

# The Walled Garden

Newsletter of the Friends of Llanfrechfa Grange Walled Garden



## Autumn Watch

Welcome to the autumn issue of our quarterly newsletter on the Llanfrechfa Grange Walled Garden project.

Over the last few months, our volunteers have been busy working on some key improvements to the hard landscaping areas of the garden. The biggest of these has been laying in a new self-binding gravel surface to the interior paths across the two biggest quadrants of the garden. It was a massive undertaking but well worth the effort. New walls and steps around a number of the beds have also been built and the cottage has had a make-over.

We held a number of planning and social events for volunteers, which even included an art taster session! Coming up in December will be our Christmas fund raisers and a lunch and quiz for volunteers. Details can be found on page 7.

Read on for more news about how the garden is developing and our plans for the future. New members and volunteers are always welcome so if you would like to get involved, please contact us. Our details are on the back page.

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# Path Improvements

*The hard graft of our most recent working parties of volunteers have made huge improvements to many of the main paths around the garden*



In early September, on the hottest weekend of the year, a wonderful band of volunteers laid in the top dressing to the meandering paths in the northwest and southwest quadrants of the garden.

We had 20 tonnes of self-binding gravel, tipped earlier in the week outside the west gate, barrowed in and carefully levelled. Two layers were needed, with each being dampened with a hose and skillfully compacted with a vibrating roller. Hot and hard work indeed for everyone!

The finished paths look amazing. Their golden colour beautifully sets off the plants that flank them, and the surface is now wheelchair and buggy friendly, enabling more people to access more of the garden.

Though a garden is never finished, these paths mark a sentinel point in the Walled Garden's story.

Our thanks to Aneurin Bevan Health Boards' Charitable Funds Committee for the grant that covered the cost of buying the gravel.

Thanks are also due, yet again, to AP Waters for the loan of their vibrating roller. The biggest credit however goes to our volunteers who worked so hard before, after, and throughout the weekend. You are a truly wonderful and committed team indeed.



## AGM 2023

***The Annual General Meeting for 2022-23 was held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September.***

In the late afternoon of Tuesday 12th September 2023, the Friends of Llanfrechfa Grange Walled Garden held its Annual General Meeting in the Walled Garden. The AGM is a formal requirement of the Charity Commission for England and Wales for all registered charities, which also involves the submission of an Annual Return or financial statement for the preceding fiscal year, (April 2022 to March 2023). A copy of this and our Annual Report were provided at the meeting and are also available on our website. They will be submitted to the Charity Commission later in the year.

The meeting was open to the public and attended by the Trustees, except for the Membership secretary Bobinca Wilson, who sent her apologies. The audience numbered about 16 people, all members or volunteers. Presentations by the Chair, Jan Smith looked back on the garden's development and outlined plans for the next year, and Chris Parsons, Treasurer, presented the financial accounts.



Charity Trustees for the Walled Garden who attended the AGM. L-R: Angela Fry, Jan Smith, Chris Parsons, Sundari and Jane Nehaul.

Following the meeting, light refreshments and a plant sale were provided and attendees were invited to stay and enjoy the garden.

## Plants for sale

We now sell a range of plants from our new barrow in the centre of the Walled Garden and the plant nursery area just outside the south gate.

The nursery stock has improved in quality, quantity and variety since a new and very knowledgeable volunteer (and his pet robin) have taken up residence – but *please* if you donate plants for us to sell, label them clearly with their name and flower colour; it's difficult to sell things if we don't know what they are or what colour the flower is, and we're getting short of space to be able to wait and see for a season.

We are currently selling a range of spring bulbs. These are advertised by the barrow but the stock is kept in the greenhouse to keep them dry. They are selling out fast but this is what we have left:

Anemones – Blanda Mixed/Coronia Hollandia, Alliums – Purple Sensation, Tulips – Claudia, China Pink, Elegant Lady (all lily flowered), Cyclamen Hediflorum pink, Daffodils – Silver Chimes/Tresamble, Iris Reticulata (violet/yellow), Camassia – Leichlinii Caeruleum. Prices vary but very competitive and all proceeds go to supporting the Walled Garden.

If you would like to buy any please call in at the garden and speak to one of the Trustees or volunteers. Sorry but at the moment we can only take cash (no cards).



Photo by Cathal Mac an Bheatha on Unsplash

## Planning Ahead

***Our latest planning session with volunteers was a productive and amicable event. Several things were agreed and are now being implemented.***

We held another garden planning event on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October. Anyone who's ever shared accommodation will know the challenges of keeping it tidy and ensuring essential tasks get done. We tackled the uses and abuses of the greenhouse, cold frame, polytunnel, nursery and compost heaps. (The shed was left out of discussions for several reasons!).



- Develop two more growing beds on the east side of the polytunnel but use them as brassica frame storage and painting etc. space over the winter.
- Use polytunnel ground space for tomatoes (with a permanent framework), also sweet peppers and (one only!) exotic squash in summer, with salad crops in winter. Cucumbers seem to grow better in the greenhouse, chillis seem happy everywhere.
- Purchase a 'hot bin' composter, to enable us to 'cook' small amounts of homemade compost more thoroughly to get rid of weed seeds so we can use it for sowing our seeds and top-dressing plants for sale.

It was a very productive (and amicable) day, aided by good weather. Several things were agreed and are now being implemented –

- Keep small but necessary items of potential clutter in plastic bins – pink for the greenhouse, red for the polytunnel, blue for watering kit, and green for vegetable growing.
- Rebuild the big cold frame as a permanent structure with an easier means of raising and lowering the lights.
- Acquire more small watering cans to reduce damage to both small plants and small volunteers in greenhouse/polytunnel.

We also discussed the area inside the north gate – there seemed to be general agreement that we should have simple and easy to maintain planting with some evergreens to give winter interest. We also agreed on a large noticeboard with information about the history and layout of the garden, and a waterproof space for notices.

Over the next few weeks, we will mockup something to look at the best place/size/orientation of it, as that will determine what else can go in the biggest bed.

## Our First Melons



We like to try and grow new things each year and to try out some unusual, exotic or heritage fruit and vegetables. This year was our first attempt at growing melons, which we raised in large pots in the poly-tunnel. It was only a small crop but we are pleased to have managed it nonetheless.

We harvested these during the working party sessions on the paths so lots of volunteers got to sample a slice after a lot of hard and hot work. Delicious!

## Visitor Opening Hours

The garden is open to the public every day while volunteers are working in the garden. Access is via the wrought iron gates at the north end (Grange Hospital side) and south end (Llanfrechfa Grange side).

Core opening hours are 10 a.m. to 1.30 pm, but often the garden is open either side of these times, depending on the numbers of volunteers in, which varies throughout the week.

Group visits can be accommodated by prior arrangement. Our contact details can be found on the back page.



### Garden inspires budding artists

It is good to see people finding new ways to enjoy the Walled Garden. Some of our volunteers took some time out from all the weeding and planting to take part in a small art class run by one of our talented artists on a Saturday morning. It was a little chilly but everyone seemed to enjoy it. It would be nice to do again when the warmer weather comes around.



## Supporting Us

***There are many ways to support this fantastic project. Volunteer, become an Associate Member, donate or buy plants, produce or crafts or come along to our fund-raising events.***

### Become a Volunteer

We are always delighted to welcome new volunteers. Our volunteers enjoy being part of a friendly, supportive community, nurtured by our volunteering secretary, Sundari. If you are over 18 and independent, we can always find jobs, even if you know nothing about gardening.



If you are interested in joining us, please contact Sundari at email:

[grangegardensundari@gmail.com](mailto:grangegardensundari@gmail.com)



### Become a Member

Can't volunteer but still want to support the project and follow our progress? Then please consider becoming an Associate Member. It costs just £5 per year with renewals every January. As an Associate Member you will:

- Receive our quarterly newsletters by email
- Have access to the 'Members only' section of our website providing more detailed information on the progress of the garden and learning resources.
- Get "Early bird" invitations to events at the garden, such as Open Days and workshops.
- Be supporting a worthwhile project which is proving to be so beneficial to staff, patients and their relatives and the local community.

Membership renewals are due at the end of December, so existing members will soon receive a reminder invitation from our membership Secretary Bobinca Wilson. Being a member is a great way to support the garden project and stay in touch with its development so we hope all our members will continue.

If you have any suggestions for increasing or engagement with our membership, please do get in touch. Email: [info.lgh.garden@gmail.com](mailto:info.lgh.garden@gmail.com)

### Latest Grant Awards

Our thanks to Croesyceliog and Llanyrafon Community Council, who have awarded us a grant again this year. Two of our volunteers will be attending their awards ceremony in December when we will know how much they will be contributing to providing shade in the garden.

We are delighted to have also been awarded a Keep Wales Tidy Community Orchard package, consisting of 12 fruit trees and lots of other goodies. With permission from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, we will be planting the orchard behind Grange House for all to enjoy.



Photo by Sokmeanou on Unsplash



# Garden Events

*Activities planned for the coming weeks*

## What

## When

## Where

### Diwali Celebration

A social gathering for our regular volunteers

Sun 12<sup>th</sup> November  
14:00 – 17:00 hrs

In the Walled Garden

### Christmas Wreath Making Workshops

£25 per person  
Price includes all materials, tuition and light refreshments

Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> December  
Sun 3<sup>rd</sup> December

Recreation Hall, (opposite Grange House), Llanfrechfa Grange, NP44 8YN

SOLD OUT



Sat 9<sup>th</sup> December  
Sun 10<sup>th</sup> December

10:00 -12:00 or 13:30 - 15:30



### Christmas Craft Fayre

Pop up stall selling a range of Christmas gifts, decorations and preserves. There will also be a raffle each day  
CASH ONLY

Tue 28<sup>th</sup> November  
Sun 3<sup>rd</sup> December  
Tue 5<sup>th</sup> December

Outside entrance to Grange University Hospital

All 10:00 – 14:00

### Christmas Lunch & Quiz

Social gathering for our regular volunteers

Sun 17<sup>th</sup> December  
11:00 – 14:30 hrs

Recreation Hall, (opposite Grange House), Llanfrechfa Grange, NP44 8YN



# Cottage Make Over



The cottage that backs onto our little cottage garden has been getting a much-needed spruce up recently. Roof repairs were kindly undertaken by the Health Board's contractors earlier in the summer. Following this, our volunteer carpenters have replaced the bargeboards and repaired and repainted the front door and its architrave porch. It looks so much smarter now. Our thanks to all the volunteers and supporters who made this happen.

Next up will be replacement windows and eventually a refurbishment of the inside.



## Contact Us

Friends of Llanfrechfa Grange Walled Garden,  
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Website: <https://llanfrechfawalledgarden.wordpress.com/>



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