



Botanic Gardens, Churchtown

Botanic Gardens Community Association (BGCA)

Reg. Charity No. 1164497 (Incorporated)

Spring News Letter 2017

Here we are springtime, and the Botanic Gardens have looked so pretty, despite the changeable weather, due to the hard work of the volunteers, and your generous donations, during autumn so that we have been able to enjoy the beautiful splendour of the gardens.

What is happening in the Botanic Gardens? There are many exciting things so please read on and see what dates you have to put in your diary.

It is now a year since we obtained our charity status and what a year it has been.

An important date for your Diary is Thursday 27th April, 7pm at The Parochial Hall in Churchtown, where you are all invited to attend our first Annual General Meeting as a Registered Charity.

Please note that only members can vote, but it is an opportunity for you to hear where all your donations have been spent on, what the plans are for the future (other than which are in this newsletter), and have the chance to raise any points, ask questions, put forward ideas, and hopefully, become a member and or a volunteer. You may even like to become a sponsor. So please come along.

We are a non-profit organisation and all monies raised are ploughed back into the gardens and facilities with voluntary labour doing the work.

What does being a Registered Charity mean? It means we can now apply for various grants and Lottery funding so as to improve and keep this beautiful Victorian Garden, which is one of the last in the country, viable and the heart of the community. Improve facilities for all who use the park and encourage various community activities.

The BGCA are still awaiting a new poly tunnel to be erected. New Directions have assured us this will happen shortly. We also have one of the greenhouses, so seeds and plants are nurtured, for the Gardens and for sale to you in the community. You can now purchase and take a little bit of the Gardens home with you for your garden/ home/ window box and know that all of the proceeds are going back into the Gardens.

As you will have noted the Garden Shop is open, where there are so many plants and garden features to choose from, that you really are spoilt for choice. Gail and Steve Settle are doing a marvellous job and such providing a great and much appreciated contribution to the gardens. Do contact them on botanic@madasafish.com for any further information, or if there is something particular you would like to purchase.

Where do the monies raised go?

Well every penny counts and here are some of the areas your donations have been spent on:

The Toilet facilities

As you all know, the toilet facilities were taken over by the BCGA, and improved. It is one of the last public toilet areas in Southport. The 20p to

“spend a penny” you pay helps us keep the toilets in good order by maintaining them and ensuring that there is a good supply of soap, toilet tissue etc. We are also looking at putting in new hand driers.

We have received many compliments regarding the new and improved toilets and unbelievably, this facility has encouraged various groups to use the park more often and coach parties now have the Gardens as a feature of their tours.

Defibrillator:

As you will remember as part of our health and safety initiatives, we have been looking at purchasing a defibrillator, which will be in a central point, in the café. Recently, a gentle man had a heart attack in the Botanic Gardens. Despite the valiant efforts of Gail Settle and others to help revive this gentleman, as they awaited for the paramedics to arrive, we are so sad to report he did pass away in the park. We cannot say that a defibrillator would have changed the outcome, but maybe it would/could have.

Therefore, as previously mentioned, this is a very important date; the 29th April there is a sponsored walk around Botanic Gardens to raise money for a Defibrillator for the Gardens starting at 10.30 until 3pm. Please come along and support Gail and the volunteers on this sponsored walk, and take part yourselves, for a much-needed piece of equipment.

Planting in the gardens

We also say a big thank you to all of you who support us and donate in many ways.

The Aviary

Monies you generously donate in the Avery box help towards the upkeep and wellbeing of the birds and animals. Ensuring that their food, shelter and toys are kept to a good standard.

The Park Benches

We pride ourselves in being able to keep all of the benches maintained, with over 70 having been repainted by the volunteers.

The Fernery

We are pleased to say that the fernery, which is a rarity in this country, continues to be well maintained; and thank you for your donations. We are pleased to say that during the summer the Fernery will be open from 10 am to 3pm each day.

What the Volunteers of the Botanic Gardens Community association have achieved since its inception in 2012.

Here is the report from our Chairman, David Cobham who one of the Founding members of the BGCA

RHS BRITAIN IN BLOOM 2014-15-16 OUTSTANDING

DISCRETIONAL AWARD NATIONAL CERTIFICATE OF DISTINCTION 2016

TASKS THAT HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN AND ACHIEVEMENTS from 2012 – 17.

1. Relieved and cured severe flooding of the lake by contacting the landowners outside the gardens, who allowed us to clear culvert blockages at both ends and continuing to keep them clear. Also, clear accessible litter and lake debris.

2. Renovated, painted, and repaired {where necessary} over 70 badly weathered park benches and we continue to keep them clean and maintained.

3. Carry out minor repairs and painting jobs to park railings and garden walls etc.

4. Painted, cleaned and made repairs in the toilet block and now maintain the sanitary ware and plumbing. Supplied and installed toilet consumables and fitted new multi roll dispensers and hand wash soap dispensers. Supplied and fitted anti-odour dispensers. Maintain facility and replenish consumables daily.

We have renovated the old ticket office and Mural perimeter.

5. We have a team of litter collectors and have a “zero tolerance” litter policy .

We do concentrate on the front of the park and Aviary area keeping it clean and litter free.

6. Volunteers spent all winter of 2014 (and since), making the lake paths at the wild end of the lake clear of decades of solid mud and foliage to recreate and develop a nature trail.

7. Hold 4-5 free events per year for all classes of visitor and raise funds.

8. To reverse the filling in of the flowerbeds and containers, we started a sponsorship scheme four years ago to pay for flowers from the Nursery; following the closure of the Nursery we now outsource plants, save, and grow some in the greenhouse for summer and autumn/ spring flowerbed displays. Five large beds, a new aviary rose garden and 40 containers and baskets are now planted up by BGCA volunteers, and maintained throughout the year.

Britain in Bloom awards of top level 5 outstanding have been awarded for the last three years plus in 2016 a discretionary National Certificate of Distinction for excellence over a long period.

9. We have a partnership with the Café to help and improve an in-house Garden Centre; profits go to us to help with the purchase of plants for the gardens displays. Over £9000 per year, is generated through our regular sponsors, events, donations and the Garden Centre, which also supplies materials.

10. We try to work well with the Council Officers and Park force staff and attend most of the many meetings that are set up etc.

We have a website, and aspiration list of work and projects, some that need major funding , we wish the boats and land train to be back and the old Museum building to be put to good public benefit, and a proper base for us to hang our hats on. The scenic lake needs dredging and its infrastructure restored.

The very popular Aviary and Fernery to be enhanced and BCCA to continue to gain top awards, which are good for all our supporters, the Council the public and us!

Over 10,000 volunteer hours, have been worked over last three years, all funds raised are for the benefit of the Gardens, but major funding is required to complement this

Projects we wish to achieve this year:

Project Educational and leisure Lakeside Nature Trail Area.

Re surface approx. 250 yards bonded gravel pathways.

Supply and fix two appropriate vandal proof benches.

Selected clearing of silted up lake areas to suit available funds.

Supplying and installing of Lake Aeration fountain.

Supply and fix approved habitat features to attract Birds, Bats, Bees and Butterflies etc.

Supplying and fitting of educational Flora and Fauna signage.

Improve and add to existing Arboretum and provide species signage.

All of these improvements are to complement, and put capital and finishing touches to the labour intensive work done by volunteers over the past 3 years in clearing lakeside pathways and edging stones of tonnes of solid mud, roots and overgrown foliage.

This will bring back free safe accessible public use for all ages and abilities. It will provide a wonderful natural area of the Botanic Gardens, and will provide a contrast to the “outstanding” rated by North West in Bloom floral landscape part of the Gardens all year round, and reinforce the Botanic Gardens highly rated Green Flag status.

This is no mean task and the approximate cost to enable all of this to be done is around £5,000. So, you can see why all of the sponsorship, donations and fund raising is so essential and so appreciated.

Free Events in the Park. Dates for your Diary

***Our much-loved Easter Event is A Rabbit called Peter on **Easter Sunday at 11.30 until 3.30.** Mr O'Malley of Nationwide Foods is generously sponsoring this event,.**

We also have the very kind donations from Tesco's, Morrison's, and Asda, who are donating a supply of Easter eggs.

There will be lots of sideshows, games, egg hunts and a fun family day.

* **Saturday On 29th April** there is a sponsored walk around Botanic Gardens to raise money for a Defibrillator for the Park starting at 10.30 until 3.pm.

* **Sunday 18th June, Father's Day, 11 am until 3.30 pm**, there is a cycling event throughout the park. This will be a presentation of certificates for youngsters who have passed their cycling proficiency tests. There will also be representatives from various cycling clubs. As this is a Sunday, the Band in the Park will play tunes to do with vehicles i.e. Bicycle made for Two etc. and various exciting things to experience.

* **Sunday 3rd September** we have the much loved and demanded, highlight of the year - the **Victorian Gala**. With all of the sideshows, stalls, and fun, you have come to expect and enjoy.

The Bands in the Park.

This annual summer season event is beginning again and you will be able to enjoy the free concerts on a Sunday afternoon in the park. Such a lovely way to spend an afternoon: Set in idyllic surroundings, listening to amazing bands with a wide range of music for your enjoyment, and all for free.

Membership

We have, at the last count, 50 paid up members of the association many of who volunteer in the gardens. **So, why not become a member?**

It is inexpensive and as little as **£10 PER YEAR per person.**

So please email Clive Pickup for further details on clive.pickup2@btinternet.com

What would you like to see in the gardens?

We do have a fund raising committee who welcome your ideas and participation.

Be part of the whole community, your community, and come together; volunteering in the park, and as a team giving it a spruce up in all areas.

Do contact Secretary Sandra Cain on sandrajain@gmail.com or our Chairman David Cobham on d.cobham@sky.com

Keeping in contact with you.

We need you to tell us:

***What you would like included in the newsletter and on the website**

<http://www.botanicgardensca.org.uk/>

***How often you would like to receive a newsletter.**

***Do you have an article you wish to include?**

***Would you welcome making donations on line?**

PLEASE DO LET ME HAVE YOUR IDEAS, THOUGHTS, MUSINGS BY EMAILING ME ON sallycrowther@btinternet.com

Volunteers are the backbone of keeping these Gardens maintained for everyone's enjoyment. If you have any spare time, even for an hour, please come and join in. Do whatever is comfortable for you, be it sweeping up leaves, deadheading plants, litter picking or wanting to do some heavier manual work. You may even be an "ideas" person, whatever your skill we do want you to be part of this special park.

