

**BRIDGE END GARDENS WORKING PARTY held at 4.30 pm initially at BRIDGE END GARDENS and then at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 12 June 2000.**

Present:- Councillor D J Morson - Chairman.  
Councillors Mrs D Cornell, R C Dean, M A Hibbs and D M Miller.

Officers in attendance:- J Bosworth, Miss S Chapman, D Demery (Bridge End Gardens only), B Smeeden and P J Snow.

Before the formal meeting took place at the Council Offices, Members met at Bridge End Gardens to meet Paul Dawson, the recently appointed Gardener/Supervisor and to inspect the recently erected chain link fencing and heritage fencing.

**BEG1 APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Mr M D White (Clerk to Saffron Walden Town Council).

**BEG2 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 May 2000 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**BEG3 BUSINESS ARISING**

**(i) BEG 28 (i) Potential Grant Sources**

It was reported that a grant application had now been submitted as part of the European Partnersearch - Culture 2000 initiative. It had been submitted by an organisation known as "European Extension for disabled and disadvantaged persons". Officers had originally been advised that financial assistance might be available for restoration work but this had proved not to be the case. Instead it would result, if successful, in an exchange of ideas and support for the endeavours of the taskforce, in association with the Chateau de Braives in Belgium. The outcome was expected to become known in July.

During the course of the discussion on this item it was suggested that a letter should be sent to the Members of the European Parliament for the Eastern Region making them aware of the steps taken to promote this grant initiative.

**BEG4 ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE**

It was noted that Paul Dawson had been appointed to the position of Gardener/Supervisor following the interviews held on 8 May. Members had met Mr Dawson at the site visit held prior to this meeting and were impressed with the progress made in restoring the gardens.

There were presently six participants on the task force scheme, including three employed under the New Deal Scheme. Two members of the Environmental Task Force were engaged in community service and one of these had asked to be considered as a volunteer. There were also a number of potential participants on the scheme from various parts of the District and beyond.

Members agreed to send a letter to Mr Dawson expressing pleasure with the work carried out.

#### **BEG5 FENCING - UNSPENT BALANCES**

The Working Party gave consideration to the expenditure of £4,200 remaining unspent following the erection of security fencing. During the course of the site visit, Members had agreed that it would be most appropriate to provide a boundary fence to deter entry to the gardens on land south east of the maze owned by the Town Council adjoining the Anglo American Memorial Playing Fields. It would then be possible to explore options for the restoration of the boundary wall including the erection of a replacement balustrade. The Property Services Manager was asked to prepare estimates.

It was also agreed that a letter should be sent to Saffron Walden Town Council seeking their approval for the proposed work.

#### **BEG6 MAZE VIEWING PLATFORM**

Members noted that the replacement viewing platform would be erected in the maze shortly.

#### **BEG7 APPLICATIONS FOR EXTERNAL FUNDING**

It was reported that letters had been sent to some fifty organisations and companies inviting them to participate in the restoration of the gardens. Several replies had been received and, to date, all of these were negative.

Applications for funding would now be made to English Heritage and the Essex Environmental Trust. Members considered that it would be appropriate to approach BAA at the same time and Officers undertook to write accordingly.

Members then discussed various methods of potential sponsorship arrangements with the private sector and a number of different ideas were explored. It was agreed that these would be pursued individually by Members of the Working Party who would liaise with each other and make individual approaches to potential local sources of funding. Officers would prepare a suitable information sheet to assist this process.

#### **BEG8 RE-COSTING OF WORKS**

It was reported that Liz Lake Associates had indicated their agreement with the principle of re-costing the work in the Consultant's report.

#### **BEG9 SECURITY OF THE GARDENS**

Officers circulated a report proposing how the gardens could be secured. The report made various proposals about locking up separate parts of the gardens to provide security in depth, and identified the locations where it was proposed that gates should be locked.

The Officers advised that there were no legal obstacles to the action being proposed but that the Council should formally advise the Fry family of any proposed measures and should advertise its intentions on the Council page and elsewhere. Notices should also be displayed at all public entrances indicating times of closure.

The Working Party considered the implications of locking the gardens and discussed the practicalities involved. These included the possibility of enforcing different summer and winter closing times and the extra costs involved in implementing the extra security measures. Members accepted that it was not possible to keep the gardens open at all times and that a firm policy was required to ensure proper security even though it was accepted that the great majority of users of the gardens were not engaged in vandalism.

The Working Party was unable to reach a conclusion on what were considered to be the best opening and closing times and agreed that the officers should ascertain the extra costs likely to be involved, and consult The Friends of Bridge End Gardens.

#### **BEG10 FRIENDS OF BRIDGE END GARDENS**

It was reported that there would be a public launch of The Friends of Bridge End Gardens at Saffron Walden Library on 21 June 2000. The Chairman of the Working Party and the Chief Executive had been invited to the launch.

There was general agreement that this occasion provided an ideal opportunity to publicise the measures taken by the Council and the progress which had been made towards the restoration of the gardens.

It was stressed that the Friends wished to play a positive role in the restoration work and discussions were taking place on partnership initiatives. A restoration scheme was being prepared by Officers, for the Rose Garden which was supported by the Friends.

The Chairman thanked Officers and Members for their contribution to the restoration work already in hand.

#### **BEG11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at 4.30 pm on Monday 24 July 2000.

The meeting ended at 6.10 pm.