



## Welcome to the (slightly belated) Spring News Letter

Needless to say the activities of Friends of Jubilee Gardens has been severely curtailed so far this year due to the Covid 19 crisis. All events in the gardens this year have of course been cancelled including the Eel Festival, Aquafest and all the summer band concerts. We have only been able to have one pre lockdown working party and none are currently planned though this may be something we could now look at as restrictions ease.



### What Has Been Happening?

Early in the year the council gardeners made a concerted effort to tidy up all of the beds and get rid of a lot of overgrowth and so by February /March the gardens looked very tidy indeed. The spring flowers in March looked beautiful and there were many admirers

On the 12<sup>th</sup> March we held the only working party so far this year. Having said that some members did come into the

gardens to do some work in an “unofficial” capacity, choosing this as their once day lockdown exercise.



Following this of course, the Corona virus took over and activity in the gardens was very limited. People could walk through but were not supposed to linger. On the upside this year has been an apparent increase in birdsong and birdlife.

The council gardeners were able to continue some maintenance tasks and in particular, have regularly mown the grass. The spring weather has been beautiful

and as the lockdown eased somewhat during May, the gardens started become a favourite place for friends to meet.

## Some Not so Good Things

Inevitably, as seems to be the norm for most public spaces the gardens have suffered some abuse in recent times. In January some of the potted olive trees at the Broad Street end of the gardens were vandalised. Fortunately the damage was done mainly to the crumbly old pots rather than the trees themselves. The council are repotting these and they'll be back soon!



As people have become fed up with lockdown and restrictions have been eased there has been a clear tendency for larger and larger groups to congregate in the gardens. Around the time RBK (the bar/restaurant by the Maltings) started selling takeaway drinks people have been drinking quite heavily in the gardens and in the riverside area in general. This has led to a very large number of visitors requiring toilet facilities and being disinclined to visit the facility in Ship Lane Car Park (which also has reopened).



This last weekend saw literally, dozens of people, male and female, relieving themselves almost anywhere in the gardens but primarily in the area abutting Missin Gate, Winfarthing Court and Ship Lane. On Monday, following numerous residents' complaints the gardens were visited by council officials including environmental health. This area of the garden which includes the Sensory Garden has now been sealed off to try and mitigate the problem. The area is going to be disinfected. Also the gate to the Maltings/Ship Lane area has been opened to allow quicker access to the toilets. Whether this helps remains to be seen. The fine weather has clearly prompted people to come to the gardens to drink. Presumably many of these would be in the pubs in normal times. Several



large groups of twenty or so people descended on the gardens bearing huge quantities of booze and paying no heed to “social distancing”.



One of the weirdest things to happen so far happened last night Tuesday/Wednesday: A small group consisting of three young adults a baby and seven dogs put up a makeshift tent. At the Broad Street end. There followed a lot of argument, loud dog barking and then some paramedics arriving at 1.30am, donning PPE, and carting off one of the campers in an ambulance! The remaining couple continued to loudly and obscenely

bicker and the dogs continued to bark..... Not a good night! It has been a very strange time.

## **Committee**

Because of Covid 19 there have been no committee meetings since February and this remains problematic.

However, some of the committee officers will reach the end of their terms by the time of the next AGM (due March 2021). These include the Chairperson and Treasurer. Anyone who is a member of the Friends can serve on the committee. Its about four meetings per year plus the AGM and not too onerous.

Any prospective nominees welcome!

Best wishes to all!

Hope to see you in Jubilee Gardens soon

John Crawford  
Chairperson FOJG

Finally, Some More Pix





