

ASPRA AGM – item 12

Addiscombe Recreation Ground Gardening Group

The gardening group was formed in 2016 and throughout the year small groups of gardeners spent time tidying up the flower beds near the entrance to Northampton Road. Weeds were cleared, shrubs were pruned, perennials were planted and seeds sown. It was a good start to improving the neglected beds.

Throughout the year, local residents were generous in donating plants from their garden and there was the very welcome addition of a splendid bird bath which greatly enhanced one of the beds. The group were also very fortunate in securing a significant number of plant donations from the Royal Horticultural Show at Hampton Court.

In the months leading up to Christmas, the gardeners tidied up the beds, planting bulbs, digging up pelargoniums for over-wintering and cutting back shrubs. But perhaps the most visible change was the creation of a low level fence around one of the beds. This was to deter the ongoing problem of dogs wandering amongst the flowers, knocking them over or fouling on the earth.

Another challenge during warm and dry periods was to keep the plants well watered. A water butt was installed next to the park keeper's hut but was not always enough to help young plants survive. There are ongoing attempts to gain access to a water supply from the toilet block.

The park looked glorious in the first few weeks of spring. Daffodils and hellebores in the beds and the carpet of crocuses in the grass was a delightful sight.

The group has recently benefited from an injection of funds via the Tesco Bags of Help initiative. Many thanks to all those residents who shopped at local Tesco stores and voted for our project. With this money and a generous donation from our local councillors, we will be purchasing and erecting a more permanent fence around both flower beds for greater protection. We also plan to erect some trellis and grow some climbing plants against the 'toilet block' wall.

2016 was the start, but plans for 2017 can only progress if we 'grow' the gardening group and increase the pool of volunteers.

To find out more, or to express an interest, please email secretary@theaspra.org.uk

Here are just some of the ways you could get involved:

- Join working parties for planting and weeding
- Donate seeds, bulbs and plants
- Organise refreshments for weekend working parties