

# Nightingale Park Community Garden Memorandum of Understanding

DRAFT

## Purpose

The former bowling green on Nightingale Park is being developed into an accessible community green space for park users, providing a secluded area of the wider park that allows local groups to work with council officers to develop an informal space for recreation, social and therapeutic horticulture, sustainable gardening and biodiversity.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is between Cambridge City Council (CCC) and the Queen Edith's Community Forum (QECF), and covers the use of Nightingale Community Garden, created in the former bowling green in Nightingale Park.

The MoU will:

- Help guide the activities of:
  - The Queen Edith's in Bloom Working Group (QEIBWG) of QECF;
  - Friends of Nightingale Park (FoNP);
  - The appointed volunteer Garden Co-ordinators;
  - Recruited garden volunteers;
  - Invited groups using the garden, including corporate social responsibility partners;
  - Interested park users.
- Provide written reassurance to individuals, grant-giving organisations and businesses who/that might support the project that their resources will be used for the benefit of the project and be available in the medium- to long-term, for example for at least 5 years.

## Management:

- The Nightingale Garden will remain in CCC ownership
- Decisions regarding garden design and activities will be made collaboratively by CCC and the park users via the QEIBWG and the appointed garden co-ordinator(s).

## City Council:

- There will be named points of contact within CCC, with e-mail and phone contact detail to assist with :
  - Technical advice, especially on biodiversity and events
  - Permissions for use
  - Non-horticultural Council assets: (club hut, water provision, benches)
  - Volunteers (and Time Credits)
  - Informal infrequent assistance with some gardening tasks and volunteering
- CCC will continue to:
  - Manage and maintain any trees, for safety and tree health;
  - The peripheral hedge: for annual trimming, according to a plan shared;
  - Mowing of wildlife areas, twice yearly, according to a plan shared;

- Contribute as necessary to the mowing of smaller paths in the previous bowling green area and any other small works that might require power tools or more expertise than is available in the volunteer
- Manage the mains water and electricity supply;
- Ensure the fire extinguisher in the club hut is maintained.
- There will be an annual management plan from the QEiBWG, setting out likely changes in features and activities, to be agreed with CCC.
- Smaller suggested changes will be agreed by e-mail with appropriate officers

Corporate social responsibility activities and visiting groups will be managed by, and co-ordinated with, Environmental Services in association with the Garden Co-ordinator(s).

#### Nightingale Garden:

- Day-to-day, a small group of volunteers will create and manage the space and its assets.
- For practical reasons, there will be one or more Garden Co-ordinators, agreed with CCC:
  - They will be available to support activities in the garden. They are likely to be volunteers and shouldn't be expected to be available for too many hours of the week, on every week of the year; in cold, wet, too hot or sunny conditions;
  - They will be on-site for at least some of the time when groups are present to ensure safe working and to explain to park users why the groups are present and how they can/or cannot be involved in activities;
  - They will ensure that the garden volunteers can work safely, that there is a first aid kit on site and a working mobile phone to call for any emergency assistance;
  - They will keep CCC updated by e-mail, phone or face-to-face meetings on changes, progress, and issues;
  - They will be managed by Environmental Services and once registered can receive Time Credits for their hours of volunteering.
- There will be a small QEiBWG within QECF, working closely with the FoNP.

The QECF is a constituted group with good communication channels (print, web and emails), close links with the Council and local schools, faith-based organisations, businesses and community-based groups. Its aims are broadly to make Queen Edith's a better place for people who live, work, study or visit. The QECF volunteers will:

- Recruit and support the Garden Co-ordinator(s);
- Help Environmental Services apply for funding to support the project;
- Apply for funding for activities associated with the project that will remain assets of QECF and can be stored in the garden;
- Initiate and collaborate with one-off events and help publicise them locally;
- Fund and arrange public liability and property insurance for the project (in addition to any insurance the CCC can provide) and manage day-to-day finances.

### Volunteering:

- An informal group of regular garden volunteers will be recruited from the local area and other interested people. They won't need to have existing skills but need to be committed to the aims of the project and work within boundaries set for safety and efficient activity.
- Garden volunteers will be inducted by the Garden Co-ordinators before working. They will be:
  - Shown where tools and gloves are kept and notified about the availability of toilets (including in the nearby café and pub);
  - Invited to take part in any available tasks;
  - Shown how to work for their own health and safety and that of park users;
  - Asked if their tetanus immunisation is up to date and encouraged to wear gloves as appropriate;
  - Provided with a place to wash and dry their hands;
  - Provided with a safe place to rest;
  - Encouraged to share any simple refreshments available and also to engage with park users.
- At the end of any volunteer activities, the Garden Co-ordinators will make reasonable efforts to make the garden safe and secure any tools.

### Park users:

- Might want to carry out small gardening or harvesting activities without explicit permission or supervision. This is to be expected and shouldn't be discouraged unless it seems unsafe or damaging to the garden. For example, they are likely to:
  - Continue to harvest the wild fruit (blackberries, rose hips, plums);
  - Start to harvest cultivated soft fruit and any herbs and vegetables grown;
  - Pick small quantities of flowers, which has the benefit of dead-heading for some, and collect seeds.
- Signs can be added to encourage picking or to discourage the picking of inedible things or from plants that are too young.
- Garden Co-ordinators will make reasonable efforts, advised by CCC, to not plant highly poisonous plants that might be eaten in error or that have toxic sap, and to remove plants and weeds that might be hazardous.

### Function of the garden – opening hours and access:

- The days and hours of access to the garden will be as close as possible to those of the park itself. Because the garden shares boundaries with private residences, the garden will be closed during hours of darkness.
- The gates will be secured with a CCC padlock and copies of keys provided to a small group of 'gate rota' volunteers. The rota can be managed separately, for example by the FoNP.
- Secure storage areas will be secured with keys, shared with Environmental Services and S&R, with as few additional copies as necessary for efficient use of the space.

### Property and access:

- The club hut will be secured when not in use and kept reasonably tidy and safe for use.

- Volunteers will be advised not to bring valuables on-site, if possible, because there aren't any lockers within the club hut or sheds.
- Additional storage areas (such as small sheds or covered stores, may be subject to planning permission) will be purchased or made, in proportion to the needs of the garden and its users. They, and tools, equipment and materials, can be the property of QECF or other groups. Keys to these storage areas will be made available to a small number of incoming groups that need access, such as local schools for primary science or home schoolers. A copy of the key will be kept by CCC for infrequent access. The addition of storage will be agreed in advance with CCC and also checked with the residents that over-look the garden.
- Garden volunteers can make wooden structures and furniture, as long as they are safe to use and maintained.

#### Nature pond:

- CCC will design and be responsible for the creation of the pond, associated planting and biodiversity features, and any safety measures and signage, with assistance from recruited volunteers. CCC will draw up a management plan and work with volunteers to carry it out and safely. The Garden Co-ordinators will be responsible for checking the pond and advising CCC on any issues.

#### Planting and wildlife:

- There is an expectation that existing and wild plants should be encouraged in at least some parts of the garden. There are orchids growing in some places and these can be identified and reasonable efforts made to protect and explain their growth.
- Choices can be made to select plants that are:
  - Especially good for biodiversity;
  - Attractive to people, including as blossom and cut flowers;
  - Act as sensory plants and ways to navigate around the garden;
  - Provide height or shade and places for children to hide;
  - Are culinary herbs or scented;
  - Demonstrate fruit and vegetable production in a community garden;
  - Can be harvested for garden structures or weaving;
  - Produce orchard fruit;
  - Are drought resistant or water tolerant.

#### Produce from the garden:

- Any produce that is grown can be harvested by volunteers and used within the garden or given away. It won't be exclusively for the use of the people who planted or cared for it. There is the expectation in an open-access community garden or park that park users will help themselves to at least some degree and this can be encouraged.