

**BRIDGE END GARDENS WORKING PARTY held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 4.30pm on 17 JUNE 2002**

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

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

BEG156 APOLOGIES

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

BEG157 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2002 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

BEG158 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Stone Bench

At the last meeting reference had been made to the possibility of providing a memorial area within the Gardens. Whilst a designated area might not be appropriate the Heritage Lottery Fund had stated that discrete memorial artefacts within the Gardens would be acceptable.

(ii) Writtle College

At the last meeting consideration had been given to sponsoring one of the task force participants as a student at Writtle College. The Local Plan and Conservation Manager stated that he was discussing this matter with other relevant officers. If this option were pursued then a full report would be made to the next meeting. Councillor Mrs Cornell then advised that a grant towards the cost of the course fee might be available from the Saffron Walden United Charities for any person living in Saffron Walden. It was suggested that Officers pursue this option first.

(iii) Photo Call

It was hoped that the visit by Lord Sainsbury to the Gardens would be arranged after 24 July 2002 although no response had been received to date. Officers would pursue.

(iv) By-Laws

It was confirmed that copies of the by-laws were now on display within the Gardens. The possibility of providing more substantial signs would be reviewed in the future.

(v) Equipment

The Local Plan and Conservation Manager reported that items of equipment had now been ordered and were awaiting delivery. The issue of a lawn mower had still to be resolved. The Working Party reaffirmed that the current lawnmower was inadequate and urged officers to resolve the matter as soon as possible.

BEG159 TENDERS FOR MANAGEMENT AND HISTORIC PLANTING PLANS

Prior to the meeting the Chairman of the Working Party opened two tenders which had been received for the preparation of an historic planting plan, and a management plan. The following tenders had been received:

Elizabeth Banks Associates Ltd	£26,472.50
Liz Lake Associates	£43,677.00

Officers prior to accepting a proposal would check the tenders. The HLF had offered a separate development grant of £20,600 (being 75% of eligible development costs) towards the preparation of a planting plan alone. HLF had stated they would not finance preparation of a management plan. As Members were aware, it would be necessary for the Council to contribute the remaining 25%. Officers would assess the exact amount from the financial information contained in the successful bid. Saffron Walden Town Council had previously offered £10,000 towards the Bridge End Gardens project and Councillor Mrs Cornell advised that it would be appropriate to put that contribution towards the cost of the preparation of the management plan. She would raise this matter with the Clerk to the Town Council and advise Officers accordingly. Alternatively the residual sum could be sourced from the £25,000 already set aside by the District Council.

BEG160 HLF REQUIREMENTS FOR MAKING MAZE AND WALLED GARDENS MORE ACCESSIBLE

Members were aware that the Heritage Lottery Fund had offered a Stage 1 pass but required additional details to be submitted as part of the Stage 2 bid. One requirement was that “an assurance must be provided and details supplied to show that the maze and walled garden will be more readily accessible to visitors than they are at present”. A paper on the subject had been forwarded to Members.

Members were advised of the current situation and informed that it was proposed that the revised arrangements relating to the maze be continued and that the gates to both areas remained open during the working day, thus providing much greater accessibility. The Local Plan and Conservation Manager reported that officers had recently met with a security company who would be providing a costed proposal by the end of June. These measures would include at least one pole mounted security camera scanning key areas of the Garden including the maze and walled garden. Once security measures were in place it was suggested that the attendant who opened and closed the toilets during the weekends also opened and shut the gates to the

maze and walled gardens at the same time. A price had been requested from the current contractor for this small additional service and a figure of £20 per week had been put forward. Members' felt that this figure was acceptable and should be included in future contracts.

Once the electricity had been laid to the toilets there could be flexibility to extend accessibility to a later time on summer evenings should the toilets be opened for a longer period. However, this was a matter that would be explored later.

The Working Party stressed the importance of the involvement of the Friends and for them providing a rota of manning the maze area at weekends as they had agreed. Officers would raise this matter with the Friends.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1 Members accept the principle of providing greater public accessibility to the maze and walled gardens as required by the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- 2 The revised arrangements recently initiated in relation to the maze continue.
- 3 The maze and kitchen garden be accessible at the weekends between 8.30am – 5.30 pm once security measures are in place.
- 4 The contract with Superclean be amended to include provision for the opening and closing of the gardens for 2002/03 and the additional cost be included in the draft 2002/03 budget.

BEG161 **TASK FORCE UPDATE**

Following discussions with Writtle College, a new application had been made for funding from the Government's Learning and Skills Council to provide on site horticultural training. If successful, funding of up to £47,500 could be accessible.

The Local Plan and Conservation Manager reported that the RPS Rayner Charity, subject to agreement with police checks procedure, had appointed two persons. They would provide sixteen hours per week to develop communication and other general learning skills for the task force participants. There would be no cost to the Council for this service.

BEG162 **PROGRESS WITH HLF BID**

The Local Plan and Conservation Manager reported that good progress was being made. As set out above, tenders had now been received, for the planting and management plans. The recommendation above concerning greater accessibility to the maze and walled garden would now be forwarded to HLF who hopefully would approve it. The documentation for attracting new audiences had been prepared and agreed by HLF. A detailed schedule of repair works to structures, statues and paths was well advanced and prices would be sought prior to the next meeting. The latter had been discussed in draft with the HLF monitor who had complimented officers on its quality. Details of the refurbished toilets had been submitted to HLF who were

anticipated to approve them shortly. Officers had met with a security company who had been asked to submit a costed proposal by the end of June. Thus the commitments required by HLF in relation to the Stage 2 submission were well advanced and on time.

BEG163 FEEDBACK FROM MEETING WITH FRIENDS

Councillor Morson reported that the meeting scheduled for 12 June had been cancelled.

BEG164 BY-LAWS

Councillor Morson reported that he had received a letter from a dog-walker concerning the dog ban by-law and asking for the matter to be reviewed. However, it was borne in mind that the Home Office had felt that the dog ban by-law was justified because of the special nature of the Gardens and the availability of alternative areas nearby. It was concluded that it was too early to review the by-law and the correspondent would be advised accordingly.

BEG165 MEMORIALS

It was reported that a letter had been received concerning the possibility of placing a memorial stone at one of the fountains in the garden. However, because of the historic nature of the Gardens this was not felt to be appropriate and it was suggested that if the person would like to make a contribution towards the Gardens, a suitable inscription could be included on the proposed roll of supporters, which would be displayed in the Gardens at a later stage. Councillor Morson agreed to discuss this matter with the correspondent.

BEG166 BEST VALUE REVIEW

Councillor Morson reported that at the meeting of Scrutiny Committee 1 it had been suggested that, as the Best Value Review of planning had been extended for six months, it might be appropriate to transfer the Bridge End Gardens element to the current review being undertaken of leisure services. However, the Scrutiny Committee did not feel that this would be appropriate and this view was shared by the Working Party.

BEG167 NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at 4.30 pm on 15 July 2002.

The meeting ended at 5.30 pm.