

# The Friends of Cressing Temple Gardens



## Chairman's report 2019

2018 started with the good news that Heritage Lottery had made us a generous grant to rebuild the arbour, combined with funding for capacity building and to enhance the visitor experience in the garden. The resulting project, Celebrating the history of the Cressing Temple Gardens, has been our main preoccupation during the year. The work has been led by Alison Warwick, who was our first WRAGS trainee. A new arbour, to a slightly revised and more durable design, has been built by Joe Bispham and his team. Essential repairs have also been made to the viewing platform. Of the other elements in the project, Mark Townsend has made good progress on the time lapse photography of the garden, and on recording and videoing interviews of people with memories of Cressing Temple and the creation of the gardens, making many interesting discoveries in the process. A group of the volunteers who help in the gardens have researched and visited other historic gardens as preparation for enhancing the exhibition in the wellhouse and creating improved interpretation panels for the benefit of the public.

Meanwhile, the Friends have continued to support the seasonal round of looking after the gardens. Plant sales, organised by Lesley Killin, remain the principal source of income, providing funding for buying plants, equipment and sundries. The volunteers, about 30 in number, who come in on Tuesdays and Thursdays, help sustain the high standard of maintenance so essential to the public's appreciation of the gardens. The Community Garden is thriving and indeed expanding. It has just acquired a willow windbreak. We enjoy good relations with our neighbours in the Community Shed who help us with numerous small jobs.

This last summer we achieved our objective of putting the now large apple harvest from the Jubilee Orchard to good use. Having acquired an apple press and a pasteuriser, we were able to bottle about 150 litres of apple juice for sale at our annual October Apple Day, thanks largely to the expertise of Howard Green who set up the processing operation. The Apple Day is our main event and remains very popular and enjoyable. Beekeeping, with three hives, continued successful, thanks to the hard work of Jan French. Once again the honey won awards. We produced 231 lbs making £800. Initial expenditure on equipment is now well covered by income.

Behind all this achievement is a hard working committee which includes the trustees. Of these we are losing three. Karen Perry and Nigel Thompstone have been with us since the Friends were set up five years ago. Howard Green has felt it necessary to stand down. We are grateful to them for their contributions in different ways. We are fortunate that three committee members have offered to step up to being trustees to replace them. We could do with one or two more trustees, and we are also urgently looking for a secretary if someone would be prepared to take on that role. It remains to thank all those who have helped with the work of the Friends over the year, particularly our colleagues on the County staff who work at Cressing Temple.

David Andrews  
March 2019