

**REPORT** on Project for Botanical Gardens at Quinta da Figueirinha, Silves  
As at 4th June 2016

Latest project meeting held Thursday May 12<sup>th</sup> at Quinta  
Present : Dr Gerhard Zabel, Marilyn Medina Ribeiro and Rosie Peddle  
Also Invited as possible volunteer helpers Claudia Gomes and Luena Gouveia

Meeting was called to view progress on cleaning and tree work, and to discuss next phase.

Work completed on **native plant garden** since last visit includes clearing ground around major trees to reveal trunks and allow evaluation for future pruning work. Also cleaning out dead material and weedy growth to show structure of main shrubs. All excess materials have been cleaned out from the site, burned or disposed of. It was noted that the site has a rich spontaneous display of pyramid orchids. It is also hoped that we can integrate wildlife friendly areas to encourage diversity in the bird population on the site.

It was agreed that it is now possible to start work on marking out the main paths for public access and some possible sites for sign boards were discussed. It was agreed that, where possible, new signs should be on their own low level supports and not attached to trees etc.

Pathways should take into account access for wheelchairs, prams etc. on the main route but with smaller side paths for access to as much of the site as possible. It would be part of the next phase to consider a sign board for the gardens situated at the Quinta to make visitors aware of the gardens with directions and basic info. there is the option to make a viewing point with a table and seating, in a rustic style.

A new water mains tube has been laid up to the site for occasional irrigation by hosepipe during first planting and subsequent summer season. A stand and tap need to be constructed. The previous trench has also been filled in and if compacted could form the basis for one of the main pathways.

There is currently a rough track up to the site for cars with a 'hammer head' turning circle but it is suggested that only disabled visitors should be encouraged to drive directly to the site.

On the proposed Filippi garden there is still a need for cleaning out of recurring acacia seedlings and other weedy growth. It was noted that there has been some spontaneous regrowth of *Clematis flammula* which is to be encouraged.

Suggested next steps

1. Preparation of detail path access
2. Layout during the summer months to show paths for final approval before work
3. Preparation of planting lists and budgets for first phase planting
4. Target autumn season 2016 for first phase planting
5. Prepare graphics for first phase signs, approve text and photos for quotes
6. Prepare newsletter specifically for the gardens with latest info and also send to professional contacts such as Olivier Filippi, Roy Lancaster, Tim Walker and John Fielding for comments.

NOTES on the volunteers

Claudia Gomes is very experienced in organic agriculture and has worked as a volunteer on the Iberian Lynx project as well as other ecology projects.

Luena Gouveia is experienced in ecoclothing projects with her own line of designs, she uses bio cotton and is a designer.