

**BRIDGE END GARDENS TASK GROUP held at BRIDGE END GARDENS
SAFFRON WALDEN at 4.30 pm on 9 JUNE 2003**

Present:- Councillor D J Morson – Chairman.
Councillors A J Ketteridge and V Ollier.

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

BEG1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R P Chambers and B M Hughes and from the Clerk to Saffron Walden Town Council.

BEG2 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Bridge End Gardens Working Party held on 14 April 2003 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

BEG3 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Flooding

The Project Manager informed Members that the 33 Engineer Regiment hoped to undertake work to the defensive ditch in July.

(ii) Gardner/Supervisor

It was noted that the Gardner was on sick leave until the end of June and the Project Manager reported that if the situation continued it would be necessary to request a temporary replacement. The absence was causing problems of delay. Members acknowledged this situation of prolonged absence could not continue without being rectified.

(iii) Felling of Trees

The Project Manager reported that the account for the felling of trees had been settled. However, a supplementary bill had been submitted for approximately £1,000 in relation to serious disruption and delays which had been caused by filming for the BBC TV series "Secret Gardens". The Project Manager confirmed that there had been serious disruption to the work on the trees and he considered that it was reasonable to meet the extra costs incurred by the contractor although he would try to negotiate a lower sum. The additional cost could be met from the project's existing budget.

RESOLVED that the principle of meeting the additional costs incurred by the contractor be agreed and that the account be settled in a sum to be negotiated by the Project Manager.

BEG4 PROGRESS REPORT

Members of the Task Group received a progress report on the letting of contracts for the works to be undertaken in the Gardens. Members then carried out an inspection of the Gardens and viewed the work in progress.

BEG5 ROYAL VISIT

The visit by the Earl of Wessex had been extremely successful and had attracted some excellent publicity.

BEG6 BYELAWS RELATING TO DOGS

Byelaws prohibiting dogs from Bridge End Gardens had been made in August 2001. A letter and a petition had recently been received requesting that consideration be given to allowing dogs in the Gardens.

The Task Group considered that the Gardens were a quiet place which could be visited without being disturbed by dogs. In particular Members considered there were adequate areas nearby where dogs could be exercised.

However, it was acknowledged that a number of people walked their dogs from the Castle Street entrance and crossed the top part of the Gardens to gain access to the adjoining meadows and there was some support for allowing this practice to continue. The Committee and Communications Manager said that if Members wished to relax the byelaw in this part of the Garden it would be necessary to seek legal advice regarding the practicality and procedure for this.

RESOLVED that, subject to the receipt of satisfactory legal advice, the byelaws be relaxed to enable dogs to be walked across the top part of the Gardens to gain access to the meadow.

BEG7 MAIN BUILDING CONTRACT

It was noted that two tenders had been received for the main building contract and these were currently being evaluated. The tenders would be evaluated against three criteria namely price, specialist knowledge and historic content. Both tenders were within the budget estimate and once evaluated either tender could be accepted without further reference to Committee.

BEG8 FEEDBACK FROM MEETING WITH FRIENDS

Councillor Morson said that there had not been a recent meeting with the Friends. However, the Task Group wished to place on record its gratitude for the assistance of the Friends with both the Royal Visit and work in the Dutch Garden.

BEG9 WRITTLE COLLEGE

Councillor Morson again raised the possibility of seeking funding to enable a former task force participant to undertake a course at Writtle College. It was noted that funding might be available through the Saffron Walden United Charities and Councillor Morson would discuss this matter further with representatives of that charity.

BEG10 NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at 4.30 pm on Monday, 14 July 2003.

The meeting ended at 5.45 pm.