

ELLON CASTLE GARDEN

NEWSLETTER 1 – SEPTEMBER 2015



These are some of the many yew trees in the garden. The yews shown are called Irish or fastigate yews which means that they are upright. Yew trees are a feature of the Garden; some of the English Yews are believed to be about 400 years old. Over the years, these fastigate yews have lost their shape and one of our first tasks has been to start the process of reshaping. It will take several years before they are fully restored.

WHO ARE WE?

Ellon Castle Garden was set up as a Company Limited by guarantee and we are a registered charity. We were formed when the Castle Garden was handed over to the Community by the builders Barratts and Scotia as part of what is called planning gain. Along with the garden, there was a sum of money set aside to help to conserve the garden. In addition we will have ownership of 11 apartments in the development behind the garden.

ELLON CASTLE GARDEN BOARD

Alan Cameron – Chairman
Stuart Wale – Vice Chair
Sandy McDougall - Property
Moira Muir Fund raising
Chris Hall – Finance
Elaine Cooper-Willox Marketing
Eddie Gordon – Built Environment
Mike Watson – Security
Nick Broom – Health & Safety

The Board currently meet once a month on the second Monday at 6.30 in the Buchan Hotel Lounge. The Board is elected annually at the AGM.

OUR FACTOR

One of the first decisions the Board made was to appoint a Factor to look after all of our interests. We were pleased to welcome Julie Lorimer who has had previous experience working with the National Trust.



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MAJOR PROJECTS:

As you can imagine, there are many tasks facing the Board – not least, those which currently present a Health & Safety risk. Some of the walls are not safe. There are bulges on the west wall. (That is the wall facing the Health Centre). One of the walls supporting the terrace needs to be rebuilt and the Castle ruin needs to be stabilized since there is a risk of falling masonry.

However, we have to take all of those in turn: seek permission from Historic Scotland: then match the task with the necessary finance, This is a long process but we are anxious to progress this as



The castle ruin is unsafe because of loose masonry and is currently surrounded by Heras fencing. It is our intention that the ruin will remain an important aspect of the garden. Shown opposite is an old photo of the terrace with the box hedge and its knot pattern.



THE FRONT GATE

The front gate looking on to the Deer Park is in quite poor condition. It is, nevertheless repairable. The Board feel that this gate is quite iconic and would like to make a start to repair it as soon as practicable. Permission will have to be obtained from Historic Scotland. There is already a

small sum – about £1200.00 which has been identified to remedy this. We wish to seek your financial support and would welcome donations for this purpose. We propose that the gate will in future be called the Community Gate to recognize that the funding came from the community of Ellon. If you wish to contribute to this, you should send your donation to:

ELLON CASTLE GARDEN,
5 Fechil Brae,
Ellon AB41 8NS.

Cheques should be made payable to: ***Ellon Castle Garden***



WORK BEGINS IN THE GARDEN!

THE IRISH YEWS

We are extremely lucky to have the advice and expertise of Simon McPhun who was formerly Head Gardener at Inverewe and Leith Hall. If the yews such as are shown on page 1 are left, they tend to splay out. They are tied with wire to keep them upright. Simon has done a lot of pruning of these trees to restore them and next year will top them to encourage growth

from within. All of the apple trees have been pruned, the self-seeding trees removed and some pruning of dead branches in the remaining trees.



THE TERRACE BOX HEDGE

After the Rosebay Willow Herb was removed from the box hedging on the terrace, the hedging looks quite healthy and we should be able to rescue this attractive knot pattern.

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

There is plenty of work to be done in the garden, and there is a job for you, no matter your skill level. Initially, the work will be fairly basic and involve disposing of grass cuttings, prunings, and cuttings from the trees and shrubs. There is work to be done on the fountain which has all but disappeared. There are weeds to be removed especially around the yew trees. Since all of the trees are subject to



Find the fountain among the weeds and
briars

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), any work on the trees requires permission and supervision. The work should be enjoyable and it is rewarding to see what a difference you can make. If you think you would like to help,

Contact the factor – Julie Lorimer

E-mail Julie@julielorimer.plus.net

Mobile: 07495 675757

SOME MORE RECENT WORK IN THE GARDEN

A large self-seeded tree was removed



Weeds were removed to reveal a rare Japanese yew tree (Left).



The old steel container was removed (below)



All of the apple trees were pruned



MEMBERSHIP

This is a community garden and therefore by definition is your garden. There will be an AGM every year so that the Board can explain what they are doing and also seek your views on what we could or should be doing better. Members of the Board may serve for 4 years and can seek re-election for a further term. In order to stagger the retirement, half of the members will stand down at the second AGM.

The intention is that Membership will be open to all of you who wish to support the Ellon Castle Garden and its development as a community resource. We intend to offer Adult, Joint Adult, Family membership, Senior Membership and Joint Senior Membership.

Members will be invited to special events, have free entry to the Garden on open days and the ability to participate in the AGM. At this stage if you are interested, register your interest (with no commitment) to Julie Lorimer: Julie@julielorimer.plus.net or Telephone 07495 675757