

# Garden report 2025

After a cold and dreary winter there are certainly signs that spring is around the corner. The Landings is putting on its usual show of spring bulbs and the rockeries at the entrance to the estate are looking particularly good at the moment, thanks to some additional planting last year.

As usual I would like to thank everyone who turned out to help at our work parties, last October and again just last week. These are always fun occasions, when the weather cooperates, and we have managed to get some useful jobs done that are not in the remit of the contract gardeners and that help to make the Landings look good

During the growing season, the gardeners' weekly contract for two hours work on a Wednesday morning is sometimes just not enough to keep on top of grass cutting and hedge trimming. So on two occasions last summer I bought in some extra hours from Sage when the grass was in a growth spurt. The additional expenditure on limited occasions helped to keep all the grassed areas looking well kept.

Last month we also bought in some extra hours from the gardeners to tackle the build up of moss on tarmaced surfaces throughout the estate but which was particularly bad in some of the garage blocks. The moss is not just unsightly but gets slippery in frosty conditions and is also harmful to the road surfaces. The moss treatment has been very successful and is a great improvement. It will probably only need repeating every couple of years and we consider it money well spent.

I continue to monitor and treat the two small areas of Japanese Knotweed on the estate and treat it three times a year. The good news is that it is confined to a couple of areas well away from homes and it is certainly not spreading or popping up in new areas. There is however, little chance of being able to completely eradicate it from the riverbank in Waterside Close as many of the roots are below the waterline so cannot be attacked as effectively as when they are on the bank itself. This work is ongoing though and will continue for as long as it is needed.

I know I sound like a cracked record but I want to remind residents, yet again, that the river bank, throughout the estate, is Landings property and should not be touched, beautified, or cultivated in any way. We have a responsibility to maintain the river banks as a wildlife corridor which is interrupted when people cut back the vegetation down to the river edge, and especially when it is turned to grass. Small mammals like dormice cannot cross these open stretches so the wildlife corridor becomes fragmented and devalued. In our conservation work on the Lammas lands recently, David and I came across a nest that had been built by a harvest mouse. It was unoccupied but the Countryside Ranger was very excited as it was proof that this species, that had been missing for many years, is now moving into the area. Our river banks might not be natural harvest mouse habitat but this is a reminder that many small and low profile creatures rely on us to try to secure a healthy habitat for them. We really need to do our part for the local wildlife whose long term survival is hanging by a thread.

David and I have continued to carry out our monthly water testing on the woodland stream as part of a Water Rangers monitoring scheme for the River Wey catchment area. The last successful monitoring session was last October but during November something dramatic happened that has resulted in greatly diminished flow to this stream. The water is still seeping through but the depth and flow has reduced to such an extent that we are now unable to take meaningful samples and we have had to switch our testing site to the Cut behind Waterside Close. Paul has been investigating the cause of the dramatic drop in flow. As yet we cannot determine whether it is due to a collapse in the pipe that channels the stream between the Navigation and the woodland, or is due to a build up of silt in the

Navigation around the outlet pipe. I am sure that silting has something to do with this as the collapse of the woodland stream coincides quite closely with the dramatic increase in silt accumulation in the Cut below the weir and under the bridge in Blackburn Way. This is clearly part of a wider problem as the silting behind the boathouse is also a recent phenomenon. Sadly, it is a problem that is beyond our ability to alleviate.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any comments, queries or suggestions about the common areas of the Landings estate. But in the meantime we all look forward to a golden spring and summer so that we can fully enjoy and appreciate the privilege of living in such a lovely corner of Godalming.