

FRIENDS OF GRAPPENHALL HEYS WALLED GARDEN



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12 April 2018

Ms Elaine Welborn
Chair of Grappenhall & Thelwall Parish Council
Council Office, Bellhouse Lane
Grappenhall
Warrington, WA4 2SG

Dear Ms Welborn

With reference to your letter of 5 April 2018 following the meeting of 3 April 2018, the Friends Executive Committee is very disappointed in the whole tone of the letter, which follows the tone of councillors at the meeting. There was no attempt to negotiate or compromise with the Friends – in effect, everything was presented as a fait accompli.

In your letter, you ask that the Friends recognise and respect the role of Parish Council (PC) staff, recognise and respect the status and position of Apé Bars and their staff, and comply with all legal requirements for the sale of food produce. It's a pity that the PC, in return, has not reciprocated, but has failed to recognise and respect the vital role of the Friends over the past eleven years. If it weren't for the Friends' activities in promoting the garden by holding events, opening a café, and creating publicity on social media (which has been shared with the PC's Outreach Officer), the garden would not have become as well known and popular as it has. Indeed, if it hadn't been for the Friends' ideas, suggestions and financial assistance, and badgering of the "professional" staff, the garden would not have evolved one iota from the day it was taken over. More than £55,000 has been given from the funds raised by our volunteers, not counting the countless small purchases made, amounting to many more £000s, and the free time given by our volunteers.

The Friends Executive Committee is not prepared to put together any business plan for a cabin (requested at the meeting on 3 April 2018) – in fact, in view of your demands and restrictions regarding produce sales, we are handing back total responsibility for this to the garden, as our volunteers are not prepared to continue. After all, we are volunteers, and have done the job out of love for the garden, not for our own financial gain or for the PC.

The Friends will honour the commitments already given for funding to refurbish the large gazebo, the carving of a replacement bench seat, and the purchase of good quality tools. Any future funding the PC needs for the garden will be subject to a written request, with proper financial justification - grants will not be given on the casual basis of the past. Any grants we give must be for the enhancement of the garden.

The Plant Fair will go ahead as arranged, and we will provide volunteer wardens for the Stockton Heath Festival play as promised.

The future direction of the Friends will be decided by the members at the AGM. In the meantime, we will not be recruiting an Events Co-ordinator, nor will we be putting together any events programme.

Yours sincerely

Kath Brown, Secretary (on behalf of the Friends of GHWG Executive Committee)