

The following Agenda Item 6 (drafted by Darren Pask) was included in the agenda papers for the 2019 CARA AGM and discussed and agreed at the AGM:

Vision for Cerne Abbas

Cerne Abbas should be a vibrant, prestigious, congenial and inclusive place to live with attractive public spaces suitable for all, with desirable, well-maintained buildings, equal in value to others in the area.

Aim – The Gardens

The gardens are here to enhance the pleasure of the residents of Cerne Abbas. As such, they should be well tended, informal, and uncommonly attractive with open spaces suitable for all. They should be in proportion to people and the surrounding buildings and not dominate the landscape in size or density. The type of plants should be akin to those varieties found in gardens of the large old houses and established spaces within Bournemouth, focusing on the slightly exotic, eccentric plants from around the world. Both shape and colour should fascinate the eye, and lift the spirit.

Guidance Plan

The common areas fall into four distinct sections: two quadrangles within the buildings of Phase one and Phase two, secondly the gardens which form the perimeter to the estate, and finally the garden areas near at the entrance. These guidelines indicate how these areas should be maintained and developed. It is important to consider proportion and shape both in foreground and background as well as colour, plant silhouette, final growth height, density of foliage and the overall impression.

Quadrangles – General

As stated above, the gardens are to be for the enjoyment of all, and be in proportion to the people and the buildings. These areas should comprise distinct trees, beds and lawns. The trees should have a variable silhouette of height and width, and not develop to a height greater than the first floor of the buildings. The beds should have a variety of height with interesting leaf texture, colour, shapes and flowers, avoiding overcrowding. Some shrubs can be as high as the ground floor windows

whilst others will be much shorter. It will be a mixture of flowering perennials and shrubs with all year interest. The lawns are to stay much as they are today. They will need fertilizer, weed killing and aeration. The soil on the estate is in poor condition so appropriate weeding and watering is paramount to success and will be necessary. The beds can be protected against drought by regular mulching. New planting will require new soil and fertilizer for all plants, from trees to shrubs. To ensure plants become established and do not die in our weak and sandy soil, we need to monitor and feed until the plants are well established. In drought summers we need to water some beds; lawns do not require watering.

There will be necessary changes to the gardens from time to time (e.g. disease, drought, restructuring). Because plants take time to establish and grow, any design changes and replanting will be in stages. This way any appropriate trim back, removal and planting will be less of an impact to the eye. We should improve the outlook and maintain the overall appearance by replacing with something better than we had before but always within the limits of this guideline.

The Perimeter

These areas are for both the visual enjoyment by the residents and those passing public who view from outside the estate.

Trees: Some are protected by Tree Preservation Order (TPO) under control of the local council; however we are not in a Conservation Area. Where there is a TPO we need permission to replace when trees die or are trimmed or felled for safety reasons. We have the trees checked by an expert contractor every 3 years or so and who makes recommendations regarding removal or trimming. We can ask to replace with trees of our own choice. By making careful recommendations regarding type of tree, the soil it will be planted in and the resilience of the species we find the local council are often in agreement with our preferred choice. One example is the new Mexican Weeping Pine at the side gate, this replaced the wind damaged Cedar which had to be felled.

Shrubs: The shrubs are not under TPO. The soil is poor and very dry so there are few plants which will survive without our care (an exception is gorse -, however we are not inclined to use this species). We will need to pay attention to replanting both by soil improvement and long-term watering if newly planted shrubs are to survive. Buying plants is an outlay and an investment, consequently we need to care for our plants in the early years until they are established.

The Entrance

This location is for both the visual enjoyment by the residents and those passing public who view from outside the estate.

Trees: There are no trees under TPO. We have planted *Trachycarpus Fortunei* palms which are well suited to the soil and dryness and have established well.

Shrubs: Some areas can become untidy and removal and replanting appropriate hedging may be required. Smart clear lines here will lead the eye into the smart and tended garden of the turning circle.

Lawn: After removal of poor soil, tarmac and rubble and replacement with a nutritious soil the replanted lawn areas are growing successfully.

The Quadrangles

These areas are only for the enjoyment of residents and their guests. They are not seen by the passing public.

Phase 2 Quadrangle

Trees: Some of these may be under TPO and their status will be checked before any work. If any trees should need replacement we will consider species with a lower ceiling such as *Sorbus* or *Econymus* and for shrubs *Cratagus* and *Camelia*. Trees and shrubs will be kept in proportion with each other using non deciduous flowering varieties when possible.

Lawn: We will keep the lawn in its existing shape and work to avoid its erosion by the more strenuous growing shrubs.

Beds: There will be mixed planting and, importantly, we would please ask residents to volunteer to maintain new planting and water during droughts.

Phase 1 Quadrangle

Trees: None of the trees in this area are under TPO. Some are still young and, even so, well above what is considered a proper height. They were planted as attractive small trees but are now reaching about half their natural height. We cannot control this by pruning so some radical thought-out plan for the future is required to avoid very big trees which endanger the buildings.

Shrubs: Many of the shrubs have been replaced with attractive species and these, with the attention of owners, have survived and become established. Regular

watering is required as the soil soon dries out both due to climate as well as the trees. We will continue to maintain and plant these beds following the guidelines above.

Lawns: These suffer with the drought every year but always recover. The shape will remain unchanged and we will continue to have our gardeners fertilise, weed-kill and aerate as before.