



FRIENDS OF VICTORIA GARDENS

Newsletter July 2016

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Dear Member,

This Newsletter is a month later than usual as the editor has been away looking at trees, parks and gardens in Canada. If any of you have been to the Butchart Gardens on Vancouver Island you will appreciate the tourist attraction a well maintained and colourful garden can achieve. The Garden is one of Canada's most popular tourist places attracting around 1 million visitors a year.

Visit: <http://www.butchartgardens.com/gardens>

We are now midway through winter and June has been wet and cold, and July even colder with snow falling down to 500m across Victoria on 13th July. The days are getting longer and already Jonquills, Daphne, Clivia are flowering and Japanese Sacred Bamboo, *Nandina domestica* is covered in bright red berries.

Gardens Inspection:

An inspection of the Gardens was held on Wednesday 11 May with Dominic Mazza, Steve Watt Andrew Mulholland & Glen Anderson from the City of Stonnington and Vihra Migios, Denise Saville, Peter & Jenny Legge, Nobby Seymour, May Davies, Amy Lee & John Hawker from the Friends of Victoria Gardens. This was a follow up to last year's successful meeting between the Friends and Stonnington Council.

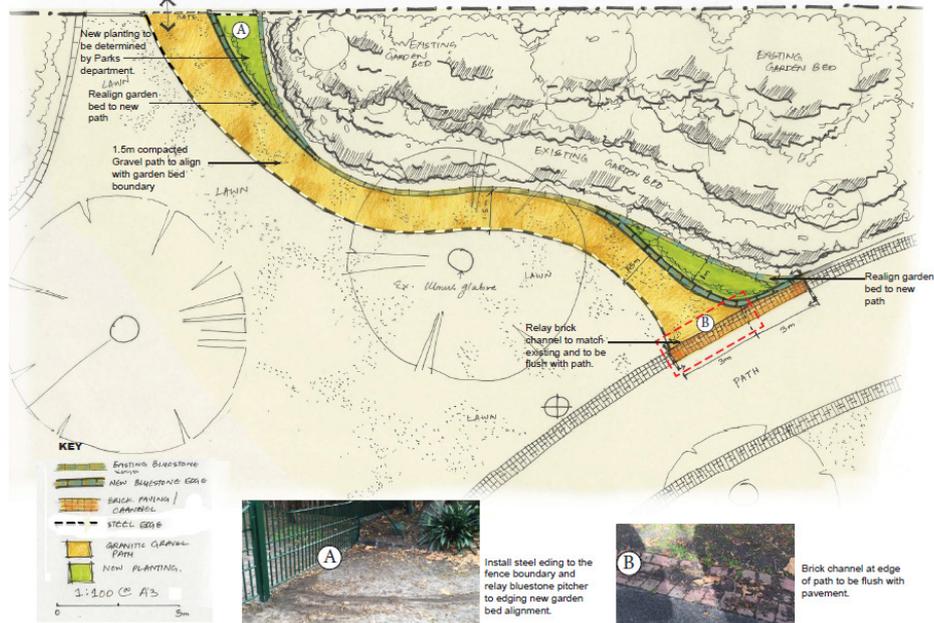
There was discussion on the need to continue weed and woody weed removals, prune back overgrown shrubs, remove dying trees, mulch garden beds, top-dress and control weeds in lawns and plant more colourful plants. Already the overgrown *Buddleja madagascariensis* in the south west corner has been coppiced and several woody woods, including coprosma, privet and celtis have been removed. The toilet has been painted and the asphalt path repaired. The remaining ivy and Jasmine on the Depot fence and the Paulownia suckers will be removed. The numerous *Plectranthus ecklonii* have been cut back and will make a bright display of blue flowers in summer.

Concern was expressed about the compacted soil and loss of turf around the seats surrounding the sunken oval. This has been a problem for a long time but has become worse in recent years. The absence of lawn is due to several reasons including dogs digging around the seat slabs, wear and tear from heavy use, the steep slope, shade, tree competition and low moisture in summer. It was agreed to trial a turf re-establishment project around the 2 seats at the northern end (near the Winged Victory statue). Another project is to establish a path to the Lumley Playground to control the extent of compacted soil and a establish lawn beneath the Golden Elm.

The future upgrade of the Lumley Playground was discussed including the to installation of new equipment and improvements to existing equipment. Council is conducting an audit report for capital upgrades into playgrounds to determine future needs across the City. The alignment of two short sections of the timber surround has been altered to improve access. The Box Elder will be pruned and a new tree planted on the north side. Flat weeds in the lawn will be controlled and the south lawn levelled and re-sown.

The issue of uncontrolled dogs was raised. It is very clear with signs at both the Murray Road and High Street entrances that dogs off leash are only allowed on the sunken oval. Council's Animal Management unit will increase surveillance, especially between 4 to 6pm. The Friends were informed that new 120L bin and enclosures will be installed to replace to existing 55L rubbish bins that don't meet occupational health and safety requirements.

Proposed new footpath to Lumley Playground:



Interpretation Sign:

During the inspection the Friends discussed with Council a proposed Interpretative Sign for Victoria Gardens. The sign would be similar to signs in Malvern Gardens and Central Park, and include a brief history, historic image, main features, garden plan and regulations. The sign is about 2m x 1m and 1.2m above ground level. The cost is in the vicinity of \$12,000 and the Friends are considering a funding contribution towards this project.



Annual General Meeting:

On Tuesday 5 July the Friends held their Annual General Meeting. The committee for 2016-17 are; Vihra Migios (President), Denise Saville (Secretary), Jill Hawker (Treasurer) and Newsletter Editor John Hawker. If you have any suggestions or actions the Friends should be attending to please let us know. Forward to info.fovg@gmail.com

Spring into Gardening:

Spring into Gardening will be on Sunday 9 October 2016. If you have any suggestions for the Friends to undertake during this community event can you please let Vihra know. We are looking for ideas and help. We are keen to improve our profile and relevance within the community.