

Background

Proffitts have been working alongside Tottington and Bury West Rotary Club and Bury Council officers for several years, looking at the proposals to upgrade and improve access and improve Whitehead Gardens to better benefit the local community.

The aim of the project is to open up areas within the site; introduce colour to the site with new planting and create a new larger stage area to better accommodate local events and activities, such as those which used to take place, now known as Tottington's Big Day Out. The site will once again become the focal point for community activity, whilst respecting the heritage of the Gardens.

Community Consultation

A consultation was carried out between November 2019 and July 2020 by the Rotary Club, focussing on the community, schools and parishioners in the Village and surrounding areas. A series of questions were asked to determine how the site is used at present and how it could be used if access and facilities were improved.

There was a great response to the consultation – 128 people directly responded to the online consultation with additional more detailed feedback coming from within the Rotary and others in the Village.

Reponses included a focus on tree pruning/felling and introducing more colour to the garden through planting; creating a new, permanent 'stage' (bandstand) area, resurfacing paths; restoration of the memorial; improving the site for wildlife and installation of additional seats and signage.

Consultants

In order to fully understand the site, arboriculturists from Christians Environmental Ltd were engaged to assess the trees within the gardens and to feed back on the suggestions from the Rotary. The outcome of this survey (which highlighted the poor condition of the majority of the trees) has shaped the proposals which are being put forward in this application. See also 'Works and Replacement Planting December 2022' – the two tabs in this document include both the report from Christians and the replacement planting proposals.

Summary

The project has been shaped by the views of the key stakeholders as well as being informed by the general public and through the aim of respecting the heritage of the site and wider Conservation Area.

The proposals being put forward in this application have been shaped directly by the feedback we have received.

Overleaf is the results of the questionnaire which was distributed along with comments from discussions and local meetings about Whitehead Gardens:

Further information from consultation within the community:

Letters of support have been received from:

- Mike Bent – Bury MBC
- James Daly MP
- Bury Voluntary Community and Faith Alliance
- Councillor Yvonne Wright
- Councillor Iain Gartside
- The Reverend Hugh W Bearn – Vicar of Tottington (St. Anne's)

The key issue regarding Whitehead Gardens is the excessive tree cover. The children of Tottington Primary School and others have focused on this as a real concern as areas of the gardens are in deep and unwelcoming shadow when the trees are in leaf and the northern end of the garden is a particular issue. The tree cover also may prevent the planting out of other species due to blockage of light and drying out of the ground we believe.

A look at Google Earth taken in the summer months reveals the problem.

Parking i.e. additional disabled parking bays need to be considered if possible in addition to the bays in the car park at the south end adjacent to Carmelo Restaurant. We gather that Highways Dept. may have looked into the suggestion of parking bays on Chapel St. but this appears not to be an option. Worth checking out though to establish this.

Would facility for a small parking area in the gardens for disabled vehicles be practical option?

The bandstand is a focal point of the gardens and is built on the foundations of a tennis pavilion we believe. Restoration / development of the bandstand or a complete rebuild is sorely needed so that It can be put back into safe use by the community for a range of events and made into an attractive feature. The attached memorial stone needs refurbishment.

The whole area of Whitehead Gardens looks dismal and dark and we need to find a way to inject some interest, texture and colour into it. It is hardly used by the community and we want to make it into an attractive feature of the village which people will want to use and visit.

The “memorial” nature of the gardens must be preserved.

Some ideas for the development of Whitehead Gardens discussed at the last Steering Group meeting (not in priority order) as follows:

- rebuilding of the band-stand – possible Victorian style;
- permanent arena style seating
- tree felling and pruning based on management plan as needed;
- resurfacing of paths;
- restoration of the memorial stone;
- developing the area around the stream and the bridge - modelling an embankment with terracing;
- possible general memorial listing previous mayors of Tottington;
- information board re. the Whiteheads and events of WWII;
- information boards showing the heritage trail route;
- wildflower/butterfly garden;
- rose garden;
- remodelling the steps – access via a ramp;
- thoughts about how to welcome young families into the area;
- additional benches.
- Alan Barton Memorial Garden needs development.

Findings from the children of TPS when they surveyed the gardens in 2017/2018 were as follows:

- No point being made of why it's there;
- Lack of disabled access or signage (signage now in place);
- No flower beds;
- Very dark and overgrown;
- Not inviting or particularly attractive local feature which people would want to use;
- Memorial and surrounding bandstand in very poor condition;
- Nothing in the gardens for children;
- Pathway obliterated by dead foliage (now cleared);
- Poor condition of boundary wall (now repaired);
- No one uses it.
- This was at the beginning of the project and Tottington Primary School are currently involved in developing the Heritage Trail, which has been delayed by the pandemic. They hope to make a start during summer 2021.

Share your ideas of what you would like to see at Whitehead Gardens

01-Nov-2019 - 03-Jul-2020

Ideas		Votes	Visitors
Title	Description	Votes	
Plants for pollinators	Flowering plants to attract bees and butterflies, maybe a small patch of wildflower meadow.	29	17
Bandstand	I would like to see renovation of the bandstand and some fixed seating so that bands, choirs and other outdoor performances could be showcased throughout the year	25	57
My grandma's auntie and uncle died in the bombing so I think it's important that the stone with the victims names on is preserved.		25	10
Information board	As part of the refurbishment it would be beneficial to have an information board relating to the history of the gardens so the public understand it's relevance. There are names of the people affected on a stone located near the band stand.	23	48
Wildlife	I would like to see more wildlife in the area, I think this could be done with hanging bird boxes, bird feeders, flowers and protected pond areas	22	32
Enable and encourage local community groups to use the gardens for open air functions as many groups have no outdoor spaces.		22	11
Pathways reinstated by new tarmac; weeding out along the stream and cleaned out; trees pruned; more waste bins; memorial stone cleaned.	CLEAN UP	20	6
Bandstand	As Musical Director of Tottington Public Band, I know I speak for all of our members when I say that we would love to be able to play on the bandstand again, if it could be made safe to do so again. and we would appreciate some form of	20	37
Learning about the heritage of the area is key - linking to the schools - they would get so much out of it and respect the area being involv		19	7
Have some areas with habitat piles for wildlife. Have information boards about minibeasts, bats, birds and so on.		18	6
Some kind of shelter for the bandstand, a traditional circular structure with roof maybe.		15	8
More indigenous trees spaced appropriately	More trees for wildlife and planet	14	14

Garden for reflection. Perfect location for peaceful reflection, esp as close to local churches. Appropriate too in view of 1944 event.	Garden of Reflection	14	3
History of Tottington	I would like to see something that would inform people about the history of the local area. Maybe there could be some information boards about the history of the gardens, the dungeon and other points of interest.	13	19
Victorian bandstand, improve paths, cut back the trees -very little light, new benches, improve stream area and renovate memorial		13	2
Snowdrop walk	An area of snowdrops to form a short walk to herald renewal. Have seen these in a few places. They are extremely popular and a wonderful sight.	12	14
Plants in wall kept Small but colourful, Alpines? Stream banks cleared, Bluebells? flower beds reinstated. Mossy, slippery, paths improved		11	2
More light - cut back trees and shrubs; create views of adjoining fields; improve the stream to become a feature; refurbish bandstand/stage.		11	6
I would like to see a board with the history of the gardens and a plaque of the men and woman that lost their lives		11	5
Flowering bushes to be planted donated by local garden centres with signs to say who had donated which plants.		10	8
Flowers / more light/ reflection area	Like the idea of an area for reflection. Also think flowers / colour would be good. More light. Maybe an area to display work / creations for local children? Nice seating areas. Room to play for children.	9	16
Adventure playground for children maybe incorporating the stream. Mor		9	9
Trees	Would some cutting back be appropriate to let more light in to increase ground cover for plants and shrubs	8	9
Orchard	Small orchard of fruit trees	8	7
Sensory gardens	These would be suitable for being inclusive to all members of our community and possibly the schools could help to plant and tend to them .	8	11

Restore bandstand to former state to allow various musical events to take place. Establish nature area around stream for educational visits.		8	4
An area of reflection for those that need it, an area developed for community events and areas to encourage birds and wildlife to stay.		7	4
sow wild flower seeds each year for colour and for the bees and butterflies.		7	0
Community Area	picnic/area to sit and relax. Community events would be great to be held here, monthly accoustic music nights with one of the local bars/resturaunts supplying food/drinks to put money back into the business in the village along with	7	10
Stream and path restoration and play area	I'd love to see the stream and paths restored and some sort of play area put back.	6	6
More flowers and cutting the trees back for a lighter environment		5	0
More flowers to add colour to the gardens		5	0
Wall along the public footpath, only looks nice daffodil season. Should the wall be a little higher and be better plants throughout the year	Historical gardens should reflect this, lives lost breath new life and future in our heritage	4	6
Alan Barton & garden areas to reflect our four seasons	What happened to Alan's memorial garden? His name plaque is still there but we need a good info board and a nicer area for his memory. I remember Alan - he was a lovely man, always happv. smilina and working hard pushing that	3	10
A board giving the history of the garden and commemorating those who lost there lives. A peaceful area with benches and wildlife.		3	2
Bandstand	As a playing member of Tottington Public Band, I would love to be able to play on the bandstand again, if it could be made safe to do so again, and we would appreciate some form of overhead covering if it were possible	3	3
As a member of Tottington Public Band we would love to make use of a restored Victorian bandstand(with covering if possible) .		3	1
Not an idea at the moment but I have a few excellent bushes which are available.	Please email if of interest. Immediately available.	2	4

Restore paths and lawns, seating areas (covered), wild flower hedge rows/sensory garden, bird feeding station. Place for natural environment		2	1
Outdoor Gym Equipment (adults) and Adventure Playground (kids)	Outdoor gym equipment for adults and an adventure playground for children - like the one in Worden Park (Leyland) as in photo	2	0
Brightness and light	I spent 45mins as a new visitor and have to agree with all the suggestions about reducing the tree foliage and allowing light in. The overall green cover would benefit from areas of wild colourful flowers. The fabulous brook and it's banks could Putting the memorial plaque in a new stone base maybe more central to the gardens instead of being tucked away in the back of the area. Perhaps adjacent to it could be a couple of benches to encourage visitors to sit and	1	15
Upgrade the memorial		1	3
Pedestrianised Knowsley Road 6 foot wall by the A56, more parking.....= more people using, = more shops, cafes = more wealth = better space	,	1	3
Reduce size of hedge at back, crown lift trees at back to give vista of field behind		1	4
There is a lot of concrete in the stream	which needs removing to give a more natural look.	1	1
Repair or replace broken benches its nice to sit in this garden .		1	3
Picnic area	Picnic tables and perhaps something to engage children such as a couple of wooden type obstacles that are dotted around the perimeter of Nuttall park. Similar to the photo	1	4
Trees cutting back and also an area for families - play area/picnic area. Nature trail for children.		1	1
Some bright flowers to attract wildlife and maybe a little area for children to interact with the wildlife and the area around the park.		1	3
I would like to see some information boards about the history of the area. Be also good to have some wildlife specific developments.		1	1
A nature trail for children and maybe a garden they can tend to		1	0

Flowers, cut trees, stream tided/stepping stones. Revive bandstand/memorial plaque, seating area/kids seating. Dog free area, bird houses, trails		1	1
Refurbishment of the bandstand would be brilliant.	Refurbishment of the bandstand would be brilliant allowing live music sessions/concerts to be held regularly, attracting people to Tottington and bringing a real sense of community to the village.	1	0
A space for all - young and old alike please	- A space for all; young and old alike. A space to come together as families, friends and community groups. BUT (and suggested by a dog owner!) NO DOGS to be permitted at any time. This	1	0
Butterfly Sanctuary	My mate Carl Wood loves butterflies and I think a Sanctuary would not just benefit Carl but all butterfly lovers across the borough.	0	6
Bandstand :)	Restore the bandstand and host regular live concerts would be great! Many local bands would really appreciate the space and the community would benefit from the social aspects of coming together to watch possibly on a monthly basis.	0	2
Solar charging stations	Solar powered charging stations would be really handy for phones	0	1
I would like to see a board with the history of the gardens And maybe an adventure playing area for children		0	1
I would like there to be an upkept sensory garden with different feels, textures and smells - warty plants and local stones, woods and so on.	Sensory garden	0	1
A bandstand and security cameras	Saw a band in the gardens in 1956 and love the place, also some quiet bench areas.	0	3
Reduce tree cover, improve paths, new bandstand, restore memorial, improve stream area, more flowers, improve drainage, information boards.		0	1
Sensory beds	These could be cared for by different organisations e.g. Rotary, Church, Horticultural Soc., School. They would be popular with visitors to the gardens both young and old.	0	2
Please can you add in nest boxes(bats and barn owl)to improve wildlife spaces. Addition of a pond and wildflower meadow....		0	0
Plant a mix of crocuses. snowdrops and bluebells along both banks of the stream where it runs parallel with Chapel Street. HPH		0	2