

# Pump Room Gardens

## Royal Leamington Spa

Restoration  
Proposals  
November  
2015



A partnership between Warwick District Council (WDC), Warwickshire County Council and the Friends of the Pump Room Gardens has prepared plans for a major restoration of the gardens – the first sizeable work there for a century.

The Friends are a group of volunteers formed in 2008 to campaign for the improvement of the gardens. The group's first achievement was the restoration of the eight Linden Arches, originally erected in 1875, completed in time to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

The total cost of the proposed works is estimated to be £1.1 million. The Friends will contribute 10%, WDC another 10%. The remaining cost will come from a grant of £900,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) provided a bid submitted by the partnership in August is successful. We expect to hear the outcome of this bid in January 2016.

The HLF only makes such grants for projects involving the local community and which brings tangible benefits to it. Our planned community involvement and activities are described below.

## Physical Works

The current plans propose a number of physical works:

- **Bandstand** To be dismantled, removed from site, the paint stripped, all parts restored and re-assembled on site. The work will be done by a specialist in restoring Victorian bandstands. The steps to be rebuilt, the base and undercroft to be restored to store seating and equipment for performers and to house the unsightly electric cabinets.
- **Waterlogging** Fresh drains to be installed leading to a new rain garden feature that will overflow to the Leam. Waterlogging will be alleviated by "earthquaking" twice a year. Earthquaking is a technique in which turf is vibrated and aerated below ground, improving drainage.
- **Fencing and bollards** erected to prevent indiscriminate movement of vehicles in the gardens. Fencing will be "double-hoop" Victorian style, either 750 mm (2' 6") or 1100 mm (3' 7") high. Bollards will match those in the gardens of the early 1900s.



- **Paths** To be re-laid on new foundations, with a bound gravel surface and edged in blue engineering bricks. Restricted routes for heavy events vehicles will have more robust foundations. All vehicle movements, both by exhibitors during events and by WDC contractors, will be on these routes.
- **Footpath adjacent to Dormer Place** To be replaced with material that is resilient to tree root movements.
- **Riverbank** Woody vegetation and brambles to be cleared to reveal the river; low ground cover and a flowering meadow of native species to be planted and cut annually. Diseased and self-seeded trees to be removed.
- **Steps leading to York Bridge** To be rebuilt in stone with a central handrail.
- **Wall adjacent to Parade** Will be rebuilt and set back so the Linden Arches stand proud of the wall.
- **New planting in small areas** at the entrances to PRG near Pump Rooms; opposite Pizza Express; beside steps to York Bridge; around the rain garden.
- **Seating** 31 benches in the style of those used in PRG in the early 1900s.
- **Timing** Works to start September 2016, and be completed by May 2017.
- **Maintenance** WDC is committed to maintaining the gardens for 10 years to the standard achieved by the restoration. All new and repaired gullies and drains to be regularly checked and cleaned. WDC will seek Green Flag Award status.

## Activities

- **Bandstand** to be promoted for regular use by both professional bands and start-up groups.
- **Music and dance** in PRG to reflect the variety of cultures and ethnic groups living in and around Leamington.
- **Guided walks** with a variety of themes – heritage including the influence of William Louis de Normanville; nature (birds, bats, riverbank wildlife); gardens in WW2; changing role of gardens for people of Leamington over 200 years.
- **Walking and jogging** for health – reflecting the original function of the PRG, including help for those with dementia and other mental conditions.
- **Story telling** for families with young children.

## One and two day events

- **Annual flower and vegetable show** (which ran in the PRG for about 40 years after WW2).
- **Youth events** run by Youth Forum to give young people a sense of involvement and ownership of the PRG.
- **Leamington Looks Back and Picnic in the Park** annual events.

## Informal learning for local residents and visitors

### Formal learning for schools of the district

- **I.T.** Web-based information; social media; expanded Friends' website for the Pump Room Gardens. Audio tours; YouTube clips; DVDs.
- **Printed material** historical photos, old postcards of the gardens.
- **Timeline** of history of the gardens and of restoration process.
- **History** of Pump Room Gardens to be used in curricula for local primary and secondary schools.

## Volunteers

To train and build a team of volunteers to engage with the local community and activities in the gardens, collect oral history, event management.



