



FRIENDS OF HILL HOUSE GARDENS

March Newsletter

**In February, I was privileged in being invited to talk to a local Tangent Ladies Group about the work the volunteers are involved in at Hill House Gardens. Thank you, for your kind donation and for the warm welcome you extended to me and the interest shown in our project.
Regards, Margaret - Chair Friends of Hill House Gardens Committee**

RAISED BEDS IN THE SMALL GARDEN

We've long had plans to put in some raised beds at the end of the small garden, so we can have an area where all members of the community can get involved with the planting and maintenance. As you may recall we successfully applied for funding from the National Lottery to purchase specialist tools which can be used by older people or those who have difficulty in bending down or using regular tools, for whatever reason. We've also purchased tools which can be used by children, as we want these beds to be fully accessible by everybody.



One of our volunteers, Colin Breen, offered to construct the beds for us using his considerable expertise, not to mention muscle power! He also supplied some of the wood, the rest was purchased from our funding, so we really are indebted to him. We'd also like to thank Dale Farm who have donated a dozen bags of their excellent manure, and Richard and Lyn Knowles who have given us an equivalent amount of topsoil. The next



step is to paint the beds at one of our volunteer sessions (when the weather permits), then prepare them for planting. We'll be arranging special workdays once they're ready to be planted, so we'll keep you informed about these.

WORK ON THE SLOPE – CHESHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST



Our volunteers were joined in January by a party from Cheshire Wildlife Trust, led by Fiona Megarrell who is the Community Conservation Co-ordinator at CWT. We'd asked for their assistance in removing some overgrown and diseased shrubs from the central bed on the slope in the small garden. The shrubs had outlived their useful life and the bed was very overcrowded, but as they were so old we knew it wasn't going to be an easy job to dig them out. The CWT team turned up armed with pickaxes, saws, spades and considerable muscle, and we all set to work, cutting down the branches and moving the debris off the slope before tackling the deep roots. The weather was fine first thing in the morning but by 10am light drizzle had started, which soon turned to sleet and then snow - however the volunteers carried on regardless, and didn't stop until we called a halt for lunch!

Tesco Heswall had very kindly invited us to join them for a hot lunch in their staff canteen - this offer would have been welcome anyway, but given the weather conditions it was an absolute godsend! A very big thank you to Gareth Lloyd (Tesco Manager), Lindsay (Community Champion) and Karen and Sharron who did the catering.



After lunch we returned but the weather had deteriorated even more, so the decision was made to clear up and re-arrange another date to complete the task. True to their word Cheshire Wildlife Trust returned in early March and the remainder of the roots were dug out and removed. The bed is now clear and ready for soil improvement, before being replanted. We've designed a planting plan which will be more suitable for the conditions on the bed, and will also follow our aims of providing a calm and tranquil atmosphere in the small garden, as well as attracting lots of pollinators to the bed. We're in the process of raising funds to purchase all of the plants we need, via the Co-op funding campaign (see separate article for details of this).



After

RSPB BIG GARDEN BIRDWATCH

On January 26th we took part in the RSPB big garden birdwatch.

The results have not only been sent to the RSPB - every time our group completes a survey whether it is birds, bats, or butterflies this information will also be recorded on the iRecord website for future generations to see.

We didn't see as many birds as we usually do (this is so typical of an official birdwatch), however we were able to record the following –



- 4 Blue tits (2 where examining the bird box)
- 2 Great tits
- 2 Robins
- 1 Long tailed tit
- 4 Wood pigeon
- 4 Goldfinches
- 5 Magpies
- 3 Blackbirds



We are definitely seeing an improvement in the variety and numbers of birds, this is very encouraging as it shows we are on the right track. We have also spotted a nuthatch on the feeders a tree creeper in the park and a woodpecker - just unfortunately not at the time of the birdwatch.

Latest News

FUNDING

As you are probably aware, in July of last year we were successful with our lottery funding application, this has enabled us to buy some important and much needed tools. We are now able to accommodate those with mobility issue who can use our specially adapted tools. We also have educational bug magnifying tubs to allow children to take part in nature surveys. One of main purchases from Gordale was a range of excellent equipment including spades , saws, hand trowels, shears, we would like to say a special thank you to the team at **Gordale** for their advice and support.

The next bit of exciting news is we have been accepted to be a part of the Co-op funding. Our group's picture is above the tills at the Pensby Co-op store and also in their local funeral parlour .

How does this work

Members of the Co-op are sent an email detailing the three groups picked, they then get to vote who they would like to receive the 1% of the price of Co-op branded items sold. This is where we need your help. We need our group's number to be advertised – this is 28983. If you can join us in spreading the word about the group, where we are and what we do, this will boost our funding. We're planning to use the money to purchase some much need plants to replace those we've had to remove recently, so we can plant the area not only to look great but to encourage wildlife. There is also a video on you tube too show the Gardens over the past year . Feel free to pass this link on <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUJupwIXdarY13taEPNaNpw>

Follow us on our Facebook page the friends of Hill house gardens,
Or our new twitter page @hillhousegarde1
Instagram hillhousegardens5

FoHHG AGM

The date has been set for the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Friends of Hill House Gardens; this will take place on Tuesday 7th May at Heswall Hall, and will begin at 7.30 pm. During the meeting we'll be looking back at what we've achieved over the past year, as well as presenting our plans for the year ahead. We'll also have some formal business to conduct, which will be the election or re-election of the Chair, Treasurer and Secretary, as well as the other members of the committee. This is also an opportunity to have your say about anything you would like to see in the Gardens, or what you want from the Friends group in the future. We look forward to seeing as many as you as possible on the evening.



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28983

With special thanks to local artist Tom Corlett for designing our new logo

