

29th Jan 2016 - Synopsis of meeting with Lesley Hinds at NEArts, 3pm

Present Mariana, Liz, Dave L, Margaret, Neiria, Gillean, Jonathan, Kirsty, Linda & John G in an advisory capacity.
Apologies Sylvia, Laura & Chad

Introductions were made around the table and discussion began with an update on the group's progress over 2015, and Friends Group draft proposal to WEL/EDI. This was put to the board for discussion in August of 2015.

Lesley asked a few questions about our proposal and when John had last had contact with WEL/EDI to discuss the agreement details of our sustainable horticulture proposal. October 2015 was the last time John contacted Mark Harris requesting an update - no response.

- We requested Lesley's help in obtaining an update and opening a discussion again with WEL/EDI.

Grant funding options to help establish a vital new access track and door could be secured with an agreement for the Friends Group to use the garden.

Green Infrastructure Fund was of interest to Lesley. It can fund large scale initiatives to improve access to the green network, help regenerate vacant and derelict land, improve cycletracks, create paths and encourage good management of habitats themselves for biodiversity. It is overseen by Scottish Natural Heritage.

Action John G to forward details of fund to Lesley for an upcoming council 'capital coalition'? meeting. A motion?

Partnership working & good communication with the council is key to us moving forward with Friends Group aims, as the council technically own the garden - there is an option to work with a different branch of the council, if the garden's ownership was transferred from WEL to the Parks Department in the future, as they are supportive of our ideas.

(Friends Group representatives met previously with members of the Parks department at the Friends Group forum held at the city chambers, and at a walled garden site visit in Nov 2014. We discussed the cycletrack condition, and improvements to the 'adopted core path' running alongside the Western boundary wall of the listed garden. Wheelchair accessible offshoot track to the walled garden, new door through the steel shuttering, which is not listed)

Toward the end of the meeting with Lesley we were able to highlight the network of interested & supportive organisations developing through our awareness raising efforts, and particularly the historic research undertaken in the last year.

Historic Environment Scotland are keen to continue working with the Friends Group the field archaeology work and training through Scotland's Urban Past.

We explained that our very recent finds about the ancient monument status was being processed by HES. This could have implications for any future planning applications to build housing in the historic walled garden.

We thanked Lesley for taking the time to meet with us and her for the offer of help.

Kirsty