

Friends of Jubilee Gardens April 2026 Newsletter

Hello Friends,

It is a while since we gave you an update on Jubilee Gardens. Below are a number of items that have been happening in the last six months since the last progress update.

Flowering Trees

This spring we are again reminded how we have some lovely flowering trees in the gardens. Here are some photographs, do you recognise the tree species?



Eco Ely

Amanda Hall from Eco Ely met with the Friends' committee who along with the council's Open Spaces Team are supporting the creation within the gardens of some raised beds. The purpose is to demonstrate eco-friendly gardening practices and they have been granted a small area for this use. The Eco Ely organic raised bed project is for demonstrating organic food production in raised beds.

- The project aims to show how organic growing can be beautiful and practical through companion planting, mixing flowers with vegetables.
- The design includes sensory elements (herbs), visual displays (artichokes, fennels), and companion planting with nasturtiums.
- Location: behind Queens Wood (Arboretum), left side when entering from Broad Street, which is a relatively bare area with good sunlight.
- Timeline: planters built in Feb 2026 with planting in March.

Photograph: Eco Ely raised planters



Broad Street Entrance

The Broad Street entrance contains a raised planter bed which woodwork and content needs attention. A replacement raised planter bed costs are rather high, and we need help raising some funds, as well as finding a carpenter to do the work. It is hoped to dismantle and rebuild rather than completely replace it.

Photograph: raised alpine planter bed



The stone is to be cleaned and re-lettering will be carried out.

Photograph: the entrance stone:





The ten tree planters at the Broad Street entrance have trees that have probably become root-bound: some appear in very poor condition. These are going to be investigated at the end of the year (2026), they will be removed via a big machine and if required replaced. We hope the planters themselves will survive the process, though this is not guaranteed, in which case there may be opportunities for fresh sponsorship for planters and replacements for John and Susan Long's trees.

Photograph: Tree in planter at entrance

Central Lawn

The D-shaped central lawn area that often dies in the summer because of the barrier underneath has got maintenance scheduled by **March-April 2027** with spiking, aeration, over-seeding, and fertiliser treatment. This is a back-to-basics approach suggested by Helen Seal, which may never actually have been tried before here!



Photograph: bluebells in Queen's Wood

Donors Information

The Friends website has now got a page about the past donors recognising those who have contributed to the many items in the gardens. If you are a sponsor, please check your details there are correct, and use the 'contact us' link on the website to inform us of any errors or omissions. There is an initial page listing overall all the donors; shortly there will be a map with locations of donated items and lists of individual sponsored items. Please see <https://jubileegardensely.org.uk/donors.htm>. Thanks to Paul Lockyear and Simon Higginson for drawing together this information from various sources, including Spencer Clark at ECDC, as well as Everton Constantino and Russell Grief for the website work.

Gardening Volunteers

Jonathan Trustram reports on making progress on the Dry Garden restoration in which he is now leading a group of about **a dozen** volunteers. The group completed **weekly** work sessions removing weed membrane from dry garden that was planted directly on top of plants. The volunteers found thyme plants with roots spreading horizontally on membrane surface, some had died from lack of soil contact. The soil is poor but quite a few bulbs have been planted, as well as a stick edging being put up to minimise people walking over it all.

More volunteers are welcome to contact him. You may identify the volunteers in future as we hope to acquire some hi-vis tabards to wear to help raise the profile of the Friends.



Photographs: the Dry Garden re-planting



Other News

Phil Mitzman is stepping down as Chairman after a successful four years, having encouraged our committee members and rejuvenated the Friends after the COVID years. The committee is very grateful for his hard work.

Shortly there will be an email to current members inviting renewal, since it is that time of year again. The new annual personal membership rate is ten pounds.

We have an updated membership leaflet, (hopefully it is attached). Please try sharing it with people you know so that we can grow further the membership numbers and hopefully find some people to join our committee whose primary role is encouraging the council in its work on the gardens, as well as ideally finding innovative ways to raise funds for our occasional projects.

Simon Higginson

Membership Secretary

April 2026

