

Millennium Garden survey, 17-23 July 2019

Introduction

The survey was carried out by the Cinema Focus Groups' working groups in to assess the use of the Millennium Gardens and the potential impact of developing the Pebbles building as a digital cinema, with screens housed in a building extending into the present garden. We did not try to log *every* visitor to the gardens but rather to take a series of samples by (a) making a short 'in and out' visit at specified times (10am, 11.30am, 3pm, 5pm and 7pm) and (b) during a continuous stay of at least 30 minutes between 12.30 and 1.30pm to assess the lunchtime presence. Each volunteer was asked to note the weather conditions and log the number of visitors (excluding themselves), their sex, approximate age, type of activity, and any other relevant remarks.

General remarks

Several general comments recurred. TTC maintains the garden, which was scruffy and overgrown when the survey started but received the attention of three gardeners on the second day, from which point it looked much more attractive (although the amenity is reduced by TTC's use of the garden to store two trailers, one of them beneath the pergola, which is dank and heavily shaded, at the Pebbles end). At the bottom of the garden, where the other trailer is stored, the gate into the White Lion's carpark is normally locked except when gardeners require access. Signage on the High Street is minimal and easily overlooked by the casual visitor to Tenterden: on some occasions the garden was empty at times when the High Street was thronged with visitors and the White Lion forecourt was humming with activity.

The White Lion's kitchen, which runs down part of the western side of the garden, has two noisy extractor fans which run constantly. The fans sometimes exhaust unpleasant cooking smells, which could not be avoided.

A photograph from the church tower shows how surrounded the garden is by urban development. There is often noise from the construction works on the building site to the east of the garden, beyond the boxing

club, and south. Obviously this is short-term but the new housing overlooks the garden and will have a long-term impact.

Pattern of use

Use of the garden is obviously very dependent on the weather. Most of the week was fine, dry and warm so results are likely to give a good idea of peak demand.

The garden is most visited at lunch-time, although on Sunday lunch-time there was nobody there. It is a popular place for people to eat sandwiches or picnic, either socially or solo. Other than on Sunday, the number of lunchtime unique users (not double-counting people who popped out and then returned) ranged from four to sixteen, with a peak of eleven in the garden at one team (on Tuesday lunchtime).

Outside lunchtime, the garden was often empty although it was occasionally visited by people to sit, meet for coffee or sunbathe.

The survey data sheets that follow collate all the observations by working group members during the week.

Conclusions and observations

The Millennium Garden is a valuable but under-used resource for residents, workers in Tenterden and visitors. The proposed cinema development would attract more people to the garden and increase its use. Although the garden area would be reduced, the scheme would provide compensating seating, greenery and other features that would increase the green-space amenity. Burrell Foley Fischer's 'alternative 2' proposal would screen seating areas from the sound and smell of the White Lion kitchen extractors (which would be unpleasant on the terrace proposed in 'alternative 1'). We have no doubt that an outdoor café area would prove very attractive. An entrance from the side of the garden (from the White Lion yard) rather than from the car park at the bottom would gain the White Lion an extra parking space, and allow the end of the garden to be separated off during construction rather than subjected to damage.

Survey Data

Wednesday 17/07	
10.00 am	Warm, sunny. Garden a bit overgrown. Grass not mown for about 2-3 weeks. Brambles extending from hedges. Hedges need a trim. Two trailers parked in the garden (TTC store store their trailer and other things in the garden because they have nowhere else to store equipment apparently). Two visitors arrived, looked around briefly and departed without stopping. Comment made "its bigger than I thought".
11.30 am	No visitors. Door into garden open at rear of White Stuff
30 min 12.30-1.30	Warm sunny day, very little breeze, wispy thin cloud, overgrown foliage infiltrating most of the benches so not very pleasant to sit down. I sat on the "Finch" bench for 30 minutes which gives a reasonable view of the garden and entrance pathway, the overgrown foliage makes it difficult to see people so if you pop in please walk round the garden otherwise you might miss someone. Lots of building noise coming from the various building sites. The White Lion extractor fan going the whole time – it's quite intrusive given the supposed peace of the garden. Can't hear the traffic (perhaps because of the loud extractor fan). Back door of White Stuff open 12.30-1pm 2 x 20 year olds? Sunbathing on the grass by the building site, lying on blankets, talking loudly at times. Still there when I left 12.30pm 1 man 50s jeans, walked along the back of White Stuff over to the White Lion fence under the pergola and then immediately walked out (in garden 10 seconds or so) 12.35pm 1 x female late 20s eating salad from bowl, joined by 2 others, one mid 20s female at 12.40 and another 20+ female at 12.45, one sat on the grass, the other two sat on the 1 st bench on the left. Office workers? All three females still there when I left 12.45-12.55pm 1 x female office worker sat on bench and left after 10 minutes (7 total visitors in the period, maximum 6 at any one time)
15.30 pm	3.30pm hazy, dry, warm – no visitors, door open at White Stuff, White Lion extractor fan on, construction noises
17.00 pm	5pm hazy, dry, warm – no visitors, window open at White Stuff, door closed, heavy pounding music beat heard from Tenterden Boxing Club, White Lion extractor fan on, cooking smells from White Lion
19.00 pm	Nobody
Thurs 18/07	
10.00 am	Garden empty although back gates open
11.30 am	Garden being tended by 3 TTC staff - cutting grass and plants plus weeding - great improvement- slight misty rain - no public

Slot		Thurs 18/07
30 min 12.30–1.30	<p>12 30. It was drizzling and breezy. No one there. The extractor fan was very noisy and there were strong greasy smells from it wafting into the garden. The grass was cut but the garden needed weeding. Nice shrubs had been planted but nothing screened the unattractive white building that was part of central garage. The door to the White Lion car park was open. Building work was noisy.</p> <p>12 50 - the weather had brightened up.</p> <p>13 10 - 2 young women (in their 20s) came and sat on a bench. (Pergola end of the garden) . 1 of them was smoking . They sat there eating their lunch.</p> <p>13 17 - 2 more young women came in and chatted to them and then sat on another bench to eat their lunch. A man in his 40's walked through at the same time and sat on a bench at the end of the garden , left hand side.</p> <p>13 27 man about 60 years and a women with a walking stick came and sat on a bench - another young woman joined the others on one of the benches.</p> <p>13 30 - I left. 8 were in the garden.</p>	
15.30 pm	Weather cloudy but not raining. No one was there. Extractor fan was still going.	
17.00 pm	Weather cloudy but not raining. No one was there. Extractor fan was still going.	
19.00 pm	Thursday 7pm garden now tidy but empty It's not tranquil with roof fan from white lion kitchen roaring.	

Slot		Friday 19/07
10.00 am	Dry, warm and overcast. Two ladies (20s/early-30s) talking on a bench when I arrived; they left at 10.10hrs. No further visitors before I left 5 mins later.	
11.30 am	Dry, warm and overcast. Nobody there when I arrived, but two ladies (50s) came soon afterwards with coffee and food, and were still there when I left.	
30 min 12.30–1.30	Overcast with occasional light rain. Nobody there when I arrived, but two young ladies (20s) came with lunch soon afterwards, and were still there when I left. A third lady (40s) came soon afterwards but left 5 mins later when it started to rain. A fourth young lady (20s) came and joined the original two at 13.15 hrs, and was talking with them when I left. (Four in total, three maximum at any one time, all female.)	
15.30 pm	Nobody	
17.00 pm	Nobody	
19.00 pm	Overcast, threatening rain (which arrived at 7.25!). So, even though a Friday evening and busy at the White Lion, no-one appeared for the duration from 1900-1930.	

Slot		Saturday 20/07
10.00 am	Morning cloudy after heavy overnight rain. Seats very wet! Nobody	
11.30 am	Nobody	

Slot	Saturday 20/07
30 min 12.30–1.30	<p>12.30 Bright but breezy. Empty on arrival. Noise/smells from WL extractor fan. 2 trailers.</p> <p>12.45: Two grandparents(?) with small child in buggy arrive. Have a picnic</p> <p>12.50: 2 ladies arrive (70s/30s?) Ate lunch</p> <p>13.00: Elderly couple arrive with younger man</p> <p>13.00: First entrants leave (duration of stay 15 mins)</p> <p>13.05: the 12.50 ladies leave (duration of stay 15 mins)</p> <p>13.10: 2 ladies arrive with young child - sit</p> <p>13.11: the 13.00 trio leave (duration of stay 11 mins)</p> <p>13.12: the 13.10 ladies and child leave (duration of stay 2 mins)</p> <p>13.14 couple arrive (70s?) Lady was the one from 12.50 returning</p> <p>13.15: 12.50 younger woman returns with child</p> <p>13.24: one of the 13.10 ladies and child return: they leave after one minute (Suspect child emergency toilet break!)</p> <p>13.25: lady and dog arrive: they leave after 2 mins. (Suspect loo stop for dog!)</p> <p>13.30: 13.14/15 people still in the garden</p> <p>Overall a total of ten separate adults and two children visited the garden (several of them more than once) with a maximum of eight in the garden at any time.</p>
15.30 pm	Sunny and breezy. Nobody
17.00 pm	Sunny and breezy. Nobody
19.00 pm	A lovely peaceful evening, Nobody,
Slot	Sunday 21/07
10.00 am	Weather sunny and warm. No-one in the garden. White Lion Fan on.
11.30 am	Two girls, late teens, drinking take-out coffee talking loudly and laughing, engaging with each other and their phones. White Lion fan on, cooking smells from White Lion. Loud crashing noises from bottles being emptied into waste bin in the White Lion yard
30 min 12.30–1.30	From 12.40-1.20 the weather was dry and mild with a mix of sunshine and cloud and a light, shifting breeze. There was nobody in the garden and nobody came into it during the whole 30 minutes, although the High Street was thronged. The noise and above all smell from the White Lion kitchen fans made it unpleasant to sit reading in the garden after a while. Moving around, it was possible to find spots where noise and smell were less obtrusive but impossible to avoid them altogether.
15.30 pm	Weather warm and sunny. 15.30: on arrival 2 mothers with young child and baby. At 1535, they all leave. Garden empty
17.00 pm	Cooler: one young man sitting at end of garden. Still there at 17.05
19.00 pm	Garden empty.

Slot	Monday 22/07
10.00 am	Weather fine, hot and sunny. Nobody in the garden.
11.30 am	Weather fine, hot and sunny. Nobody in the garden.
30 min 12.30–1.30	12:30 there were 4 women comprising 2 young ladies sitting together and 2 others sitting separately. Over the next half hour 4 additional women arrived and one couple. When I departed at 13:00 there were 10 persons present. None departed during the period. Overall the garden seems to be a very popular place to sit and eat lunch! Very peaceful (even with the fan at the White Lion).
15.30 pm	2 young men (20s) sitting at far end of garden. There when I arrived and when I left 10min later.
17.00 pm	Nobody
19.00 pm	Nobody. The White Lion terrace was very busy, suggesting a promising market if we can produce an attractive patio for light meals and drinks. In the back the dreaded fan was running on all visits, and on the 7pm visit there was a strong smell of cooking, so these would need to be addressed.

Slot	Tuesday 23/07
10.00 am	A lovely summer day, with a clear blue sky and a slight breeze to alleviate the heat and humidity. Nobody in the garden. I stayed for 15 minutes, but nobody came. White Lion fan was running but no cooking smells, thankfully.
11.30 am	Hot and sunny. Nobody in the garden.
12.30–1.30	Very hot, with full sun; the White Lion fan was running but there were still no cooking smells. At 12.30 there were two young women sitting on the grass, talking and eating lunch. At 12.40 three other women came and unpacked their lunch, joined by a fourth. 12.35 two young women arrived and sat to lunch in the sun. 12.55 a young woman arrived by herself and sat on a bench in the sun to eat. 13.06 two middle-aged women arrived with picnic things and went to the bottom of the garden. By this time there were 11 people using the garden, all women, in groups of 4-2-1-2-2. 13.10 two left from the group of four. 13.11 another young woman entered the garden and joined one of the groups of two. 13.15 the solitary young woman left. 13.20 the two young women who were there at 12.30 got up and left, as did the remaining two of the group of four. 13.24 an older woman arrived and sat to have lunch. 13.25 another young woman arrived solo, followed immediately by another. 13.26 two young women left. 13.30 a middle-aged woman arrived solo and started to eat lunch. Overall a total of sixteen people, all women, came to have lunch and in many cases socialise in the hour 12.30–1.30, with a maximum of eleven in the garden at any one time.
15.30 pm	Garden empty
17.00 pm	One elderly lady on a bench who left as soon as I arrived. A group of 6 sun worshipers (one lady topless) who brought own tables and chairs.
19.00 pm	Nobody

Photographs

