

FRIENDS OF TOWNHILL PARK HOUSE GARDENS

News Update- April 2023

Dear Friends



An almost perfect year for opening the garden sadly saw us cancel Heritage Day at the last minute due to the death of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth 2nd. This after the hottest of summer heatwaves when the gardens and grounds were parched. The grass has barely recovered. Whilst the sunken garden and borders are slowly being restored to their resplendant best. We are doing all we can to improve the situation, even exploring how to finally obtain a lasting football and cricket pitch, given the wear and tear both endure throughout the year – more on that to follow. Martin has been replaced by the formidable double act of Luke and Liam and run out the bunting, we've been re-joined by Ted who has quite recently been able to increase his hours, which is very good news.

We have also been joined by Ben Young, a former Gregg student, who is now studying at Sparsholt college whilst undertaking the practical side of his apprenticeship with us here at the Gregg. Last summer and the heat and drought blighted large areas and then of course we had the box hedges attacked. It has meant that in front of school we replaced the ornamental boxes and elsewhere we have had to dig out all the dying Box, which is very sad. It formed such an important framework for the garden.

The emphasis now has been to buy more plants to replace those we've lost and to understand what might replace the box. At the same time we have purchased additional stone so that we can complete the pathway beyond the herb garden towards Jacques field. So we are purchasing and planting to try and make up for this damage. Hopefully all our open day dates will work out, barring any setbacks. We could do with a slightly more consistent summer this year. After last year was so brutal with the searing summer and freezing November..

We continue to need young blood both on the committee and assisting at weekends in the 'posse'. This is purely voluntary and can be incredibly rewarding. They'll always be assured of a smiling face and a delicious slice of cake!

We remain indebted to those who have stuck at it through the pandemic and out the other side from our committee and volunteers. To Peter Wilkinson our treasurer, who continues to run the accounts scrupulously and accurately. He had another strong audit this year and we are all now ready for the big Bank Holiday open day.

Nicky Pickett, remains our Queen of Hearts or more precisely cakes. She continues to produce spectacular amounts of cake for consumption on the day, which in turn provide the lifeblood of the income for each open day. Along with her team of willing helpers they provide exceptional service – Michelle & Jo H – a thousand thank yous. We are enormously grateful.



We did manage to hold both member's days last year, with a successful BBQ on the sundial lawn. Another two Members' Days will be held this year with further details at the bottom of this newsletter.

I do hope that all members will renew their membership for 2023, as this will help with the continued development of the wonderful Gertrude Jekyll gardens and other emerging areas.

Crispin

Crispin Ingham (Chairman)

Web Site

The Gardens are now included as a part of the school website www.thegreggschool.org Please log on and explore.

What can you do to help?

The friends are always in need of any help that can be given. This is not always a case of being on the physical side! Perhaps you would be in a position to help, for example by:

- Donating unwanted presents and books for our raffle, tombola and book stall - just bring them with you.
- Picking apples on Saturday 2nd September (2.00-4.00pm) for sale on Heritage open day
- Fund raising ideas or become a member of the committee
- Arboretum and grounds clearance (cutting down brambles and holly etc)
- Renew your membership for 2023 and bring a friend on Open Days

If you can help during 2023 please contact Crispin or a member of the committee (details below) either by telephone, email or at one of our open days.

COMMITTEE 2023

If you would like to become more involved you would be very welcome, please contact any member of the committee. The current members are as follows:

Crispin Ingham	Chairman and Secretary (School Bursar)	02380 472133 <i>cri@thegreggschools.org</i>
Peter Wilkinson	Treasurer	02380 781012
Rosaleen Wilkinson	Co-ordinator of the Herbaceous Borders, Herb Garden and Historian	02380 781012 <i>rosaleenwilkinson@talktalk.net</i>
Rod Clay	Co-ordinator of the North Terrace Borders	<i>rowann8@yahoo.co.uk</i>
Ted Waite	Co-ordinator of the volunteer 'Posse' and local publicity	<i>ted@thegreggschools.org</i>

Committee Members: Paul Young, Adrienne (Minute Secretary) & Steve Harris, Ann Clay, Vanessa Constable

Liam Cross & Luke Enticknap Grounds Managers 02380 472133

Sunk Garden, Herbaceous Borders & The Boudoir Garden.

Sunken garden & Pond - Pergola has now finished being pruned.

Winter Jasmines have been pruned by Ted & Ben.

Grasses have been thinned and clumps have been replanted in-front of Hart and the Boudoir Garden.

Pond has required some patch repair work.

Gazebo roof needs some maintenance.

Paths need some general repair work.

Many plants, notably Prostate Rosemaries and Santolinas have suffered due to the recent hard frosts.

Lady Swaythling seat has been treated by Paul and is now back on display.

Herbaceous Borders

Liam has started weeding and cutting back.

Again many plants look to have suffered, from recent weather.

Herb Garden

Hydrangeas have been pruned.

North Terrace

Luke has pruned and cut back the shrubs.

Layering of shrubs to be done.

Boudoir Garden

Nothing to report

Volunteers Posse

Email sent out for Posse on Sunday 5 March and again for 23 April

Advert Form for more volunteers to join sent out to SVS.

Other areas

Luke has beautifully clipped all the Yew hedging.

Snowdrops to be thinned and replanted around site. A good showing this year.

Paul planted shrub from his own garden by perimeter.

Layering of Deciduous azaleas to be done.

GARDEN OPEN DAYS 2023

Sunday, 12th March from 2.00pm to 4.00pm featuring a small classic car display and the fabulous Meridian Winds.

Monday, 1st May from 2.00pm to 5.00pm. Enjoy the bluebells and blossoms in the arboretum. the School Orchestra, Duke of Wellington Dancers and a classic car display in front of the house.

Sunday, 2nd July from 2.00pm to 5.00pm When the gardens are at their most colourful and we look forward to Meridian Winds who will again be playing their end of season event..

Sunday, 10th September 2.00pm to 5.00pm Heritage Day and the house will again be open for guided tours by the school's students. There will also be another classic car display in front of the house and music from Uke Box Glory.

MEMBERS ONLY DAYS 2023

Tuesday 25th July from 3.00pm to 7.00pm – Summer Picnic.

Bring your own picnic and a rug or your chairs to enjoy the gardens in full bloom. A basic BBQ will also be available with sausages and burgers.

Tuesday 24th October from 2.00pm to 5.00pm – Autumn Colours with a tour of the house or gardens. Help yourself to a bag of apples from the Orchard ... if there are any left to be had!

Members may also bring non-member guests to the picnics. We would ask that members' guests make a donation of £2 each towards the gardens.

The aim of these openings is for members to relax and enjoy the gardens