**E54/23: REPORT TO TOWN COUNCIL ON WORK UNDERTAKEN IN BAILEY PARK YEAR ONE OF THREE YEAR COOPERATION AGREEMENT TO 5th APRIL 2023**

It has been a very productive year for the Friends of Bailey Park, as we have become more aware of how to improve the flower beds, by planting more pollinator friendly, hardy, drought resistant perennials, developing and enhancing the Sensory Garden, and attending to some other somewhat neglected areas of the park, including the extension to the Woodland area. Sensory Garden – The four planters were replaced, curtesy of Monmouthshire County Council, so the funds that we had set aside for them have been defrayed in the purchase of a bench to replace the two picnic benches which were moved to a more public spot, in an attempt to cut down on their use for illicit drug and alcohol abuse. So far the results have been good in that there is much less littering. However, we await the summer weather to see if this improvement continues. The new bench, which will be dedicated to Margaret Searle, a long time and hard-working volunteer in the Park, who sadly passed away just before Christmas, will be sited on a widened plinth to allow for the bench to be used with wheelchairs alongside. The space where the other picnic table was situated, is currently being cultivated into a small garden with Harkness Roses, red Royal William and the white Princess of Wales, to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III. They will be surrounded in time by blue Verbena and Lobelia. All the raised beds are being replanted, the old Sensory Garden sign moved to a more appropriate location, and new signage is currently being produced to improve the public’s awareness of how different plants affect our senses. We were successful in raising sufficient funding to assure the resurfacing of the path, making it much more wheelchair friendly. In the summer we intend to encourage local residential and nursing homes to consider the park and the Sensory Garden in particular as a restful destination. Engagement of Young People – It has been difficult to achieve as much as we would have liked in this regard, but we did have groups of schoolchildren from Cantref Primary School planting narcissus round the bases of the new trees, along the path from the Bandstand to the A40 exit opposite Morrison’s . We also helped Monmouthshire Housing Association with their Christmas Childrens Fayre. This was originally planned to be held inside and near the Pavilion but because of safety concerns, it was moved to the Scout Hut. About 100 children of MHA tenants were treated to gifts from Father Christmas. We also engaged with two boys taking their D of E Bronze Award for several weeks during the Summer months, and they had experience of learning new gardening skills. We are currently investigating ways to encourage more involvement from other Primary schools, and also with King Henry pupils. Improvements to The Avenue. – this year we have planted 2,000 snowdrops, 2,000 daffodils and 2,000 bluebells. The daffodils and snowdrops have attracted a lot of positive comments from visitors to the park, many from further afield than the town.. In time we hope that Bailey Park can become a destination in its own right, for visitors to enjoy examples of increased biodiversity, pollinator friendly plants, and all year round colour and interest. Planting of the bulbs was done by both our own volunteers and with assistance from members of KEEP ABERGAVENNY TIDY. We have also developed the corner by the carpark, known as the Rockery, and the stream which is the main entrance from the Town. It is the intention to make this area bee, bird and butterfly friendly as well, with appropriately appealing plantings. Wildflower meadow – a little bit of a disappointment in 2022 because of the drought in the summer and the damage caused by the Steam Rally. We are extending the area this year and managing it by both reseeding and encouraging self -seeding. We have planted Wood Anemones, Foxgloves, Monmouth Mix Wildflower seeds. The damage problem has been resolved by amicable discussions with the Abergavenny Rotary Club, with whom we hope to work cooperatively in the future. They have recently purchased a further bench for the park.

Town Council Grant Expenditure:

£500 on a new bench plus plaque

£200 on daffodils and narcissus bulbs

£120 on perennials and shrubs

£250 on spring and summer bedding 2022

£100 on two large planters

£160 on Harkness rose bushes.

£120 on two half barrels to contain donated Box shrubs

Total £1450

Judith Vicary,

Chair, Friends of Bailey Park