

Chandlers Walk

On Tuesday 17th August 2021 some members of the Environment and Climate Crisis Working Party met with Jenny and Fred, Ken and Annie at Chandlers Walk Gardens. Chandlers Walk became part of St Austell Bay Parish in April 2021 and with it came the award winning garden entrance to Charlestown Village.

Following the building of the houses in Chandlers Walk the original plan for a children's play area never materialised and the area, which was a waste ground, has, over the years, been transformed into a beautiful woodland glade.

A small group of retired residents agreed to take on the area, donating money to buy a strimmer and plants. In their first year they entered Cornwall in Bloom and were both surprised and delighted to win an award together with a cheque for £250 which was reinvested into the project.

Gilbert and Goode donated topsoil and plants and soil have been funded by St Austell Town Council. Most residents now contribute an annual donation of £10 towards the running costs, whilst others donate plants, ornaments and more recently bird boxes, a bug hotel, bird feeding stations and a dovecot.

There is some concern over the age and the condition of some of the trees, which remain the responsibility of Cornwall Council. Storm damaged trees and branches have been reused wherever possible as a hedgehog hotel and a stumpery for insects.

In recent years due to the attrition of the original team there has been a move away from annual to perennial flowers. Bee friendly flowers such as poppies, calendula and lavender are being used and the recent "Jen project" which has created a small patch seeded with wild flowers has been so successful it is to be extended next year to form a drift area. Jen is also growing more plants from seed which keeps costs down.

The whole ethos of the garden is targeted towards providing an environment which is an oasis for birds, bugs, bees and wildlife. There is a composting area and rather than collecting and discarding grass cuttings these are now being left on the ground as mulch. There is no water or power in the gardens so a petrol mower cannot be avoided. Watering beyond natural rain has been achieved by draining water butts and using dustbins to collect rainwater where possible.

The whole project is run on a shoe-string with many hours of invaluable hard work being done by a few volunteers. The gardens are a credit to the area and demonstrate what can be achieved when the will is there to transform an area of waste ground into an oasis for nature.