

BRIDGE END GARDENS WORKING PARTY held at 4.30 pm at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 14 MAY 2001

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

Officers in attendance:- J Bosworth, Mrs S Chapman, M T Purkiss and B Smeeden.

BEG71 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M A Hibbs and from the Clerk to Saffron Walden Town Council.

BEG72 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2001 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

BEG73 BYELAWS – PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee and PR Manager informed Members that the byelaws for the regulation of the Gardens had now been confirmed by the Home Office and would come into operation on 25 May 2001. Appropriate notices would be displayed in the Gardens once the issue of dogs referred to below was resolved.

At the last meeting, Councillor Miller had asked that consideration be given to making byelaws for the control of dogs in the Gardens. Provision for controlling dogs could not be included in the byelaws made by the Home Office as these were the responsibility of the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. The Committee and PR Manager reported that there were three types of dog bye-laws generally available:-

- Dogs on leads
- Dogs on leads by direction (ie where disturbance or annoyance takes place)
- Prohibition of dogs in an area

Problems caused were dogs running across planted areas and causing damage and also fouling. If either of the first two options was adopted a separate bye-law would need to be made concerning dog fouling. Dog fouling byelaws also required the provision of bins. The Working Party felt that the most practical way of dealing with problems caused by dogs was for a complete ban within the Gardens. The byelaws would provide an exemption for guide dogs. The DETR guidance on making byelaws stated that the dog ban byelaw was particularly suitable for small enclosed parks and gardens.

The Committee and PR Manager explained that if Members decided to proceed with a dog ban, the byelaws would need to be made and advertised and an opportunity would have to be given for objections to be submitted to the DETR.

The Working Party considered that the Gardens were not appropriate for dogs and

RECOMMENDED that byelaws be made providing for the banning of dogs from Bridge End Gardens, Saffron Walden.

BEG74 FURTHER TASKS IN THE GARDEN

The Head of Local Plan and Conservation reported that following a recent meeting with the Friends, two advisors with experience of managing classical gardens had offered to help with advice and forward planning. The Friends had also offered to help with some project work and had suggested that they could supervise the opening of the maze at weekends. These offers were welcomed and would be discussed further with the Friends.

A national grower of old varieties of rose had provided 75 plants which had arrived at very short notice and had been planted in the rose gardens. Although the Friends had been advised of the arrival of the plants, it had not been possible to involve them in this exercise, but further planting would be required in the autumn and their assistance would be taken up at that time.

The construction of a new flower bed and further work to the Jacob's Well area had not taken place because of the annual leave of the Gardener/Supervisor but would be completed before the next meeting of the Working Party.

BEG75 TASKFORCE UPDATE

The Landscape Officer reported that two additional participants had now joined the New Deal Scheme and it was hoped that a further applicant from the Haverhill Job Centre would be signed up shortly.

BEG76 EXTERNAL FUNDING UPDATE

The Head of Policy and Conservation reported that the Linbury Trust had offered a grant of £100,000 towards the Gardens. However, they had stated that this might be "reviewed" in the light of other offers. He also reported that a grant of £10,000 had been received from BAA Stansted and £4,240 from the Youth Justice Board. This brought the total contributions (including an element of professional fees referred to below) offered so far, including the Council's own budget provision, to £243,500. An application would shortly be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £363,327. A copy of the Business Plan in support of the application was circulated for Members' information and a copy would be placed in the Members' Room in due course.

Members recalled that the professional work in supporting this project would be provided by Council Officers. This made possible a substantial saving, but a total figure of £67,000 for professional fees needed to be charged to the project. It had been suggested that the sum could be spread over two financial years with £29,000 in 2002/03 and £38,000 in 2003/04. The Chairman of the Working Party agreed to discuss the matter further with the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee. The Working Party congratulated officers on the excellent work which had resulted in achieving such a magnificent level of external funding.

BEG77 SECURITY MEASURES

The Landscape Officer reported that Essex Police had provided a survey report on aspects of security at the Gardens. All the main items had been included in the Lottery Bid.

It was noted that the Friends had expressed concern at security at the Summer House and this was being investigated by the Council's Property Services Manager.

BEG78 REVIEW OF CLOSURE OF THE GARDENS

Following a number of complaints from members of the public, it had been decided to discontinue the closure of the Gardens at 5.00 pm. Whilst there had been no significant increase in vandalism since the Gardens had been left open, it was considered that the matter needed to be addressed urgently. Options of involving the Council's Parking Attendants and volunteers from the Friends had been investigated, but were not practicable. Officers were asked to investigate other options including combining the work with the closure of the Hill Street toilets and Jubilee Gardens, contacting local security companies and consulting the police. The Accountant agreed to undertake this work and report back to the next meeting.

BEG79 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Monday 25 June 2001 at 4.30 pm.

The meeting ended at 5.35 pm.