

BRIDGE END GARDENS WORKING PARTY held at 4.30 pm at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 26 MARCH 2001

Present:- Councillor D J Morson – Chairman
Councillors Mrs D Cornell and D M Miller

Officers in Attendance:- J Bosworth, Miss S Chapman, D B Demery,
M T Purkiss and B Smeeden.

BEG60 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R C Dean and M A Hibbs and from the Clerk to Saffron Walden Town Council.

BEG61 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2001 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

BEG62 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute BEG50 – Proposed Wedding Reception

The Committee and PR Manager had written to the applicant informing him that the request had been approved subject to conditions and he was awaiting a reply.

(ii) Minute BEG56 – Service Team

The Landscape Officer reported that interviews had now been held for the post of gardener. However, no appointment had been made at this stage.

BEG63 RESTORATION OF SUMMER HOUSE

The Head of Property Services reported that quotations had been received for the restoration work to the summer house. It was not appropriate to undertake the work during the winter months and it was intended that the work should be carried out shortly. However, it would be necessary to secure the openings. Members noted that budgetary provision had been made for these works.

It was also noted that the paintings which had previously been displayed in the summer house had now been restored and it was hoped that they could be permanently installed in the summer house when the restoration works had taken place.

RECOMMENDED that the restoration works be carried out subject to all openings being suitably secured.

BEG64 TASKS IN THE GARDEN

It was noted that preparatory works on the rose garden had been completed and that it was possible that an offer of rose plants would be made by a national grower. It was also noted that the Friends were prepared to assist in this matter. Some preparatory work had been undertaken around Jacob's Well, including the removal of some vegetation and the digging out of the centre of the well. Further work was yet to be arranged. Replacement yew trees had been ordered. The compost area had been tidied up and hopefully would be completed by the end of March.

The Working Party was pleased to note that the Task Force had carried out the planting of a defensive hedge along the new security fence.

Tasks proposed for the period ending June 2001 included the completion of work at the Jacob's Well area and the opening of a new flower bed in the correct historic manner in the main lawn area.

BEG65 TASK FORCE UPDATE

The Landscape Officer reported that one extra participant was now back on the New Deal Scheme and one more could join soon. There were also two more potential candidates. Also, there had been a steady throughput of people on the Community Service Scheme.

BEG66 EXTERNAL FUNDING

The Head of Local Plan and Conservation reported that all preparatory work had been carried out on the Heritage Lottery Bid with the exception of the outline business plan. He hoped that this would be prepared and the application submitted by the next meeting of the Working Party. In answer to a question from Councillor Morson he agreed to pursue the application made to English Heritage for a contribution towards the restoration of key architectural features.

It was also noted that a photocall had been arranged with BAA Stansted in relation to its grant of £10,000 towards upgrading paths in the maze area. The Head of Local Plan and Conservation said that at some stage in the future it was hoped to erect a good quality acknowledgement board thanking donors.

BEG67 REVIEW OF CLOSURE OF GARDENS

During the winter months the gardens had been closed from 5pm until 9am. In order to prevent vandalism, it was still considered necessary for the gardens to be closed during the summer months. Whilst it would be preferable to arrange for the gardens to be open later in the evening during the summer, security was of paramount importance and unless satisfactory arrangements could be made for locking the gardens, it would be necessary for the existing closing times to be continued.

It was understood from informal discussions with the Police that there was a possibility that they might assist in the locking of the gates and a letter would be sent to them pursuing this matter further. The possibility of the Friends being involved would also be pursued. The most likely option suggested was the possible involvement of the resident parking attendants. These options would be investigated further.

RECOMMENDED that Officers explore and cost the options suggested and report back to the next meeting of the Working Party and that the existing closing arrangements continue in place until alternative arrangements can be made.

BEG68 LIAISON WITH FRIENDS

Councillor Morson reported that on 22 February he and the Head of Local Plan and Conservation had met with the Chairman and other representatives of the Friends of Bridge End Gardens. This had been a very useful meeting and the Friends had offered to help on a number of issues. These included historical research, a commitment to assisting with the rose garden and contributing towards the purchase of plants. The Head of Local Plan and Conservation had given a commitment to the Friends to provide storage for tools for their use at the gardens. The Friends had suggested that a family day/open day should be held in June and they were prepared to organise this event. Whilst Members supported this venture, it was felt that it might be better to arrange it later in the summer when many of the plants would be at their best.

Councillor Morson would respond to the Chairman of the Friends accordingly and thank him for the kind offers which had been made by the Friends.

BEG69 PARTNERSHIP WITH SAFFRON WALDEN POLICE

The Landscape Officer reported on a meeting which Officers had held with the Police. It was noted that funds were available from the Youth Justice Board for the provision of placements for young offenders. Also, an application had been made for a grant of £4,000 from the Board for the provision of tools, workbenches and stands in the gardens.

The Police had also submitted proposals for security arrangements in the gardens and these would be considered in detail at the next meeting.

BEG70

NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Monday 14 May 2001 at 4.30pm.

(Councillor Miller asked that an item concerning dogs in the gardens should be included on the agenda for this meeting.)