

**BRIDGE END GARDENS TASK GROUP held at BRIDGE END GARDENS
SAFFRON WALDEN at 4.30 pm on 31 AUGUST 2004**

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

Officers in Attendance: J Bosworth, S Chapman, S McLagan and
M T Purkiss.

Also present at the invitation of the Chairman: Mr C Goldie (except item
BEG77)

BEG71 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R P Chambers and
B M Hughes.

BEG72 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2004 were approved as a correct
record and signed by the Chairman.

BEG73 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute BEG66 (ii) Postcard of Mosaic Tile

It was reported that the TIC were preparing a postcard incorporating three
photographs including the mosaic tile.

(ii) Minute BEG66 (iv) Health and Safety

It was noted that the height of the London Plane Tree had been reduced by
25%. It was considered that the work had been undertaken with great care
and to a very high standard and this view was endorsed by Mr Goldie.

(iii) Minute BEG66 (vii) Garden Relaunch

It was noted that an approach would be made to the Earl of Wessex during
September.

(iv) Minute BEG69 Locking of the Garden

At the last meeting it had been decided that the garden should remain
unlocked for the time being and that the situation be monitored closely. The
Project Manager reported that there had been no significant problems during
this period and as such the Group decided the garden would continue to be
unlocked and the situation continue to be monitored. Mr Goldie said that the
maze was currently opened on Sunday from 2 – 5 pm and he asked whether

this period could be extended to include Saturday. He said that the Friends were willing to close and open the maze if this was agreed. The Project Manager reported that the HLF Eastern Regional Manager had visited the gardens recently and would support the maze being open for an experimental period. He said that the Tourist Information Centre had some reservations but after further discussion the group considered that the proposal should go ahead.

Accordingly, it was agreed that the maze be opened on Saturday and Sunday afternoons from 2 – 5 pm for an experimental period covering September and October.

BEG74 HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Project Manager reported that he undertook a health and safety check on the first day of each month and there were no outstanding matters to be addressed.

BEG75 FEEDBACK FROM THE FRIENDS

Mr Goldie reported that the Friends had carried on with the pattern of one group gardening day each month. The Friends had also organised two evening tours of the garden for Town and District Councillors and the second of these would be held on 14 September. He said that the Friends had requested that signs be placed advising that ball games and cycling were prohibited within the garden and asked if this could be carried out without leading to a proliferation of signs. The Project Manager said that unobtrusive signs would be placed at key entrances to the garden.

BEG76 HIRE OF THE GARDEN

The Chairman reported that since the last meeting, Councillor Hughes had investigated the charging policy for the hire of gardens elsewhere in the region. She had discussed this with the Chairman and favourable consideration had been given to the scheme at Bury St Edmunds where there were three levels of charging as follows:

Commercial Organisations - £400 per day
Film Companies promoting the gardens or the town - £100 per day
Local Organisations and individuals - £35 per day

A deposit was also required as an insurance against damage to the gardens. The Project Manager reported that an email had been received from Councillor Hibbs supporting a flexible scheme of charges. However, he said that before a decision was taken, officers would need to look at the legal situation with the lease and the VAT issues.

It was also noted that there were two specific hirings which needed to be determined. The Friends were hiring the garden on Sunday 5 September and, in view of their invaluable assistance in the restoration project, the Task Group considered that no charge should be made for this event.

In addition, Councillor Hibbs had hired the garden for a private function in August and it was noted that the appropriate charge at that time was £350. The Task Group confirmed that, despite the review being undertaken, the charge of £350 must be levied for this event.

BEG77 FUTURE STAFFING

The Task Group considered a detailed report which assessed the future staffing needs of Bridge End Garden to ensure that the restoration project would be completed within the deadline imposed by the Heritage Lottery Fund. In order to meet this deadline, the report recommended that Gardener 2's contract be extended for a further year.

The report also assessed the staffing requirements to maintain the gardens to a high horticultural standard once restoration was completed. It recommended that prior to completing restoration, a suitably qualified horticulturalist be appointed to advise on the future staffing arrangements for the garden. The full report would be considered by the Community and Leisure Committee at its meeting on 7 September 2004.

Councillor Ketteridge also asked if future arrangements could include looking at bringing other gardens in Saffron Walden into this contract and officers said that this would be taken into account although noting that additional sites could not be managed with the current staff levels at Bridge End Garden.

The Task Group supported the recommendations contained in the report.

BEG78 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Monday 18 October 2004 at 4.30 pm at the Council Offices.

BEG79 PROGRESS REPORT

Members then undertook a short tour of the garden to review progress.

The meeting ended at 5.20 pm.

