

**BRIDGE END GARDENS TASK GROUP held at BRIDGE END GARDENS
SAFFRON WALDEN at 4.30 pm on 21 JULY 2003**

Present:- Councillor D J Morson – Chairman.
Councillor B M Hughes.

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

BEG11 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R P Chambers, A J Ketteridge and V Ollier and from the Clerk to Saffron Walden Town Council.

BEG12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor B M Hughes declared an interest as a member of the Friends of Bridge End Gardens.

BEG13 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2003 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

BEG14 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Flooding

The Project Manager reported that it was now highly unlikely that 33 Engineer Regiment would be carrying out the work to the defensive ditch. Accordingly, he was obtaining quotations for this work and a contractor would be appointed as soon as possible, subject to HLF agreement.

(ii) Gardener/Supervisor

It was noted that the Gardner was still on long term sick leave. As reported at the last meeting the absence was causing problems of delay and the Project Manager had discussed the matter with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The HLF had agreed that a new Gardener could be appointed from 1 August 2003 for a six month period. Accordingly, the Project Manager had appointed an appropriate person who would be seconded from Contract Services.

(iii) Felling of Trees

The Project Manager reported that a sum of £1,000 had been received from the BBC in relation to the filming of the series 'Secret Gardens'. Since the last meeting he had negotiated with the contractor concerning the account for the felling of trees and had been able to negotiate a lower sum to that originally requested. The contribution from BBC more than compensated.

(iv) Bye-laws relating to dogs

It was noted that legal advice had been received since the last meeting and it was now possible to relax the byelaws to enable dogs to be walked across the top part of the gardens to gain access to town meadow.

(v) Main building contract

The Project Manager reported that Mowlem Rattee and Kett had been appointed to undertake this work. A pre-contract meeting would be held later this week.

(vi) Writtle College

The Project Manager reported that the former Task Force participant no longer wished to pursue a course at Writtle College.

BEG15 PROGRESS REPORT

The Project Manager reported that work on installing security cameras in the garden would start shortly and it was hoped that this would be completed by the end of August. An electricity supply had now been provided to the garden shed and he would be arranging for the bye-laws to be displayed in good quality material as soon as possible, taking into account the other pressing priorities. The Project Manager said that due to the absence of the Gardener/Supervisor, a number of on going maintenance projects needed to be undertaken as a matter of urgency. Priority was being given to the weeding and tidying of the rose garden and the Dutch garden and thereafter working out from these areas.

BEG16 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

The Project Manager reported that the Grounds Maintenance Contract for all Council open spaces was up for review and would expire at the end of December 2003. Officers felt that the new contract should exclude Bridge End Gardens because of its specialist nature and the advantages that would be gained by having both employees under the control of the Council. The Project Manager said that if the Bridge End Gardens element was excluded from the contract the Council should take on the employee currently employed by Serviceteam and acquire some new machinery up to a cost of up to £8,000 which would be required in any case.

BEG17 INTERPRETATION BOARD

The Project Manager reported that he intended to place a high quality interpretative board in the gardens to explain the project and progress with it. A sum of £2,000 was provided in the HLF budget for this purpose.

The Task Group supported this ^{Page 2} proposal.

BEG18 ESSEX ENVIRONMENT TRUST AWARD

It was noted that the Essex Environment Trust had awarded a certificate of merit for the Bridge End Gardens Project. The Trust were particularly impressed with the high standard of workmanship in the restoration of the Summer House.

The Task Group asked that the certificate be displayed in a permanent place.

BEG19 FEEDBACK FROM MEETING WITH FRIENDS

The Chairman reported that a Councillor Action Day had been arranged in the gardens for 2 August 2003. Councillors were being asked to undertake some work in the garden between 10am and 5pm and a number of Councillors had already volunteered. The Chairman would raise the matter at the Council meeting on 22 July.

It was also agreed that a press release would be issued and a photo opportunity would be provided at 11am on that day.

BEG20 BBC 'SECRET GARDENS'

It was understood that the BBC would be completing the filming of the series 'Secret Gardens' on 3 and 4 September 2003 and Members were welcome to participate on those dates. The Project Manager said that, subject to the security cameras being installed, he hoped to arrange for a civic event where the statue and fountain could be installed.

BEG21 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be on a date to be agreed with the Chairman.

The meeting ended at 5.20 pm