

## Deborah on being a Friend

Well, I've been a member of the friends group more or less since it started. And, I joined originally because I was quite keen to do a bit of practical gardening (laugh) in the town, and that was really before the project to restore the gardens kicked off. But it's been very interesting being part of that process and seeing how the, the project has developed. Been interesting meeting all sorts of different people, and getting involved in events. That's been good fun. I particularly remember the one where we had the snakes! (laugh) that was lovely. That was lovely. And I'm looking forward to being able to do that thing that I wanted to do originally, the, sort of practical gardening, in the community garden, and hopefully in the sort of wider area of the water gardens and ..you know help the council staff who are going to have the ultimate responsibility for looking after it. So, yeh, I'm hoping that will work out well. I think it'll probably be a bit of a challenge setting all that up and, you know, getting into the swing of it.

So we've got a paper plan which shows a series of raised beds at different heights that means that people with various mobility problems can still access an area that they can garden. Which is very good. We're going to have a nice, nice little building where we can make ourselves cups of tea, and keep all our tools and things like that. We've talked quite a bit about what we're going to grow. And, one of the things that I think it'd be really nice to have is some, some fruit trees. I've been talking to somebody who manages a community garden in Hitchin and they've got fruit trees there and I know they produce enough apples from them to make apple juice. So that's a, maybe a further ahead ambition, not something to aim for in the first couple of years. Um, but that would be, that would be a nice thing to do. I think we're going to have to think very carefully about what we grow in the raised beds because ... people are often very keen to do edible things, but if you do edible stuff then how do you share out the produce, what do you do with it? You know, do you.. maybe sell it? to.. help fund friends activities perhaps? Or .. do you give at away to the people who have.. participated in growing it? Who've put in all the hard work? So that's a, you know, an exercise that I think we've got to think about. We can just.. grow flowers. Which would be lovely! But then do we want to do something different in the community garden from, having all the flowers in the formal flower garden? So I think there's a, you know, a lot of decisions to be made and it's very early days. Looking forward to making contact with the gardening people from the council. And the gardener who's going to have the overall job of looking after the water gardens. Cos I think the relationship between that person and the Clean, Safe and Green team and the volunteers is going to be very important to make sure it's successful and it all works properly. So er, yeh, we'll see how we go on!