

How we plan to further provide for the ongoing well-being of
future generations visiting Bailey Park.

Since our original application for three year funding from Abergavenny Town Council, there has been a dramatic leap forward in developing our operations within the Park.

After the felling of a large number of cypress trees along the railings running parallel to the A40, a significant area of the town end of the Park has opened itself up (the length of the path running along the Avenue, and from this pathway to the railings by the A40), and the Friends are in the process of dividing the whole area into two separate areas, one of which will be developed as a wild flower meadow, and the other, more shaded part will become a small woodland, growing native wild plants that will provide essential food early in the year for pollinators. There is also an area to the right of the Main Gates where some planting has taken place.

Since November, we have planted 3,000 snowdrops, some as bulbs, but mostly as 'in the green' as this is a more successful way of ensuring that plants will thrive and spread.

We are planning a similar planting exercise later in the season with bluebells in the green, wood anemones and wild garlic. A large sack of King Alfred (not King Edward!) daffodils, probably about three hundred, were generously provided by Monmouthshire County Council, and have been planted about three feet within the perimeter railings. Next year, we plan to plant a large number of tête-à-tête narcissus, or possibly wild daffodils, to add to the Spring colour in the woodland.

The sunnier, more open meadow area near the back gate opposite Morrison's, has already been sewn with yellow rattle to kill off any grass that would threaten the successful growth of any wild flowers. Research and help from Bee Friendly Monmouthshire has enabled one of our volunteers to confidently prepare for the months ahead, and we will use the Monmouthshire Mix of seeds that will flourish across a variety of Monmouthshire soil types. The list of seeds includes French marigolds, Field poppies, Borage, Cornflower, Ragged Robin and Foxgloves.

This has been a learning curve for us all as we find out more about these plants and how they can be introduced for optimum results. We use no chemicals and draw water from the stream.

With regard to the Well-being of Future Generations Act, the aim is for all these plants to multiply and spread over time, particularly in the woodland area, which will maintain itself and invite an increasing number of bees, butterflies, hover flies, and other insects seeking nectar. Over several decades and generations, the area should draw large numbers of people of all ages and backgrounds, and will help to provide physical and mental well-being, encourage social contact, and teach children about our global responsibility of conserving plants and insects, of nurturing our precious ecosystems, and appreciating that we need to do this together as a society, regardless of background. In a very small way, this area of biodiversity will contribute to improving positive attitudes towards climate change, to understanding the importance of throwing litter away responsibly as part of the improved nurturing culture, and to living in a fairer, greener society. We have already made contact with an organisation operating in the county known as Growing Space who help people with mental health issues, autism and mental disability. Through a range of therapeutic activities, including gardening, Growing Space groups can help to reduce loneliness, and bring individuals together to become more integrated into their communities. We are hoping to involve some of the people in the scheme, to help plant the bulbs in the Park, and in return to educate them about the importance of caring for our woodlands.

I have agreed to talk to a group of youngsters about the importance of respecting our planet, to look after our green spaces, and to understand the importance of disposal of litter into bins, or by taking it home.

We hope to work with MCC in the near future, in the planting of more trees around the Park, in appropriate locations.

We will continue to devote most of our attention to the maintenance of the flower beds, and to improving the existing amenities in the Sensory Garden.

The Sensory Garden Pathway and entry points

The path currently comprises of a sandy, gritty substance, which is only partially effective. In wet weather it is a deterrent for many of our disabled visitors, and the two entry points are too narrow, one having two steps, and no handrails. This makes it very difficult for wheelchair users, or anyone with a walking aid, and is not particularly welcoming or easy for anyone with a disability. As the Sensory Garden was initially designed for those with sight problems, it seems rather counterproductive, and we have noticed that many people in wheelchairs avoid this area, preferring to keep to the existing tarmac path which runs through the main flowerbeds.

Our intention for 2022 and possibly beyond, is to replace or improve the existing four planters, as they are in a poor condition, reorganise the existing plants contained therein, and introduce more to make this experience more exciting and meaningful for the disabled (and able-bodied) visitor. With the addition of a tarmac path for easier and more welcoming access, we are sure that more disabled people within our community and beyond would benefit from a more user friendly thoroughfare with easy access from either the main path, or the alternative entrance running from the path behind the Sunken Garden. Other wheeled items such as prams or pushchairs could gain easy access to this garden, and enjoy meetings with friends, have picnics, or just read and learn about the plants in the planters, as we intend to provide written information about herbs, and plants that provide sound, smell or interesting tactile sensations. We want this to be a more meaningful experience for everyone, so that the area can be put to more fulfilling use, and possibly deter the less desirable visitors who frequent this garden because they think they have free reign and won't be disturbed. Visitors will experience an area of developing biodiversity, with a growing number of plants, and fruit trees that attract insects, and a variety of homes and food for birds and hedgehogs. If there were to be available fundings to widen and tarmac this path, providing two easy entry points, we are confident that there would be a huge public response, and better use of this amenity. We will ensure that the Sensory Garden is well publicised, through local journals, and by word of mouth, thus encouraging groups of both able-bodied and disabled people to come and enjoy it, knowing that access is welcoming and trouble free.

Judith Vicary, Chair FOBP





11:17 Sun 20 Feb

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Done

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Sensory Garden: Poor entry and narrow pathway. Muddy in wet weather.

Well-being for future generations.

Planting of daffodils and snowdrops. Involvement of youngsters working towards Duke of Edinburgh Award- tidying up and sweeping the Avenue last Autumn.



