

On 18/01/23 The members of the Friends of the Harris Garden were sent the below communication with an update on the charity's situation. Post-COVID-19 there have been many challenges to get the charity functioning again, as we have had several resignations during the pandemic. This was communicated with the membership, as per the Friends of the Harris Garden constitution, with a plan to get the committee and charity functioning again. In part, this will involve amendments to the constitution being made to remove a regular membership fee system that will be replaced by ad hoc donations & events. These changes will be made over the next 12 months and were supported by the membership.

See below for the communication to the membership.

I understand it has been some considerable time since you received an update regarding the Friends and the Harris Garden, and I am therefore writing to you to provide that here.

It is a familiar theme that over the past few years it has been challenging to organise and run events normally and the Friends have been no exception to that. Either during or shortly after the lockdown(s) several of our committee members have stepped down which has had an impact on how things are run. Four members of the committee have stepped down in this time: Catherine Spargo, Aileen Ho, Tomos Jones, and Laura Wells (treasurer). Since I have also left the University of Reading this has meant it has been difficult for me to be involved until very recently.

The committee now remains as myself, John Edgar, Rose Hewitt, Trudi Rehman, Duncan Zacks, and Neil O'Brien. As a group we have met several times recently to try and resolve the issues with the vacancies left in the committee, and most importantly the treasurer, to try to get things moving again. If you are aware of anyone who would like to join the committee then please get in touch.

Importantly, we have decided that for the time being paid subscriptions should stop, as currently we are unable to provide any return for the subscription, and we will re-evaluate this as things start to get up and running again. We believe that many visitors to the garden would still be willing to donate money for investment in the garden, as it is somewhere they enjoy visiting. From emails I receive, and especially during the lockdowns, it was certainly clear that it is a much appreciated and valued local amenity. Therefore, we are looking at ways to make donating to the Friends an easier process which may replace subscriptions longer term.

On that theme, if you have been able to visit the Harris Garden you will see that investment is still ongoing from both the Friends and the University of Reading. There is now a hard path route right around the garden which will make access for people so much easier. I'm sure you will agree that this is an excellent step forward and something the Friends have wanted to do for many years. Investment has also gone into planting and regenerating parts of the garden. The stream and pond area is one example, unfortunately both were leaking quite severely and it was not really sustainable to keep topping the system up with water. The decision was therefore made to stop refilling and replant and rework this area, using grasses and bridges to make a feature out of the stream area. We are also planning to spend

money on interpretation and signage for around the garden as this is something that is currently lacking. The funds that the Friends have will continue to be invested in planting for the garden, as it is expected many plants may have succumbed to the weather extremes of 2022 (and perhaps 2023).

I hope it is clear to see that things have still been moving quietly in the background, and I will update you again in spring as the committee restarts more regular meetings and fills the vacancies. In the meantime, please feel free to let me know your thoughts about subscriptions or just generally and I will make sure to discuss these with the committee.

Income and Expenditure				Balance Sheet			
		2021/2022	2020/2021		2021/2022	2020/2021	
Income	Subscriptions	£750	£704	Lloyds Current A/C			
	Interest Lloyds A/C	£4	£10	Balance brought forward	£3,808	£3,018	
	Donations general	£150		Transfers from UOR			
	Charities Aid Foundation		£1,000	Payments/deposits	-£2,695	£790	
	Income Total	£904	£1,714	Year end balance	£1,113	£3,808	
Expenditure	Transport		-£11	Lloyds Savings A/C			
	Photocopying and Postage	-£10		Balance brought forward	£40,147	£40,137	
	Refreshments		-£66	Transfer from Lloyds Current A/C			
	Plants	-£210	-£178	Interest Received	£4	£10	
	UoR costs	-£2,671		Transfers from Barclays			
	Web Hosting	-£86	-£36	Year End Balance	£40,151	£40,147	
	Affiliation fees	-£60	-£60				
	Auditor fee	-£50	-£50	University of Reading A/C			
	Expenditure Total	-£3,087	-£401	Balance brought forward	£3,220	£2,707	
Income - Expenditure		-£2,183	£1,313	Subscriptions	£508	£513	
				Transfer to Lloyds			
				Year end balance	£3,728	£3,220	
				Total assets	£44,992	£47,175	
				Total assets at year start	£47,175	£45,862	
				Income minus expenditure	-£2,183	£1,313	
				Total assets at year end	£44,992	£47,175	

a Haskins

ANIA HASKINS

21/5/2023