

VOLUNTEER GARDENERS NEWSLETTER



THE
KIRKWOOD
SUPPORT
LIFE.



New Year update from Volunteer Gardener Linda Roberts

February 2022

Introduction

Gardens wait for no one! As we left the garden in December speeding through all those last jobs before we hung up our boots it was rather a joyous journeying through the recently revamped borders and the planting of new ones. Although it is still the early days of January we are thinking ahead and planning the summer borders, looking through the summer seed and plant lists even though we have not yet enjoyed the Spring show!!

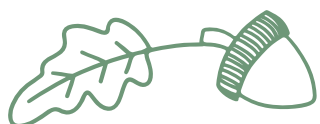
Although it is still only mid-January a recent walk around the garden showed it to be still in fine fettle presenting an appealing vista as you enter. That said there is still much to do on our return in March, or perhaps earlier weather permitting.

Where we left off and what's on the agenda for 2022

Jobs awaiting our return are plentiful a lot of cutting back last year's growth as new growth is starting to appear. Hedges need trimming, removing leaves from the Hellebores to enjoy their flowers and preventing leaf spot disease; the main lawn needs attention following a visit from a cherry picker!!, a large new bug hotel is planned (Buggingham Palace someone has called it!) and of course a lot of new planting to continue the border improvements started last year. Our new Lodge border (named after the generous donation we received from one of the Huddersfield Masonic Lodges following its closure) is nearing completion with mainly herbaceous perennials including Eupatorium Purpureum purchased during our gardener's visit to Scape Lodge. The new dry gravel border is well planted with some further additions planned.

Hopefully, our newly seeded wildflower lawn will produce copious flowers our expectations are high and here's hoping!

The vegetable garden has been reasonably productive providing potatoes, copious amounts of runner beans, onions, rocket, rhubarb and not to mention sprouts and purple sprouting broccoli still to be harvested. Perhaps more fruit will be grown this year with the only fruit so far strawberries.



The garden will need some planning with a hefty wish list from the Chef, a tall order with only a limited area available. The new greenhouse has been successful with a good number of tomatoes and cucumbers sent to the kitchen. We expect more this year as we have now full access to the small greenhouse at the side of the Support and Therapy which will be given over to cucumbers.

The pond continues to improve, the ducks love it with the annual flock of ducklings again in residence, also the frogs and newts come in to breed. We are hoping to get some 'pond pockets' which will allow some planting of much needed marginal plants, not possible with the current pond as no shelving was provided when the pond was built. The border around the pond will be improved ridding it of invasive grasses where possible. There is also a possible issue with the very tall willow trees overhanging the pond with the opinion of a tree expert perhaps needed. It is hoped the fencing around the pond will be painted ideally to match the grey of the patient planters, hopefully, the painting may extend to the benches around the garden and the seat round the Light up a Life Tree, all currently looking dull and uninviting!

Some suggestion also that the entrance to The Kirkwood can look a little sombre and perhaps some thought is needed about how to improve this! The large square planter at the entrance needs utilising, suitably located, and well planted.

Thanks to Dobbies for their wonderful donation

Last year we were extremely fortunate to benefit from the very generous £500 donated from Dobbies.

With this, we were able to purchase some desperately needed new tools. Shears, Lady Spades, brushes etc. Seeds, Potting Compost, Seed Compost. But more importantly some wonderful plants. These included a wonderful Camelia, the first in the garden, chosen particularly because it is evergreen, a winter/early spring flowering which is highly scented. This has been planted very close to the Patients Patio area where it can be seen from most of the patients' patios areas. Still quite small but in time will prove to be a substantial shrub that can very easily be pruned and will provide cutting material for the Hospice Florists to brighten up the flower arranging for the patients. Hopefully, in the better weather, the patients will be able to enjoy the



scents of both the Gertrude Jekyll and the Camelia - hoping the scents don't compete!

On a wildlife note, and we are keen to encourage wildlife hence all the bird boxes dotted around the garden, we did receive two hedgehog houses kindly built and donated by a lovely gentleman living close by. It is perhaps surprising that none of the current gardeners, many going back over ten years, have ever seen any evidence of hedgehogs in the garden?! Some advice was sought from a hedgehog rescue centre who suggested that badgers may be responsible as they prey on hedgehogs! There may be a badger set just across the river. We will perhaps pursue this issue with some static wildlife cameras suggested.

Our ever increasing plant varieties (well over 200 now) and other additions to the garden will ensure it provides continuous interest for the patients, staff and visitors right throughout all of the seasons.

Reflection

Hopefully, The Kirkwood's wonderful garden will entice many visitors again for the National Garden Scheme in July and hopefully to the RHS Yorkshire in Bloom judges will think of us favourably when they judge in the summer.

A couple of quotes to leave you with:

**The glory of gardening, hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature
To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul.**

....

Essential advice for the gardener

**Grow peas of mind,
Lettuce be thankful,
Squash selfishness,
Turnip and help they neighbour,
And always make thyme for your loved ones**

