

The Link: Garden Planning Session

16 May 2018

About the session

Representatives of LASC Childcare Services, the Parents and Tots group and the Community Garden Group (including children)—about 15 in total-- came together to walk around the outdoor space surrounding The Link, share ideas and make plans for how the different spaces may be improved and used.

Area	Ideas	Issues/Considerations
Immediately in front of the building	<p>Work will commence on the Council play park within the next month. The fence for this will come to within a couple of metres of the building, leaving a narrow strip for walking/some benches or small planters.</p> <p>Priority: to existing wooden sleepers and shrubs before work commences, so these can be used elsewhere.</p> <p>Gardening Group/Viridor Volunteers</p>	<p>Far less usable space at the front of the building, loss of grass.</p> <p>Very close proximity of playpark to building. People using playpark may wish to use toilet and/or café in the building—challenges around managing this when building is not open to public.</p> <p>Opportunity for an outdoor concessions stand?</p> <p>Vandalism potential due to more young people in the park in the evening? Will require monitoring.</p>
Path access from front of the building, past new MUGA.	<p>The council has said it will re-instate the path, archway and section of the orchard that it knocked down.</p> <p>LASC to continue dialogue with Council regarding reinstatement/ repairs.</p>	Access from Mayburn Road/new housing estate--
Raised beds/composting area	The polytunnel will be moved to where the composting area is currently. Polytunnel to be moved in the later autumn/winter.	Water supply will need to be extended for polytunnel

	<p>4 raised beds will be lost.</p> <p>Composting can be done in other places, smaller bins etc.</p> <p>Some of the raised beds could be made higher using recycled sleepers.</p> <p>Wooded slope between beds and the fence: can be tidied, with new planting, to make this a more accessible space for children to explore, etc. Wild food, rustic feel.</p> <p>Plant a 'fedge' (hedge fence—some form of prickly shrubbery to deter vandals from climbing the fence)</p>	
Greenhouse/slabbed area	<p>Big birch tree to be shortened in height/coppiced as an alternative to removal—to enable CCTV sight into the sensory garden.</p> <p>Idea to install outdoor play musical instrument equipment—there may be preference to dot this equipment around the full site instead to encourage exploration.</p> <p>This is a good space for garden teaching, potting, etc.</p> <p>Fence to be maintained/painted/repaired.</p> <p>Beds around the perimeter can be tidied, replanted.</p>	Paulo offered to work on the tree
Bike shelter	Keep bike shelter but replace the roof with less breakable material.	

Steep embankment behind greenhouse and polytunnel	Ideas include: 'fedge' at the bottom, levelling out terraces to enable planting, creating a sloped play area with a curving slide, scramble net, etc.	Cost of play equipment for this area could be significantly more than Parents' and Tots' budget allows. To be investigated further.
Polytunnel area	<p>Polytunnel will be removed. Extension to the dance studio will take over part of this area.</p> <p>There will be an area to the side of the extension that can be used for something in the future.</p>	<p>Water tap will need to be reinstated outside the building when extension is done.</p> <p>Irene to speak to the builders about having downpipes from extension roof to fill water butts.</p>
Green container	<p>To stay—essential storage. Can be painted—graffiti project?</p> <p>Or have trellises with plants climbing up.</p>	
Back access path	<p>Path needs to be widened to allow wheelchair access.</p> <p>Fence around the outdoor cabin to be moved to create larger area there.</p>	
Cabin	Parents and Tots and Gardeners want to be able to use this.	Need for discussion about who/how this cabin may be used. Could be a revenue-generating space.
Back corner—raised area	No significant ideas—to be considered at a later date.	
Side—sloped area and retaining wall	<p>Fruit cage posts to be removed.</p> <p>This area to be retained as grass for playing. Trees could be planted at the top along the fence.</p> <p>Wall height could be lowered by removing some of the sleepers.</p> <p>Patio area to be retained.</p>	Currently parts of the wall are wobbly, so not safe for children to walk on.

Other ideas for outdoor and indoor spaces included:

- A youth café
- Pathway to work/youth and young adult scheme
- Youth engagement/connection project during school hours
- Involve After School Club more in the garden, digging, planting and using produce
- Holiday-time youth club
- Need a storage container for garden tools which are currently in the cabin
- Gardening group for older people, those with dementia, mental health, disabilities
- Garden open days and workshops

There was no scope for discussion during this event about how these ideas could be developed or who would lead on these, but these conversations can be taken forward at a later date.