



Friends of Glen Goyle – January 2023 Questionnaire results

1. What should the balance be between a 'natural' look and a planted 'garden' look for the Glen?

Summary: preference for 'natural', but 'managed'

- I would distinguish between the two sides of 'Bickwell Brook': west side strongly natural, east side much more planted.
- Mostly natural, this is a particular gem of urban wilderness.
- 60/40
- There needs to be a theme of some sort - perhaps natural, or Victorian or some such - but keeping in mind biodiversity uppermost
- I think there is a good balance already. Victorian gardens were largely formal I don't think we could afford to go down that route so just enhance the area we have by careful planting.
- More of a natural look as there are plenty of trees and shrubs to provide structure already.
- 85% natural planting.
- Whilst we can strive to give areas a natural look (no bedding plants....), we must manage every square inch, and have a plan for it. Biodiversity will be helped by our considerate management. I think that the public does/will understand that a lot of the plants are non-native, but that they do no harm to - and even help - native flora and fauna.
- ...

2. What sort of wildlife should we be encouraging and how could we do it?

Summary: across-the-board flora and fauna; active encouragement

- Birds, nest boxes, etc.
- Woodland flowers appropriate for the soil, climate etc., particularly those that are endangered.
- Small mammals, eg. mice shrews, voles. Small birds e.g. wrens, goldfinches, thrushes, robins. Insects eg. dragonflies. Spiders. Suggest inviting Devon Wildlife Trust to visit the Glen. Several of us are members.
- Bats - bat boxes, suitable plants, birds - bird boxes and feed plants, water creatures....
- There are numerous badger sets in the lower section of the Goyle and a healthy population and they remain undisturbed. We see many squirrels and as we open up the dense jungle and let in the light, we have seen more varied bird species
- Spring bulbs, wild flowers and flowering plants/shrubs planned to flower throughout the year; these will encourage bumblebees, birds. Plants with seed heads, left until spring will encourage seed-eating birds. Planting/ digging areas with the above plus a mulch will encourage worms, spiders etc (more food for birds)
- Insect house and bird nesting boxes might find tenants. Hedgehogs too might like a

house. They could currently be hibernating in under the heap waiting to be shredded, so care must be taken with that task. The riverside work does not seem to have unearthed many / any water voles, shrews etc. so I would "wait and see" what might appear of their own accord and then act accordingly.

- Birds, butterflies, and buzzy things. And we should live with the badgers and grey squirrels. The squirrels can even help, with their burying of (and forgetting) nuts and seeds.

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3. How can we encourage and maintain biodiversity?

Summary: variety

- Not over-manicured - it has a slightly 'jungle' quality at the moment
- Planting shrubs, flowers etc that encourage such. Small plaques that educate the public. Nothing too overwhelming or ostentatious.
- Remove unwanted species such as three cornered leek, Spanish bluebells Himalayan Balsam and similar plants. Encourage native species particularly those that attract bees and other insects.
- The range and type of plants chosen
- I think we are already doing that by opening up a dark, dense, forgotten landscape
- See above: the more varied habitats the better
- Keep everything very simple and in tune with Nature.
- We have already massively improved biodiversity by breaking the stranglehold of the few dominant and overwhelming plants such as ivy and bramble, and cutting back straggling bushes. As the anniversary of the commencement of the Thursday group approaches, we need to move some of our efforts from pioneering reclamation to on-going maintenance.

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4. What sort of suggestions do you have for 'Victorian' planting?

Summary: 'sub-tropical', perennials, herbaceous, low-maintenance

- Not sure we want Victorian planting. The key to me is to plant in a way that reflects the special microclimate that exists in The Goyle. So a tendency towards 'sub-tropical', for want of a better word.
- Do not have enough knowledge on the subject to comment/
- A bed or two set aside for the Getrude Jekyll look, plus the replica Peter Orlando Hutchinson Fernery.
- depending on soil and aspect, ferns, 'grotto-like' plants, perhaps rhododendrons and azaleas, etc, interesting bulbs
- I think Paul's expert input is vital regarding future planting
- Continue along the path with more of the plants already planted (southern end). The main focus of a Victorian garden was a lawn and borders. There should be a piece of lawn for children to play on. A herbaceous border would look great but it's a lot of maintenance; instead, plant a wild flower border along the south-facing edges of the lawn. There are further areas which need planting up: the raised area with the dead tree ferns, for example. There are too many bay trees here which block the light. This could be planted with a range of suitable herbaceous plants with a colour theme, perhaps, remembering about light conditions.. Now the northern entrance has been cleared, this could be planted up with a range of plants, plus a seat perhaps.
- Vibrant perennials. I do not think the Glen needs anything which is going to need a lot of attention, like digging up for the Winter. Light and sunshine would also be necessary and I would suggest the area from the path arcing round to where is the current mass of debris is waiting to be shredded. Approaching the lawn from the Glen Road entrance an arc of lush perennials might be attractive.
- Asking someone who knows what they are talking about.

5. What should we do with the lawn area? Should we create a 'meadow'? Or should we leave half of the grass uncut for much of the summer?

Summary: both meadow and lawn

- Leave it much as it is. It is the only significant clearing, and most importantly, I planted the daffs there!
- Leave large patches uncut much of the summer. The rest could be a mowed meadow with some paths mowed through the uncut area in a twisty pattern.
- The Bassetts (Asherton House) used it for croquet. Let's have it maintained for picnics and family gatherings. There's a meadow off The Byes. This grass area is too small for that.
- Meadow or grass uncut - plenty of pristine cut non-bio-diverse lawns elsewhere in Sidmouth - do something different.
- I would like a wildflower border but still cut the central area
- ...
- Keep as lawn
- I would like to encourage families there, so a large part should be cut and maintained for easy access and harm-free play. But the lawn is now much larger that it appeared a year ago, due to our cutting back, so we can cater for both, so I would like to see about 25% put over to 'meadow'. We should take advice about whether this could be a strip around the edges, or whether it would be better to have it in a concentrated area, perhaps towards the southern end where we put our left-overs. And not just grass left to grow. We need to seed with an appropriate mix. And maybe de-marked by a single string low 'fence' and a few signs 'Please respect this area'.
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6. What sort of infrastructure should we have along the Glen? What sort of benches, signage, fencing, paths...?

summary: 'heritage' benches, some signage, not too much

- I have always felt it requires an understated, elegant entrance treatment, for the simple reason that many do not know it is there. I do not like excessive signage of the 'municipal' variety.
- More natural benches from tree logs. Ditto climbing/exploratory places for children such as SIMPLIFIED prow of a pirate ship, airplane, train engine with two carriages, two horses racing side by side. These could be made for a competition for high school students who are adept at woodworking. (Female and male)
- New benches throughout (seafront design) Move the current oddments(3) elsewhere. Encourage sponsorship (businesses and memorials). Ensure all fencing is safe. Re-open path by wooden bridge (new fencing will be needed). Improve surface of paths where tree roots predominate. Information boards about the Glen. Directional signs.
- Victorian style would be good. Signage about history and plants.
- John McG was pursuing the possibility of more seating and there are several old bases that could be utilised
- Why were all the benches removed? Vandals? It's a real shame that there are places for benches which are empty
- Wooden benches and fencing. Pathways need to be found again, where once they would seem to have existed. The raised bed by the lawn and flanked by unearthed steps would benefit I think from a clear path at the top of the bed, to connect the steps.
- Benches Yes. Including maybe one or two on the lawn. The footpaths signs are by EDDC. Move the top entrance dog bin away from the path (put it on the wall maybe), or replace it with a bin such as we now have at the bottom. 'Welcome' signs. Fencing is pretty good now. Interpretation boards Yes. One at Manor Road end. One

on the lawn area, about Asherton House. One by the POH fern collection, if it comes to fruition. And let's be honest, it's not perfect for cycling, or even pushing a bike through. I would suggest some bars for securing bikes to, at top and bottom entrances, and signs saying (better wording of course) that the area is not ideal for cycling, so please consider securing your bike here, coming in, and having a good look around. And we mustn't forget the Seafield Road entrance. What a joy to be enticed into the Goyle along that rather boring approach, and have this haven open up left and right. A board/signage offering help on which ways to go (via a plan maybe - see 8) at this junction, should be considered. We should consider a few 'Private' signs at the stream opposite the lawn (maybe the residents association would like to provide these), some 'please, please, please pick it up and bin it' signs, with reinforcement signs by the lawn saying 'children play here, so please, please, please, please, please pick it up.....'.

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7. Should we make access along the path a little easier?

Summary: there are different solutions to consider

- I think it is fine as it is.
- Yes, for people in rollators, wheelchairs, perambulators.
- Yes, see 6.
- Maybe - but the charm will be lost if the path is too wide.....
- Yes please. That is one few criticisms and the exposed roots forming a trip hazard for the elderly could easily be concealed with a gentle regrading of the path using 803 subbase.
- Yes, especially where the tree roots make it tricky for prams etc
- Paths are OK except where tree roots have created a hazard.
- Yes, but it won't be easy. I think that we should explore having an alternative access from the double gates on Glen Road, following the house boundary down to the bridge. If done well, this would enable wheelchair, scooter, and Zimmer access onto the lawn and down to the Manor Road and Seafield Road entrances. This 'alternative route' should be signed from the existing Glen Road entrance, and within the Goyle.

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8. What sort of information should we have on an interpretation board (probably at Manor Rd entrance)?

Summary: lots of ideas

- Interpretation boards are expensive and often go 'out of date' quite quickly. They have to be regularly replaced. There is not enough space to put anything meaningful on them. I am inclined to say 'don't bother'.
- Briefly. One paragraph the history. One paragraph the goal (wilderness and maintenance), email for comments, hashtag link to FB page of FOGG.
- Vision Group and Fogg info. plus history and plans as well descriptions of flora and fauna likely to be encountered.
- the plants and animals that can be found there, the history of the glen. A name board at either end and information board at the lower end
- The history
- A copy of the original 1800's plan of the area alongside the current area plan with perhaps the 1960's sketch supplied by the late Dr. Cohen's grandson; although that latter sketch only applies to the Cotmaton Road half of the Glen!
- History, plant species, fauna, a plan (like the Byes board plans). A QR link to the FOGG website, acknowledgment of those bodies that have helped us.

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9. Should we build on the Arboretum's use of QR codes, to provide more information electronically. And if so, at what spots should we have some?

Summary: generally supportive, different positions

- I'm not sure how many people use them. But they are obviously a good idea and unobtrusive.
- Yes, where some of the important trees/plants are located. Yes for animals, particularly badger education and protection.
- Good idea.....entrances, bridge, picnic area.
- Could do but I suspect most people don't use them - less important than written boards.
- Sounds interesting, if the promised fern collection arrives it could be useful there.
- Possibly when all finished
- QR codes. I imagine these could be an expected feature of the development. One at the Glen Road entrance could advise that the ground was once part of the late doctor's garden. One by the badger sett half way through the Glen advising the end of the Dr. 's garden and giving details of the plants now growing on the banks. Another QR code feature at the Manor Road entrance giving details of the plants to be seen en route the path to the Glen road gateway.
- See 8. Plus at all other entrances (with a small introduction sign). On any other interpretation boards. Maybe by the 'best' trees and shrubs.

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10. What sort of 'zones' or small areas could we create, making use of any existing features? Are there any specific areas you would have any specific suggestions for?

Summary: lots of ideas

- I have always thought that the 'far side' could be accessed in some way. Via a small elegant footbridge (or two) for example.
- Wild paddling pool for toddlers with stepping stones, very small, low bridges and some permanent channels for sending Pooh sticks sailing but constructed so that the sticks swirl around into a shallow pool so that they can be easily retrieved. One small area of the paddling pool could have dinosaur footprints for children to step/stride in them (they would be under the water and would have to be initially laid in concrete.f
- Apart from aspects already mentioned, suggest a picnic table and seating at the top entrance. Dog bin might need moving.
- water feature, fern zone, bulb areas, maybe 'Himalayan' area depending on what's already there.
- ...
- Around the remaining seat, the raised area with the wall (place for a seat at the back by the wall) - Could the old newt pond be turned over and used as a pond again? Or too dangerous? Could it be planted up with newt sculptures added (!).
- The Glen Road entrance has a small roundish bed being uncovered with bulbs from the past already coming up. That bed could be further planted with more Spring bulbs for the future with one or two perennials added for interest in the summer.
- There is the riverside walk, the lawn area, the raised areas on the left of the path as it heads towards the top entrance. The plans (see 8) that I've suggested, could designate these areas, with punchy names like (Riverside Walk, The Lawn, Asherton House Gardens).

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These responses were compiled from the raw data contained in the completed questionnaires – both online and emailed – excluding personal details re data protection.

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