

Andrew Williams

Progress on the project and hopes for the future.

So far, really good. you can see as work progresses, there's an awful lot of silt being removed from the river. Anybody who's observed it over the last few years will particularly notice in the area opposite the bus station that there was very little water in there. You know, round the banks of the lake area that formed there was, almost entirely silted, up to the top. So, the early stages of the project are going very well. There are no unexpected issues that have arisen and, and, as I said, a few minutes ago, you really can't see the enhancements when you're doing this stage of the plan. But, silt removal is now dealt with very differently, to how it was, in the seventies. You can't just simply, dump it into a skip and take it away. It's being put on the side, has to be assessed for, um, any contamination and problems there might be in terms of, um, its reuse. That's all been successfully cleared, so that we're, we're progressing well. And it's very interesting even in this early stage to see the water depth returning and so much of the, of the rubbish being removed. Um, but at this stage I think we're very much, doing the background work, and the benefits of the enhancements to the environment I think are still to be seen.

I think we have to accept that, over the last few years, the gardens haven't received the attention that they deserved, for a number of reasons, and have slowly.. deteriorated. What my hope for the future is that we have a fully restored, as we will have next year, a fully restored gardens and fabric, enhanced planting, and enhanced environment for the visitors. slightly changed relationship between the car park and the gardens to improve the relationship there, and more screening of the car park so the garden environment becomes, er, better than it is. And, and my hope for the future would be that, you know, that would be, better maintained by future generations that the necessary investment into maintaining that is kept up. And, we have now a, a flourishing group, that are interested in volunteers looking, interested in the gardens. and I very much hope that that continues into the future. so, not only a group that's actually become interested in seeing the restoration and bringing this about, and working, you know, very importantly, on that, but, that that group continues to flourish and grow, beyond this particular phase, so that as the gardens are back into their, their former glory that that's maintained both through, the work of the council but also the undoubted, work of the volunteers in, keeping it up maintained going forward.