

Carlisle Park Long-term Planting Strategy.

Notes from walkabout on 21.01.15 in black.

Friends' response to this in blue.

Comments from Parks staff (Des Smith, Jane Crowther and Yvonne Kelleher) in red.

2016 update in green

2017 update in italics

Introduction

The aim of the Planting Strategy is to provide the Friends of Carlisle Park with a long term, coherent approach to soft landscaping, which will increase the horticultural and biodiversity value of the Park over the years and provide future and tangible opportunities for fund raising. It is being prepared in an economic climate of increasing budget cuts and reduced resources, and the Friends understand that the council does not currently have the funds to carry out the majority of the proposals.

Areas with 'potential' have been identified for re-planting over a 20 year period and the aim is to provide sustainable, colourful, wildlife friendly planting with year-round interest. Sustainable planting needs to be relatively low in resources to plant and maintain, and this relies on selecting the right plant for the right situation, carrying out good ground preparation, purchasing good quality plants and planting at the right time of year. The plants selected also have to be sufficiently robust to withstand the fluctuations that climate change will inevitably bring.

Individual Areas

1. Veolia's old dumping ground and the junior play area

The long term plan is to relocate the playground. This would allow the two areas to be joined to create a substantially larger new space in the future. Both areas are therefore excluded from this planting strategy.

Friends' response: Everyone agreed that it was a good idea to reunite the 2 playgrounds and use this area as a new space in the future. Suggestion by the committee – to look at having wildlife garden with a pond for future development

2. Wildflower Turf Mats by tennis courts

The mats were laid in autumn 2014. They established well and will be monitored in 2015. A small amount of bulbs were planted under the mats in the autumn, and if successful, they could be added to in future years (when the photo degradable mesh in the mats has degraded). Suitable small, early bulbs would include Eranthis hyemalis (Winter Aconite), Galanthus nivalis (Snowdrop), Crocus tommassinianus (species Crocus), Narcissus Tete a Tete (dwarf Daffodil), Muscari armeniacum (Grape Hyacinth) or Scilla sibirica.

Friends: All going well with the Wildlife Turf Mats by tennis courts. Aconites have started to come through.

2016: The meadow has had a good first year. It had to be fenced to prevent trampling by people and dogs, in spite of "keep off" notices. Protecting new planting is an ongoing issue.

2017: This wildflower area is now well established and we look forward to the time the temporary fencing can be removed.

3. Bed surrounding the Pavilion

This faces due south, so is an ideal place for low-growing Mediterranean shrub planting. This type of planting is attractive, low maintenance and drought tolerant. The plants are predominantly evergreen and the foliage and/or flowers are often scented. The flowers are also a good source of nectar/pollen for insects.

Suitable plants would include: Lavender, Rosemary, Cistus, Santolina and Sage, with perhaps lower growing Hyssop, Marjoram and Thyme towards the front. Alternatively, a massed planting of 2-3 different coloured Cistus species would look very good, but would provide less value to wildlife.

There's an untrained/unpruned Yew shrub growing on the western corner, which, if left uncut, will reach small tree proportions in a few years. It's likely the Yew was planted as a small shrub along with the other conifers in this bed several years ago and wasn't intended to become a tree.

A Yew tree is neither going to enhance the Pavilion, nor will it improve the conditions nearby for planting, so it could be 'topiarized' by cutting it back into a geometric pyramid/cube. Yew can take very hard pruning so it wouldn't harm the shrub and it could look quite good. Alternatively it could be removed before it gets any larger.

Friends: Paragraph 2 – everyone agreed with the suggestion of creating topiary with the Yew tree in front of the pavilion. Portia had said she would be happy to do the cut back in this area. Everyone was very much in favour on the mixed planting scheme. Biodiversity committee member on FoCP also commented that this would encourage wildlife.

Parks: In agreement with the planting proposals and cutting back the Yew

2016: Following a successful bid to RUT Civic Pride Fund, the yew and existing planting was removed, and the area was replanted with mixed Mediterranean plants in November 2015. See appendix for plant list.

2017: *The planting, which had to be protected by temporary fencing, has now established itself well. The planting is attractive and provides a range of colour and interest over a much longer period than the planting it replaced. We look forward to the removal of the protective fencing.*

4. Birch Grove

A small grove of native Silver Birches would provide year round interest, standing out well against the darker background of the boundary planting. Jane Crowther has confirmed 7 trees would be appropriate at approximately 5m spacing. The Friends are considering applying for funding for this to be planted in 2016.

NB. On the day of our visit, boundary lines for a new sports pitch had been painted. It had not been there at our previous visit so we're checking if it's temporary or permanent as it would affect the location and number of new Birches.

Friends: EH to ensure that Portia takes forward the matter of the football pitches location.

Are we still looking at planting the birch grove in Autumn 2015?

Keep in touch with Colin & Jane Crowther regarding funding for the birch grove

JQ also in the process of filling out an application for funding through Civic Pride.

Also need to factor in the cost of the crocus bulbs & planting to go under the birch trees.

Parks: Des will visit and confirm status of the sports pitch. He also confirmed the cricket nets are staying. Hopefully the Birches can still be planted around both but we will review when we have a definitive answer from Des. Jane is still chasing G&T for a response about part funding the Birches, but if funding can be found, she confirmed they can be planted this autumn/winter. 12-14cm girth trees proposed and each tree would have a 1m – 1.5m diameter of bark mulch. We will also confirm number of Crocus bulbs when we know the m2 area the Birches will cover.

2016: Gristwood and Toms agreed to fund the buying, planting and 2 years maintenance of 7 silver birch trees (*Betula pendula* from Barcham's Nursery). The remainder has been paid for by our successful bid to the Civic Pride Fund. 3000 *Crocus tommasinianus* bulbs were planted during November 2015, and the trees planted in April 2016.

The birch grove is not in the exact location envisaged by the Friends, who acknowledge that the Parks Dept. have the final say in all planting and development matters.

2017: *The area within the birch grove will be managed as long grass.*

5. Main bed between Pavilion and Carlisle Road entrance

This is a large hot, sunny, south facing border. Currently a mixed planting of trees and shrubs with a large clump of Pampas grass. Total area approx 550m². The border originally had 4 Purple Plum trees, of which only 2 remain. 2 other trees- *Sorbus aucuparia* "Golden Wonder" - have been added fairly recently, of which one has died and Jane is talking to G&T about a replacement.

Although there is very little unity or cohesion to the planting, this was not thought to be a priority area because it is well stocked with plants that are growing adequately and flowering, but, as and when a

number of plants do need replacing a design intention or theme for the planting should be agreed. We discussed reinstating more Purple Plums to provide an early spring feature and early nectar and pollen. The Purple Plums could be a starting point for a purple and silver foliage themed planting scheme. Purple and silver foliage shows up particularly well in full sun and would associate well with pink, purple, blue and white flowering shrubs/perennials/ground cover.

In terms of habitat, the shrubs in this bed currently provide good structural diversity for birds, with nesting, roosting and perching opportunities. Therefore if a new scheme called for substantial shrub removal, it might need to be implemented over more than one season.

Friends: Agree with the main thrust of this section, especially replacement of Purple Plum.

If they are going to replace the Sorbus, can they do so with a Purple Plum?

Parks: In agreement with the planting proposals. Jane has been chasing G&T about a replacement for the Sorbus and whether the replacement can be a Purple Plum but has not yet had a definitive response.

2016: We still hope the dead Sorbus will be replaced by a purple plum.

2017: We have the purple plum, so now 3. The shrubs in this border were severely cut back this spring, leaving quite large gaps. However, what seemed, at the time, to be very substantial pruning has resulted in vigorous regrowth and much better shaped shrubs. We hope that where gaps need to be plugged any new shrubs will be chosen in accordance with the colour scheme suggested above.

6. Carlisle Road entrance

This is messy and overcluttered in parts and bare in others. Part of the fence along Scotts Drive is screened by vegetation and part of it is clear, so as part of a long term strategy, the Friends are to decide firstly, whether they would like to retain views into the Park or not (this will need to be agreed with RuT). If it is decided to have a planted screen, then the height of any new planting needs to be agreed and plants selected that will not grow taller than desired. This will avoid large shrubs being planted erroneously and having to be regularly cut back because they're outgrowing their location.

If planting is requested along the fence line but shrubs are thought to be too dense, an alternative would be a 2-3m strip of meadow along the boundary, which would be cut once a year. The meadow could be either native or a mix of native and non native species.

Inside the entrance, there is a large sprawling groundcover Juniper as well as a group of conifers which are not contributing aesthetically to the scene. They should be considered in conjunction with the above boundary planting.

In addition to the conifers, there are 2 well proportioned and established trees (Acer cappadocicum?) by the entrance and a new Hornbeam. Jane thought there was possibly room for one more tree with fastigate or upright form if the conifers were removed. Further discussion required about the whole entrance area.

Friends: Agree with this – Portia has in hand.

Screen could be whips along the fence – but this would need to be managed.

Or possibly an alternative – a row of hybrid witch hazel.

This section requires further dialogue.

Parks: We need to maintain 'splayed' sightlines around the entrance for H&S (kids and dogs running out into the road). This area does need more discussion, but it isn't an urgent issue and we didn't expect to solve it in a couple of weeks. Suggest the Friends talk to residents and park users over the summer and revert back to Yvonne towards the end of 2015.

2017: The grass here is to be kept short. Following a discussion with the Parks Officer we shall be consulting the Friends group and the wider community over the idea that the unsightly clump of conifers should be removed, and the area turfed over. The aim of this would be to provide a better vista into the park from the Carlisle Road entrance. We hope that, if and when, the conifers are removed bulbs can be planted at the same time - species to be decided, perhaps dwarf daffodils, as there is a large area of multicoloured crocus nearby.

7. Circular Rose Bed with mown grass edge

This planting is only 4 years old, but as and when the Roses reach the end of their lifespan, the Friends would like to replace them with perennials in the style of the Hampton Wick roundabout. This would provide flowers from early May through to November, although dried seed heads would remain attractive into January and also provide a winter food source to insects. Spring bulbs could also be planted to extend the season further. Ideally the mown grass edge would be replaced by 4 rows of 100 x 100mm granite setts and the planting area extended to the edge of the sets.

Friends: Good idea – all agreed.

Parks: In agreement with the planting proposals and hard edge of setts or similar

8. Southern corner

Vegetation has recently been cut back here which will increase the light levels, and a small Loggery has been created. There is some Ivy ground cover but, otherwise, much of the ground is newly bare. Suggest we monitor what emerges in 2015 to take advantage of the higher light levels.

The long term suggested for this area was for a 'pretty woodland scene'. Ornamental shrubs could ultimately be replaced with native Hazel (to be coppiced on a 4-5 year rotation) with a flowering understorey. The understorey could be sown or planted, or a mixture of both, depending what conditions are like when this area is developed.

NB. There is a leggy Privet shrub which has been newly exposed by the vegetation removal. This would benefit from having its height reduced to encourage regeneration from lower down.

Friends: Maybe introduce a hazel copse?

Good idea – all agreed.

Parks: In agreement with the planting proposals

2016: In 2014 a loggery was created here. The surrounding soil is rather bare. (Emerging insects will need something to feed on) Since the hazel copse is not imminent, we need to consider some native flowering plants to surround the loggery.

2017 This corner is still under discussion. The area is filling in with existing plants growing and filling the gaps, especially philadelphus and brambles. The standing trunk of the dead cherry tree provides valuable habitat for insects, and is something to be treasured and protected. But there is space for a new tree right in the corner, and the suggestion is a hawthorn. In order to discourage any anti-social use of this area the aim will be to extend the loggery to create a visual barrier, and create sight-lines into the area behind. The immediate area around the loggery is still in need of thicker planting to provide damp cover for the logs, and shelter for emerging insects/beetles. We shall discuss future possibilities for this area at the 2017 AGM

9. Entrance borders at Wensleydale Road

There are two long borders at the entrance from Wensleydale Road. One of them has very recently been cleared in order to try and control the spread of a vigorous, dwarf Bamboo (*Sasa veitchii*). An annual cornfield seed mix will be sown in spring to flower for a couple of months in the summer. This will allow us to see where the Bamboo is and control it as it grows back in 2015. The aim is to completely re-plant this bed with a mixture of shrubs and flowering ground cover when we have eradicated the Bamboo – hopefully this can take place in autumn 2015. Further discussion needed between PB and the Friends about shrub species and size at planting before a planting plan can be drawn up.

The bed on the opposite side of the path is currently planted with a mixture of amenity shrubs. As part of a long term plan, this would eventually also be replanted to approximately match the opposite side.

Friends: A lot of work has been done in this area, however still several trees with a lot of bamboo at their base – will these be removed?

Long-term aim – in line with the Park's Department suggestion there would be more discussion about planting scheme. PD to raise matter of entrance signage.

Parks: In agreement with the planting proposals. Re the Bamboo, herbicide is taken up by the green parts of a plant (most usually the leaves) so we need sufficient top growth on the Bamboo for the herbicide to be effective. It has already had 1 or 2 sprays in 2014 but we will largely leave the Bamboo to re-grow in the bed during spring and early summer so that we can give it another spray mid and end summer if necessary, prior to planting autumn 2015. However, we do not want to re-plant until the Bamboo has been controlled, so the planting date is still provisional. Further vegetation has been removed since the Friends comments, and Jatinda's garden has also been cleared in the last day or two, so we will review the Bamboo shortly.

2016: Annual flower seeds were sown to give a temporary display during summer 2015. The result was stunning, and extremely popular with park users. The permanent shrub planting was installed in autumn 2015. It had to be protected from vehicles by the installation of permanent wooden bollards. See appendix for shrub list.

10. Boundaries

There are a few gaps in the boundary planting where new structural shrubs and understorey planting could be established. PB suggested a further visit to discuss this in spring/summer, when the adjacent trees are in leaf.

Jane Crowther has confirmed that removal of the boundary conifers will be looked at in the next few years.

Friends: Further discussion to be had.

Parks: Portia to visit spring or summer to look at gaps

2016: We still need to address this.

2017: *The conifers on each side of the Wensleydale Gardens entrance to the park have now grown so large that they make the entrance intimidating, are impinging on the limes trees between which they were planted. We have also had requests from some of the residents of Wensleydale gardens about the impact of these trees on light into their homes. Jane Crowther plans to consult further on this and if there is agreement about further action, then the Friends would consult formally with the residents affected. The Friends have been offered another suggestion which is that the conifers could be managed as a hedge and be cut to roughly the same height as the viburnum. Further discussion and consultation will be needed. Work could only be done on the conifers outside of the nesting season.*

Western boundary: we plan to fill the gaps with a mixed hedge of natives which could be managed as a hedge no higher than present viburnums. Suitable species: hawthorn, elder, crab apple, hazel, guelder rose. This would help maintain the tree line for bats without the need to plant more trees on the green, and food and shelter for many species, including insects and birds. We would underplant along here with English bluebells.

We plan a new tree in the gap adjacent to Scotts Drive, but unfortunately there is now honey fungus in this area. This severely limits our choice of tree.

11. Trees

Jane Crowther is arranging for 2 x *Acer platanoides* (Norway Maple) to be planted this year.

She is also talking to G&T about a replacement tree for the Sorbus in the bed between the Pavilion and Carlisle Road entrance and will advise when this will be planted.

As part of the planting strategy, Jane Crowther will look at the overall species mix and age of trees within the Park to identify future planting opportunities.

Friends: Preference was to replace the Sorbus with the Purple Plum

Birch Grove – happy to progress if there is funding.

Parks: The Norway Maples have been planted. Jane continues to chase G&T about the replacement for the Sorbus as well as the Birch grove. She will review the species mix/age of trees within the park over the next 3-4 months.

2016: Part of our strategy has always been to protect and enhance the park for wildlife. During the bat walks, we realised the importance of filling in tree lines, since continuous tree lines are used by bats for navigation, and as dark corridors for foraging. The Friends wish to fill the gap in the lime trees that is between the Wensleydale Gardens entrance and Denmead (now Hampton Prep). As noted above, the birch grove will not now fulfil that function, so we would like to plant an additional one or two trees in that space. This has been agreed verbally with Jane Crowther, and we hope to achieve this during the 2016/17 planting season.

We still haven't received the full tree survey, but the pie chart in the appendix indicates that the park is over reliant on *Tilia* (lime) species, which could prove devastating if a future disease were to attack lime trees. Jane has explained that we need to diversify at *family* level, and suggests we need trees of the *rosaceae* family. The committee are in favour of a wild service tree (*Sorbus terminals*) and/or a wild cherry (*Prunus avium*).

2017: 3 wild service trees were planted in May 2017. Also, a hawthorn at the southern end of the western boundary, and a wild cherry to replace the long-dead tree behind the bowling club. The purple plum was planted in spring 2016.

There is still scope for another tree to fill the gap in the tree-line near Wensleydale Gardens gate. See also item 10 "boundaries" update.

12. Long grass.

In 2015 Parks Dept. agreed to leave some areas of long grass un-cut until September each year. As well as areas surrounding the daffodil bulbs, a new crescent of grass near the car park will be allowed to grow long. It will be interesting to see what wild flowers establish themselves in these patches.

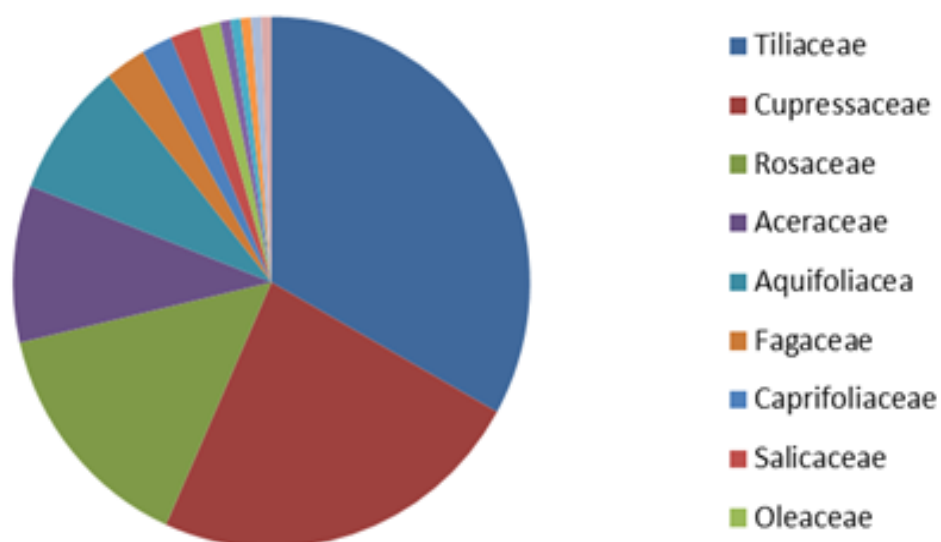
2017: Following objections by some park-users to the amount of long grass, the areas to be left long until September each year are now: 1) behind toddlers' recreation ground 2) birch grove 3) all bulbed areas under the lime trees on the green 4) loggery area. For map, see appendix 3. There have been communication problems regarding the mowing regime, hence our vision has not been fully realised this year. FoCP have been working hard to resolve this and we look forward to the successful implementation of the agreed plan in the 2018 season.

8th February 2015

4th March 2015 (Parks comments)

2016 update in green

Carlisle Park tree family



Appendix 2: Shrub list for Wensleydale Road entrance border

Structural shrubs for the back of the bed

These shrubs will be planted in groups of 3 – 5. The evergreen shrubs will be spaced approximately 1m apart and the deciduous 1.5m apart but will grow together in time

Choisya ternata

Osmanthus x burkwoodii

Euonymus europaeus Red Cascade

Kolkwitzia amabilis Pink Cloud

Feature plants

These will be planted in groups of 4-7. *Magnolia* and *Hyd. Annabelle* will be spaced at 1.5m. *Hyd Ryan Gainey* would be spaced at 1m

Magnolia stellata (grown as a multistem)

Magnolia Susan (grown as a multistem)

Hydrangea arborescens Annabelle or *Hydrangea arborescens Ryan Gainey* **

Small - Medium height shrubs (1.2 – 1.5m high)

These will fill in the gaps between the larger shrubs so may occur in larger groupings.

Philadelphus Belle Etoile

Spring flowering *Viburnum* such as *V. carlesii* or *V. carlcephalum*

Deutzia Mont Rose

Hypericum Hidcote

Smaller shrubs for the front of the bed

These will thread around the small-medium shrubs and act as the front row of the bed. Shrubs will be planted at approximately 4 per m².

Daphne odora Aureomarginata

Ceratostigma willmottianum

Viburnum davidii

Philadelphus Manteau d'Hermine

Sarcococca ruscifolia chinensis Dragon's Gate

Mahonia aquifolium Apollo

** *Hydrangea arborescens* cultivars come from America and are much more drought tolerant than the Asian Mophead or Lacecap varieties

Appendix 3: long grass map

