/18.i which should read delayed, Cllr Morgans seconded and members Thomas and Catherall voted in favour. There were no votes against or abstentions and the motion was carried.

35. Progress on Actions Arising from Minutes of Meeting on 15th June 2023

- 18.iii it was agreed to leave contacting Coleg Cambria until the Council had agreed to proceed and funding for the project was in place.
- 18.viii the Clerk stated the website was due to be updated soon as a matter for the Council and so Mr Thomas providing contact information to update it was no longer necessary.
- 28. not completed as action was superseded by the need to obtain revised quotes from Landscape Architects.
- 29/1. Completed - clarification of qualifying criteria had been obtained from the National Lottery
- 29/2 Completed - AONB sustainable development fund has offered the Council a grant of £5000
- 29/3 Completed – the project qualifies for a grant from Cadyn Clwyd but there is no funding available at present.

36. Comparison of Quotes

The Clerk had circulated three revised quotations received from the Landscape Architects originally invited to quote and updated the comparison of them prior to the meeting. The fourth had not responded. They were discussed in detail and members questioned the need for a full drainage strategy if porous materials were used for the paths and aqua drains running into soakaways were installed as an additional safety precaution.

The comparison of quotes showed:

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Landscape Architect	Quote with Drainage Strategy	Quote without Drainage Strategy
1	£17,910	£15,510
2	£21,837	£15,337
3	Not included	£17,416

If a full drainage strategy is not needed, Cllr Morgans proposed recommending using LA2 as they were the cheapest, were local and had considerable experience working in the area for Denbighshire CC and the AONB. Mrs Catherall seconded and Cllr Gibson and Mr Thomas voted in favour. There were no votes against or abstentions and the motion was carried. Action: Clerk to query drainage with architects and report back when recommendations are put to full Council.

37. Update of Potential Grant Availability

The Chair had spoken to Cadwyn Clwyd who confirmed they do provide grants to cover professional fees but the fund was currently closed until Denbighshire CC released their funding.

The Chair confirmed the project qualified for 70% from Clocaenog Wind Farm but the remaining 30% would need funding from elsewhere.

The Clerk confirmed the project met the criteria for National Lottery funding and they paid 100% of costs. She suggested applying to the National Lottery for full funding as this would reduce the workload by not having to submit multiple applications to cover the full costs. Mr Thomas proposed applying to the NL and other members agreed. Action: Clerk to include in recommendations to the full Council.

38. Update on Community Support

The Clerk had circulated a list of all those who had completed the survey form circulated last month prior to the meeting and summarised the results. 200 forms were circulated and 30 had been returned equivalent to 12.5% which is above the average 3% normally seen for this type of consultation. One could not be read but of the other 29, all were in favour of the improvements, most used the park weekly mainly for dog walking, as a short cut or for exercise. 15 said they would use the park more often if access were improved, 27 said they would if it had more facilities and 25 said they would if it were more attractive. 23 people volunteered to help with the soft landscaping when needed. 58 people had joined the Maes Ysgawen Community Garden Facebook group and 9 were active in chats. 27 people had joined the Maeshafn Community Facebook page and 9 people had 'liked' the idea of improvements but there were no chats.

A long discussion followed around the most commonly suggested ideas put forward by the community, summarised as follows:

Idea	Committees Reaction
1. Improve accessibility of gates and paths.	In favour
2. Transform park from thoroughfare to a 'destination' by incorporating a number of activities (outdoor exercise area, giant chess/draughts board, boules pitch, board games, book/magazine exchange, area for ball games) and organising community events (open air theatre, music events, fruit pressing, games competitions, workshops).	In favour
3. Create an accessible community garden with raised beds for growing fruit, veg, herbs, flowers and a compost heap for waste materials. Foster 'garden buddies' and collect seeds for growing on.	In favour
4. Create a nature trail through the park with educational lecterns explaining biodiversity, ecology etc.	In favour

5. Build a multi-purpose outdoor shelter to host educational and social events and run country craft workshops.	In favour
6. Create a rain garden along the banks of the stream to create interest, improve wildlife habitat and reduce speed of water flow to reduce flooding.	In favour In favour
7. Cut different areas of grass at different lengths to broaden the scope of biodiversity. Collect as appropriate depending on time of year and objectives.	
8. Create a pond.	*Rejected
9. Create an area for pigs and chickens.	*Rejected
10. Install bee hives	*Rejected

*these ideas were rejected due to concerns over practicalities, health & safety and conditions likely to be imposed by insurers if these items were included.

39. Documentation to Support National Lottery Application

The Clerk had started work on, and circulated the following documents which would be needed to support a grant application to the National Lottery for professional fees:

- Rough drawing showing potential layout of park
- List of 20 organisations consulted regarding the project and what help and support was available from each
- A Gap Analysis studying what is there now, what could be achieved and what would be involved in delivering the improvements.

40. Any Other Matters

1. Mr Watts was invited to pick the winners of the prizes for returning the completed survey forms. The winners of the bottle of wine were tickets 6 and 9 and the winner of the chocolates was ticket 14. Action: Clerk to notify the winners and notify the community of the results.
2. During the course of the month, committee members had met with Keep Wales Tidy, DCC Biodiversity officer and DCC Greenspaces Development officer and notes of these meetings are attached as Appendix 1, 2 and 3.
3. The Chair proposed asking the Council to call an extraordinary meeting to present the committees recommendations and seek a decision rather than wait until the September meeting and risk missing the deadline for grant applications to be submitted if the Council agreed to go ahead.

The Chair thanked the members for their contributions and the meeting was closed at 21.20 pm.

Date of next meeting to be confirmed.

Appendix 1

Notes on meeting with Gareth Jones Keep Wales Tidy on 29th June 2023 re Maes Ysgawen park

Present: Allan Morgans, Margaret Narburgh, Lyn Gibson, Ann Catherall

1. Gareth was given a copy of the proposed improvement plan to look at whilst we all walked around the park explaining what we had in mind and where.
2. He confirmed Keep Wales Tidy could help and suggested the Food Development pack would best meet our needs to create the community garden. It comprises 27 railway sleepers to create raised beds, soil, greenhouse, shed, various garden tools and a selection of plants. They would also send someone to help with the setting out and building work when the time comes.
3. We explained we would not be ready to take delivery until Spring/Summer 2024 and asked if we could 'reserve' a pack to be delivered later. He didn't know but the packs were available for the next 2 years so he would find out how best to do this.
4. We then discussed delivery logistics because the materials would arrive on a Huws Grey lorry with crane lift. It was agreed it would be best to offload from the car park outside the village hall with the crane placing the materials over the fence and into the park. This could only be done when the school was closed.

Below is the e-mail received on 4th July outlining in response to request to 'reserve' a pack for next year.

From: Gareth Jones <gareth.jones@keepwalestidy.cymru>

Sent: Tuesday, July 4, 2023 11:12 AM

To: clerk.llanferres@gmail.com

Subject: RE: FREE garden packs from Local Places for Nature / Gerddi am ddim o Lleoedd Lleol ar gyfer Natur

Hi Margaret;

This was the response I received:

I'd suggest that anyone should wait until they're almost ready to install before they apply given that we've cut turnaround time down this year. There's always going to be an issue with spring as we shouldn't have any new applications being installed Jan / Feb as there's not enough time to install for end of march and we can't start work till April.

We may keep applications open once we've allocated all this year for next year but it's TBC at the moment but an April start would be nice

They definitely wouldn't reserve packs but you should have no issue in being approved. So as long as you are close to being ready, I would apply either during the closed period or the very start of next year's round, there would be plenty available (always has been especially at the start of the packages).

Keep in touch! Best of luck with it all!

Gareth

Gareth Jones

ef/iddo | he/him

Swyddog Prosiect Sir Ddinbych

Project Officer Denbighshire

Cadwch Gymru'n Daclus | Keep Wales Tidy

07824 504796

gareth.jones@keepwalestidy.cymru

Signed :

Date :

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Appendix 2

Notes on meeting with Ellie Wainright, Biodiversity Officer DCC on 3rd July 2023 re Maes Ysgawen park

Present: Allan Morgans, Margaret Narburgh, Lyn Gibson

Plans to improve the park were explained to Ellie and during her inspection of the different areas she suggested the following to improve Biodiversity:

1. Take out any deadwood from amongst the trees and use it to build natural wood habitats.
2. Remove scrub from underneath the trees but don't stem around them as it causes damage to the trunks.
3. Stop cutting the boggy area to see what comes through naturally. She noted the trees already planted in this area were not natural 'wet loving' species.
4. She stated the first large tree in the far-left hand corner of the read boundary would be classed as a 'Veteran Tree' because it had reached maturity (probably 200 years old) and the few large dead branches which is usually a sign that it was starting to die but this could take another 100 years. Veteran trees provide useful habitats for all kinds of animal and bird species so she suggested trimming off any dangerous dead wood and leaving everything else.
5. The overgrown pine trees along the rear boundary would prevent wildflowers growing along the strip because they would be in the shade and also the soil looked to have too many nutrients for them to thrive. She suggested reducing the nutrients by cutting and removing the grass, hogweed, nipplewort, nettles and knapweed in April, July and September each year so that the wildflowers in the ground could come through naturally. This would only take one year.
6. The grass in the meadow area should be allowed to grow to see what comes through. It should be cut 3 times in the first year and left to grow naturally in the second year.
7. A path can be mown through the meadow to create the nature trail maybe with a Willow tunnel at the end linking onto the main path.
8. She suggested leaving a rough grass margin around the park.
9. Ian Sturrock is a specialist fruit tree nurseryman and the best person to ask about how to prune the native apple, plum and damson trees planted when the park was created.
10. Creating paths using limestone would be in keeping with the AONB
11. The picnic area in front of the orchard should be cut and the grass collected to keep it manicured.
12. She suggested scrapping back the limestone outcrop to bear rock and planting the crevasses with rockery plants.
13. The flat area nearest the school would be ideal for raise beds to grown veg and build the outdoor shelter.
14. She suggested creating a south facing 'mound' with any soil dug out when renewing the paths.
15. The steep bank going down to the school playground fence is too awkward to do much with. It could be planted with large trees, red currents, dog roses or left to grown as scrub which would encourage brambles to grow (not everyone's favourite therefore scrub areas are getting less and less).
16. The fruit tree need pruning and Lisett (Dutch) from Plas Newedd in Llangollen would be best person to ask how it should be done and when.
17. The grass under the fruit trees should be left to grow but a couple of paths could be cut through to provide easy access from the front picnic area to the wild meadow area at the back.
18. The water flow down the stream could be slowed down with leaky dams and by adding more curves to the banks.
19. Denbighshire's biodiversity team can provide plug plants and maybe some trees free of charge.
20. Ellie offered to meet us again if we needed any more advice later in the project's development.

Signed :

Date :

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Appendix 3

Notes on meeting with Heather Battisson- Howard, DCC Greenspace Development Officer on 17th July 2023 re Maes Ysgawen park

Present: Allan Morgans, Margaret Narburgh

Heather is a qualified Landscape Architect working for DCC's housing department. She works closely with the biodiversity, ecology and finance teams primarily looking after open spaces on council housing estates and gets involved in smaller developments within the wider community.

Plans to improve the park were explained to Heather and during our walk around the park. Her views were:

1. A topographical survey is essential.
2. Leave the main entrance gate in-situ and lock it to prevent unwanted vehicles and bikes getting in. Take out the panel to the right-hand side and install an accessible pedestrian gate to reduce costs.
3. A dropped kerb is needed outside the gate.
4. Compressed gravel and dust paths are rated as suitable surfaces for accessibility. They are permeable, environmentally friendly because they use waste materials and generally cheaper than other alternatives.
5. Creating a rockery with planting along the banks of the stream would be classed as a 'rain garden' and would help slow the flow of water and soak up some of the rain. She suggested widening the stream slightly along its length running towards the gate and using plants that tolerate both flood and drought for this area.
6. The stream along the rear boundary is silted up, which is probably what is causing flooding. She suggested a mini digger to dig it out and spread the spoil over the boggy area and if funds allow a dry-stone wall along the front to contain the water flow. Placing boulders in the stream would interrupt the water flow and stop it silting up.
7. If the awkward bank is planted with shrubs and trees, she suggested evergreen varieties to reduce maintenance as they eliminate the need to clear up fallen leaves in the park and the school playground.
8. The conifer trees along the rear boundary are preventing anything from growing properly underneath and branches should be cut back to the trunk to prevent re-growth.
9. The wildflower strip under the conifer trees could be cut back hard and yellow rattle planted to kill the grass and reduce the nutrients in the soil. She suggested throwing wild-flower seeds down every year to provide colour from cornflowers, poppies and daisies.
10. The oak tree planted for the Queens jubilee is growing outwards at the back and not upwards. The fruit trees in front could be removed and the oak have its bottom limbs removed to help it grow rounder and taller.
11. Heather always designs paths 2 meters wide to allow for wheelchairs, mobility scooters and pushchairs to pass rather than building passing points into the paths.
12. The edges of the path need replacing but the surface is solid enough. If the edges were built up the existing path could be overlaid with new gravel and compressed to save money.
13. The community garden should be a fully accessible area with solid paths for access by wheelchairs etc.
14. A mix of low level and raised beds would be preferable. The raised beds should be of a height to allow for people to sit on the edge.
15. A reliable water supply for the community garden would be needed as collecting in a water butt would not be enough.
16. A compost heap would also be needed to dispose of waste and provide compost to improve the soil in subsequent years.
17. Denbighshire volunteers run workshops to build bird and bat boxes and bug houses and she suggested running an event for children to build these ready to install during the official opening.

Signed :

Date :

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