

Rye Community Food and Wildlife Garden

Newsletter No 13: December 2016

Dear Community Garden Supporter,

With the help of many of you, the Community Garden has continued to develop throughout 2016: having received a willow screen 'dressing' a few weeks ago, **the gazebo** is now fit for purpose. This 'private' space makes a welcome addition to the facilities that are gradually becoming a reality. The **Hugel beds**, created in February, did us proud producing a splendid 70kgs of rather magnificent pumpkins and the summer crops, grown in the **raised beds**, were plentiful enough to allow us to donate surpluses to the Rye Food Bank.



Gazebo, now complete

The magnificent pumpkin crop



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The **November 26th Work Session** saw a grand clean-up operation with Dominic, Ian and Kyriacos supervising the burning of all the waste, which seems to come from nowhere, in a 'grand hurrah' final bonfire of 2016!

The **November 29th Work Session**, the final one of the year, was an opportunity to sow over-wintering crops before the hard frosts descended. The old sunflower bed, now thoroughly dug over and freed from a rash of docks, was planted out with Superaguadulce broad beans on one side of the straw bale 'divider' and Senshyu Yellow onions on the other. In addition, Bohemian Rose garlic was planted in one of the triangular raised beds. In view of the impending super-cold forecast, each area was given some form of protection to ward off any frost damage. We'll know soon enough if this approach was successful!



L: Broad beans under their protective dried grass 'duvet'

R: onions with anti-rabbit netting



Garlic also under a 'duvet'

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2017 PROJECTS:

Of course, not willing to rest on our laurels, the Steering Committee has plans for 2017 which, with the help of our Volunteers, will come to fruition.

We successfully applied for further funding from the **Little Cheyne Wind Farm Fund** which will allow us to further expand the scope of the Garden, engage in proper crop rotation and thereby minimise any risk of crop diseases.

With this new tranche of funding, we can now:

- add a 2nd water tank and the necessary guttering on the gazebo to fill it;
- build a 2nd raised bed at the far end of the cultivation area and fill it with good quality top soil/compost;
- build a cold frame for early Spring sowings;
- 'fence' around the whole expanded area under cultivation to prevent the rabbits stripping out any crops as these emerge;
- purchase more equipment, principally to help with watering our extensive tree planting!
- purchase an incinerator to manage our garden waste more effectively.

In addition to all the above, we can also look forward to utilising the donations which the Garden continues to attract from all manner of people:

- a heavy-duty garden mower from Susan & John;
- some fencing panels and a set of garden gates from a family in Icklesham;
- a pair of small cold frames from Madeleine Eve;
- more composters;
- flowering plants for the shady glade which Nigel has been developing;
- pots and hanging baskets.

The list goes on and onin fact, we have a hard job keeping up with the flow! The pots, full of tulip bulbs, and the hanging baskets are already in place around the gazebo but we await a quote for suitable posts before installing the fencing and garden gates to fill the gaps in the boundary between the Garden and the car-parking 'field'.

Compost Toilet*: the location for this - close to the school's planned pond - has been finalised and, after a lot of consideration, so has the design. The Steering Group decided that purchasing a commercially produced compost toilet, similar to the one at the Bohemia Walled Garden in St Leonards, would be more prudent than trying to buy in all the elements and constructing it ourselves. Using the installation company will also provide us with an 'insurance policy' against any future maintenance issues.

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMME:

School Pond*: the location for this has also now been marked out in the bottom corner of the car-park field where any potential flooding can be directed into the adjacent drainage ditch.

[* on both counts, **funding is now a priority** so any offers of help in this respect will be most welcome! The contact for the pond project is Sandra Sarkies at Rye Primary School.]

On November 30th, Pip attended the **AGM of RVA** held at the Woodland Enterprise Centre at Flimwell (interesting building!). After the formalities, 5 workshop sessions explored key issues raised most frequently by the voluntary sector: funding, impact assessment, community involvement, PR and attracting volunteers. For our purposes, **community involvement** seemed the most pertinent issue and I'm glad to report that there may well be good news on the horizon! Arising out of the ESCC 'Better Together' initiative (for unified Health & Social Care programmes) two **Locality Officers** have been appointed whose job is to connect suppliers of services with clients requiring help and assistance. One of these Officers covers Bexhill and the other Rural Rother ie. us! At some point, this person will be in contact with us to see what we could offer as a 'well-being' supplier.

The **Landgate WI** are very generously donating the proceeds of their stall at the St Mary's Christmas Fair to the Garden. This follows from the presentation made by Katharine & Pip in August and a subsequent visit to the Garden by several of their Members – one of whom weighed in with scateurs and hand saw to help strip out a bed of dead willow.

**** FUNDING OPPORTUNITY****

The **Galaxy Hot Chocolate Fund** is once again open for applications for a £300 award. Five such awards are available each week for small, local community projects – 4 awarded by the Fund, but the fifth is awarded as the **People's Choice**.

Get nominating! Get yourselves and all your families/friends/contacts to go online @

www.galaxyhotchocolate.com/fund/profiles/rye-community-food-wildlife-garden

and click on the **Vote button** to help us win that £300!

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WORK SESSIONS:

1st & 3rd Tuesday afternoons (of any month), between 2-4pm

2nd & 4th Saturdays mornings (of any month), between 11am-2pm

These will start again in **March** so the scheduled sessions will be:

Tuesdays: March 7th & 21st

Saturdays, March 11th & 25th

Of course, if anyone feels like being energetic (perhaps to burn off the Christmas/New Year excesses!?) there is always something to do so feel free to get stuck in (see below for the updated Action List)

2017 Q1 ACTION LIST

- **Volunteer to lead dated (and advertised) work sessions**
- Weeding of new hedge
- On-going clearance of brambles from the willows adjacent to the new gazebo
- Erection of fencing panels down the slope from the Love Lane entrance gate
- Erection of gates at far end of new hedge
- Clearance of grass from central path prior to laying of wood chippings
- Creation of flower bed adjacent to gazebo
- Please donate any of your unneeded equipment, compost, plants etc.
- **Help publicise the garden via word of mouth and social media and grow the number of our volunteers**

For further information:

Either, e-mail to ryegarden@hotmail.com

Or, write to **Rye Community Garden c/o 14 Love Lane Rye TN31 7NE**

Or, you can go to:

Either, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/rye.communitygarden> to 'like' us

Or, <http://transitionrye.org.uk> and click on Activities

Hard hats/gloves/appropriate tools are available in the metal shed but please wear **sturdy footwear** because the ground is still very uneven; bringing a **hot/cold drink** to refresh yourself would also be sensible but there is now a **covered social space** against inclement weather!