

Committee: Bridge End Gardens Working Party

Date: 17 June 2002

Agenda Item No: 5

Title: Heritage Lottery Fund, Bridge End Gardens, Condition 4 - requirement regarding greater public accessibility to the Maze and Walled Garden

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Introduction

- 1 The letter dated 29 November 2001 from the Heritage Lottery Fund offered a Stage 1 pass but required additional details to be submitted as part of the Stage 2 bid. Officers are in the process of fulfilling this requirement, which has to be completed by 28 November 2002.
- 2 Heritage Lottery Fund requirement no. 4 stated 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**'.
- 3 At the date of the letter referred to above, the Maze was only accessible to the public by obtaining a key from the Tourist Information Centre or by asking the Gardener/Supervisor to open its main gate. The Walled Garden was accessible to the public during the working day but not in the evenings or at weekends.

The current situation

- 4 Following a recent request from the 'Friends' that the Maze be more readily open during the daytime, its main gate was left open during the working day for an experimental period of a month. This revised arrangement has worked very well. The Maze became more accessible to the public who benefited from greater convenience. Additionally the gardeners were no longer diverted from their main tasks.
- 5 At weekends, the public can still only access the Maze by obtaining a key from the Tourist Information Centre. The Walled Garden remains closed to the public in the evenings and at weekends.

The Future

- 6 It is proposed that the revised arrangements relating to the Maze continue and that the gate remains open during the working day, thus providing much greater public accessibility.

- 7 As Members are aware, security measures will be provided as part of the restoration. For information, Officers have recently met with a security company who will be providing a costed proposal by the end of June. These measures will include at least one pole mounted security camera scanning key areas of the Gardens, including the Maze and Walled Garden. Once security measures are in place, it is suggested that the attendant who opens and closes the nearby toilets at 0830 and 1730 during the weekends, also opens and shuts the gates to the Maze and Walled Garden at the same times. A price has been requested from Superclean for this small additional service and Members will be advised of any response at their meeting.
- 8 Once electricity has been laid to the toilets, there may be flexibility to extend accessibility to a later time on summer evenings should the toilets be opened for a longer period. However, this is a matter that can be explored later.

RECOMMENDED that Members accept the principle of providing greater public accessibility to the Maze and Walled Garden as required by the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is also recommended that the revised arrangements recently initiated in relation to the Maze continue. Additionally it is recommended that the Maze and Kitchen Garden are accessible at the weekends between 0830-1730, once security measures are in place.

Background Papers: Letter from the Heritage Lottery Fund dated 29 November 2001.