

Gardens Report – AGM March 2026

What challenging conditions our gardens faced in the UK during 2025.

The year was one of the warmest and sunniest on record, with hugely contrasting rainfall – Spring, being the driest since 1974, continuing into Summer, and then above average rainfall for September to December.

It is pleasing that, despite the weather, our 5 sites have generally been well maintained and kept looking neat and respectable. I wish to thank our gardener, David Saunders, for all his hard work and help in this respect.

I shall now report specifically on the 2 sites that were main areas of discussion at last year's AGM -

Ocean Drive –

Finally, following ongoing correspondence from July 2024, the freeholders confirmed in September that we may preserve the 'status quo' – continue to look after the site along existing lines.

Stepping back and taking a long, hard look at the beds either side of the path, it was obvious that many of the more established shrubs and plants had become overgrown, or 'choked', resulting in a very cluttered appearance.

In addition, the apple tree had become too big, with the abundance of fruit causing mess on the road and path and becoming a potential hazard.

The low, brick retaining wall was also damaged in several places, needing repair.

It was agreed by the Committee that a revamp of the site was required.

Consequently, a quotation was approved for the complete removal of all the existing plants and the area then to be landscaped. This should be completed during February, with fresh planting to be introduced later.

Barbary/Clover Lane –

A long overdue tree and shrub cutting took place in February.

However, as agreed at the AGM last year, the site was still in need of a full overhaul – primarily the central bed, weeding, and removal of the old/damaged wooden edging. I employed another gardener, Bruce Carle, for the ongoing up-keep.

He removed a lot of debris from the centre and then rotovated.

Unfortunately, when we started to fit new metal edging we discovered an underlying layer of concrete (a base from previous paving slabs). This is to be dug out and removed, with fresh topsoil added, before we can move ahead with any planting.

Simon Thompson

Gardens Manager

gardens@frsa.uk