

Bewp51101s MN

**BRIDGE END GARDENS WORKING PARTY held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 5 NOVEMBER 2001 at 4.30 pm**

Present:- Councillor D J Morson – Chairman
Councillor R C Dean

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

BEG105 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs D Cornell, M A Hibbs and D M Miller and from the Clerk to Saffron Walden Town Council.

BEG106 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 August 2001 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

BEG107 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) By-Laws – Progress

The Committee and Communications Manager reported that the By-laws were now awaiting approval by the Home Office.

(ii) Progress on Summerhouse

The Local Plan and Conservation Manager reported that the works to the Summerhouse had been completed as far as was possible and the invoice would now be passed to the Essex Environment Trust for payment. It was suggested that the Trust should be invited to view the completed works and Officers would put appropriate arrangements in hand, probably in the Spring of next year. Further works including proper security and replacement of the temporary security measures will be considered following the outcome of the Heritage Lottery Fund bid.

(iii) Yew clippings for cancer treatment

It was noted that some yew clippings had been collected and sent to Greenoak Estates and a modest payment had been received. It was felt that an appropriate press release should be issued.

(iv) Friends Family Day

It was noted that the Friends Family Day held on 16 September 2001 had been well attended and a number of new contacts had been made.

(v) The Arts Council

Following the last meeting the Local Plan and Conservation Manager had discussed with the Arts Council the possibility of their future involvement. However they had expressed little interest which was disappointing.

(vi) Stone bench

The Working Party noted the kind offer from Councillor Miller to provide a stone seat in memory of his late daughter. A visit had been made to a sale of such items but no suitable bench was available. Subsequently, an approach has been made to Ivett & Reed of Cambridge and Councillor Miller was considering commissioning a Portland stone bench from them. Officers would discuss with Councillor Miller the arrangements for VAT.

BEG108 EXTENSION OF CONTRACT OF GARDENER/ENVIRONMENTAL TASKFORCE SUPERVISOR

The Working Party considered a report suggesting that the contract of the Gardener/Environmental Taskforce Supervisor should be extended. The original appointment had been on a fixed term contract of 12 months and it had subsequently been extended for a further year until 14 May 2002.

The current post holder had made a considerable contribution to the improvements that had been made to the gardens and in particular, had been extremely successful in administrating the Environmental Taskforce and other participants undertaking community service. The Council's involvement with the Employment Service and the Youth Justice Board and Essex Police had generated substantial payments which had gone towards the cost of training these participants and helping to offset the costs of the post holder. Also, the bid for Heritage Lottery funding had been made on the basis that the restoration represented a considerable degree of social inclusion and it was considered that the post holder and the Taskforce were essential to the restoration programme.

It was AGREED that the Environment and Transport Committee be advised that the Working Party supports the recommendation that the post of Gardener/Environmental Taskforce Supervisor be added to the draft estimates for 2002/03 for that Committee and that, subject to the necessary budget provision and the securing of lottery funding, the contract be extended to May 2005. If Heritage Lottery funding was not secured or the outcome of

such funding was unknown, the contract should be extended for a further year until May 2003.

BEG109 FURTHER TASKS IN THE GARDEN

It was noted that works to the trenches that had been dug to mend the leakage of the pond in the former kitchen garden had been completed. It had been decided to delay work on the gates so that other works could be completed within the gardens during the current spell of good weather.

BEG110 EXTERNAL FUNDING UPDATE

The Working Party were pleased to note that Sir Alan Haslehurst, MP had supported the Heritage Lottery Fund bid. It was anticipated that a "Stage 1 decision" would be made by the East of England Regional committee meeting on 28 November 2001.

The Landscape Officer reported that he had met with representatives from the Urban Policy and Social Exclusion Group of HM Treasury who were looking at examples of best practice in the management of public gardens. It was possible that Lord Faulkener would include reference to Bridge End Gardens in a forthcoming speech and it was hoped the Treasury would write a letter of support to the Council, which could then be forwarded to the Heritage Lottery Fund to assist with the bid. Officers from the Treasury had also said that it was possible that there could be a Ministerial visit to the gardens in the future.

The Landscape Officer reported on arrangements with Writtle College which had provided training for people on the New Deal scheme and said that they were now looking at the possibility of Writtle College students using the gardens as an outreach project. The college had asked if these arrangements were put in hand whether it would be possible to use a room at the Council Offices for meeting on an occasional basis and the Working Party supported this. It was likely that the students would undertake the cutting back of yew hedges and the felling of a beech tree which was suffering from root decay. This would save the Council a considerable sum. A very encouraging letter had been received from Writtle College that would be forwarded to the Heritage Lottery Fund in support of the bid.

BEG111 SECURITY

It was agreed that security issues would be discussed further following the outcome of the Heritage Lottery Fund bid.

BEG112 FEEDBACK FROM MEETING WITH FRIENDS

Councillor Morson said that at the last meeting with the Friends of Bridge End Gardens thanks had been expressed for the progress which had been made with fundraising and improvements in the gardens. The Friends had asked whether there were any preventative measures which could be taken in relation to flooding. Officers had inspected the Slade culvert following the recent flooding and, whilst the culvert had been cleared before the flooding had taken place, it appeared that there was little else that could be done. A wall had been damaged during the flooding and this would be repaired using appropriate materials, through an insurance claim.

It was hoped that the second tranche of roses would be planted soon and the Friends would be advised of the arrangements. The Landscape Officer had met with Richard Ayres and remedial measures had been taken which had obviated the need to replace some of the roses. The Landscape Officer reported that Richard Ayres was pleased with the improvements in the level of maintenance in the gardens and a further meeting had been arranged in February 2002.

BEG113 TASKFORCE UPDATE

The Landscape Officer reported that there were two participants on the follow through scheme and there had been one additional participant for a short period, who might be reintroduced in the future. Also, placements had been made by Harlow College and from SEETEC under the new deal 25 plus scheme. The Youth Justice Board were also making visits with individuals.

The Landscape Officer also reported on counselling arrangements which had been made for participants.

BEG114 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held at 4.30pm on 10 December 2001.

The meeting ended at 5.15 pm