

Gardening Committee Report

September 2025

Members: Fiona Colbeck (5), Alison Jay (17), Jane Shakespeare (12), Nadine White (15)

This year has been marked by the sad loss of Claude Perera who had been a most valued member of the Corner Green community and long standing member of the Gardening Committee. Claude had taken specific responsibility for the management of the trees on Corner Green, his knowledge of the history of the trees and their type were second to none.

In Autumn of 2024 Seasons were able to take the fallen leaves, mowing clippings and other garden waste to the newly constructed compost bins. This compost will have broken down enough in a year to use as mulch in the garden, giving back nutrients to the soil, retaining moisture and some weed prevention. We'll be able to use this mulch in Autumn 2025.

The dying Cherry tree outside no 1 was felled and also the Birch tree at the back of no 6 as it was in danger of falling onto their house. This was managed by Allan Brignal.

2025 has seen 4 heat waves with little rain during the summer. After similar drought conditions last year the trees have been under stress losing some of their leaves earlier than they should. The large Plane tree in front of Number 23 and the Amelanchier in front of No 6 being the main examples of this. Many of us have been watering the communal gardens and have kept most of the planting alive, so thank you very much for everyone's efforts, but sadly we have lost a few trees and shrubs; The Cotoneaster in front of No 4 and 5 died and was taken down, the Sumach. In front of no 15 has died and some trees in people's private gardens; the yew in No 7 and the Pine tree in the garden of no 16. The 2 Spirea shrubs that we transplanted from Nadine's front garden to the area next to the bench haven't survived but this might be because the soil is quite shallow and rocky next to the path. We have a growing awareness that future planting will need to be drought tolerant.

The front of No 1 was looking particularly wild in spring, Rose and Nik volunteered their services and cleared many of the unwanted weeds and grasses. Seasons then mulched the exposed soil. Fiona, Nic and Andrew, cleared the area of weeds in front of No, 5 and 6 and planted some Brunnera Jack Frost. These were all sanctioned by the gardening committee.

Grasses had taken over many areas, so in April we had a working party to clear the those that were drowning other planting or looking messy. We then trimmed back the remaining grasses. Thanks to all who were involved. It was a fun day with one of our youngest residents Len being very helpful clearing up the debris. Seasons then mulched the cleared areas. Len has taken an interest in gardening and has done some planting in the herb garden by the bottom car park. Well done Len!

In April new planting was planned; Euphorbia Wulfenii and Nepeta Walkers Low for outside no 1 and Hebe Blue Gem for outside no 2. Euphorbia Robbaie for the area at the car park entrance, Viburnum Opulus Sterile for the area behind the new pear tree and Brunnera, Geranium Brookside, Alchemical Mollis to fill ground cover gaps around the Green. Unfortunately Seasons didn't come back to us with a quote for these plants until the end of May and by that time we were in our second heat wave and it was decided new planting wouldn't survive the drought so we should wait until the autumn for any new planting. We have prompted David from Seasons about this planting now that it is autumn.

No mow May was not a success this year, there was very little rain in May so just a few straggly Vetch grew amongst the parched grass. It is likely we will have drought again next year so we thought not to do No Mow May next year. What do the Residents think? Shall we vote? We tried ,as an experiment , leaving the area when daffodils grow for a longer period but there has been a mixed response as to the success of this. The idea behind leaving a patch of grass throughout spring and Summer is that it provides a habitat for wildlife, beetles, bees, butterflies leaving the grass to grow for a period more than just May gives the chance for rain and therefore growth. Each successive year that you leave that patch more diversity in wildflowers grow and you then get more diversity in wildlife. However there was some feedback that this area under the Plane tree looked messy. What do the Residents think? Do we try another area or abandon the idea of leaving a patch of grass for wildlife altogether? Shall we vote?

Alan Brignal, recently removed a dead branch from the tree by no 11. He has also quoted for the significant pruning of the Cotoneasters outside number 9 and no 8 and the pruning of the plum tree behind no. 9. We await the director's approval on this quote.

David Hollicks from Seasons suggested we have a woodland wildflower garden under the tree above the steps in front of no 19 and 20. This area would need to be cleared and seeded very soon to be successful next spring.

The gardening committee welcome residents bringing their attention to any concerns/points of interest in the garden.

New committee members are always welcome