



Friends of the Harris Garden Update 2023

It has been a while since you received an update regarding the Friends of the Harris Garden, so I am writing to give you that update for over the last 12 months. There is quite a lot of work behind the scenes so apologies for the lengthy update, but it is worth reading until the end (honestly). After quite a difficult period, during and post-pandemic, I feel as though the Friends are now recovering well.

Harris Garden

In terms of staff updates Duncan Zacks, who was responsible for the Harris Garden and university grounds generally has now left the university, and his replacement Lucy Jellis started a few months ago. Duncan has overseen good transformation and investment in the garden, so it has been great having his input on the committee. Lucy is keen to continue to support the Friends work and will join the committee in Duncan's place. Following the installation of the circular path the garden is now more accessible to the community, which is great, but this has meant that there is a greater need for signage for different areas of the garden and further benches where there has not been a path previously. This is something we are looking into currently.

Friends of the Harris Garden and Committee

The biggest update (or relief for me) is that we now have a treasurer, with Sally Webster joining the committee last year. Sally has done a phenomenal job catching up with the Friends accounts. Unfortunately, Trudi Rehman, who represented the garden volunteers on the committee for some time has stepped down. So, I would like to take this chance to thank Trudi for all her help over the years.

The eagle-eyed amongst you will have noticed that the website has undergone updates over the last few months, and we now have an online payment system in place for ad-hoc donations, and subscriptions to the Friends (which you can see on the left-hand side of the page here - <https://friendsoftheharrisgarden.org.uk/>). This was possible due to the fantastic work of a garden volunteer, Richard Preston, so a huge thanks for his valuable work and input. We are now looking for someone to join the committee to focus on the forward-facing and communication side of our work in light of Richard's updates to continue this work.

With this update to how visitors can make donations, I would like to clarify a few points for those who already pay a subscription to the Friends.

1. If you are paying an annual subscription by direct debit or similar and are happy to continue to do so then nothing needs to change, we are, of course, grateful to anyone who is able to donate money to invest in the Harris Garden.
2. Generally, new visitors who would like to donate money regularly, or as a one-off can use our JustGiving donation method on the website, but if it is easier to arrange a direct debit directly or still pay by cheque then please contact Neil who will help here - (neil.obrien@henley.ac.uk).
3. If you would like to change how to donate to the Friends, then do get in touch with Neil on the email above.
4. These updates to how visitors donate were purely so we can move from what was a formal and rather outdated subscription method, to try and catch one-off donations more easily. This allows us to point visitors to the garden to our website to hopefully capture donations.

Events

Probably the most exciting update I would like to give here is that **BBC Radio 4's Gardeners Question Time** will be hosted by the Friends of the Harris Garden and the University of Reading on **26th March 2024**. The event will be held in the Palmer Building in the centre of the university campus, and the link for tickets below is available to you before it will be circulated more widely. Please do book tickets soon if this is of interest to you as we aim to share the link more widely next week.

More information in the attached letter and link here - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/gardeners-question-time-at-the-university-of-reading-tickets-852307042307?aff=oddtcreator>

Some time has passed since we held an in-person meeting for updates, and therefore the committee plans to reinstate an AGM. We are aiming to hold this in May, and I will let you know closer to the time about further details. We have also been in touch with the Friends of the University of Reading about having joint events where there is an overlap in interests, so hopefully we can begin to have ad-hoc events again for those interested. Once we have a new member of the committee to focus on this, as mentioned above, then more news should follow. If you know someone interested in gardening and communicating updates from the Harris Garden/Friends, then please point them in my direction.

If you have any questions then please feel free to get in touch.

The Friends of the Harris Garden Committee

Income and Expenditure

	2022/2023	2021/2022
Income		
Subscriptions	£553	£750
Lloyds Current A/C	£70	£4
Donations (signed)		£150
Income Total	£623	£904
Expenditure		
Transport	£174	
Photocopying and Postage		£10
Refreshments	£95	
Plants		£210
UOB costs	£30	£2,672
Website costs	£60	£86
Affiliation fees		£10
Audit or fee		£3,087
Expenditure Total	£359	£3,087
Income - Expenditure	£260	£2,183

Balance Sheet

	2022/2023	2021/2022
Lloyds Current A/C		
Balance brought forward	£1,113	£3,808
Transfers from UOB		
Payments/deposits	£257	£2,695
Year end balance	£846	£1,113
Lloyds Savings A/C		
Balance brought forward	£40,151	£90,347
Transfer from Lloyds Current A/C	£75	£4
Interest Received		
Year end balance	£40,227	£90,351
University of Reading A/C		
Balance brought forward	£3,737	£3,220
Subscriptions	£450	£508
Transfer to Lloyds		
Year end balance	£4,187	£3,728
Total assets	£45,251	£44,992
Total assets at year start	£44,992	£47,175
Income minus expenditure	£260	£2,183
Total assets at year end	£45,251	£44,992

A Higgins
A HASKINS

6/2/2024