

**BRIDGE END GARDENS TASK GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 4.30 pm on 13 JUNE 2005**

Present:- Councillor D J Morson – Chairman.
Councillors B M Hughes, R F Freeman and A J Ketteridge.

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

BEG94 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R P Chambers. The Chairman also welcomed Councillor Freeman to his first meeting of the Task Group.

BEG95 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

BEG96 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute BEG90 – Opening of the Maze at Weekends

Members of the Task Group expressed their gratitude to the Friends for opening the Maze at weekends. The Project Manager added that this was particularly useful as the Heritage Lottery Fund attached great importance to this aspect and confirmed that there had been no problems during the periods within which the Maze had been opened. It was suggested that it should continue to be opened at weekends until the middle of October.

(ii) Minute BEG90 – Postcard of Mosaic tile

Copies of a postcard prepared by the TIC depicting the Mosaic tile were circulated.

(iii) Minute BEG19 – Marriage Celebration

The Project Manager confirmed that the arrangements for the marriage celebration on 26 August 2005 had been finalised and the Chairman asked that the issue of formalising a charging structure should be considered at a future meeting.

BEG97 PROGRESS REPORT

The Project Manager was pleased to report that all work was on course for completion by 8 July 2005. He said that the statues were being returned during the forthcoming week and work on the car park was nearing completion. Priority would now be given to completing the horticultural work in time for the celebration of the completion of the project.

BEG98

CELEBRATION OF THE COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT

The Project Manager reported that caterers had now been engaged for the event and an assumption had been made that there would be 140 attendees. The principal speaker would be Liz Forgan, the Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the other main speakers would be Tony Fry, on behalf of the owners of the garden and Councillor Morson on behalf of the Council. Lord Sainsbury had agreed to unveil the 'goose boy' statue and at the same time the Chairman of the Council, Councillor Morson, and Charles Goldie, on behalf of the Friends, would unveil other statues in the garden. The Project Manager reported that a photographic exhibition showing the gardens before and after the restoration would be displayed in the marquee. Councillor Morson also agreed to act as Master of Ceremonies for the celebration event.

BEG99

STAFFING AND APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT

It was recognised that once the restoration project had been completed it would be essential for the gardens to be maintained in a professional manner. The Project Manager said that it had already been agreed that an independent consultant should be appointed and he had contacted Richard Ayres who had been involved with the project previously and he had expressed a willingness to undertake this work. Members of the Task Group agreed that Richard Ayres would be an excellent consultant for the project and were aware of the work which he had undertaken at Anglesey Abbey. Mr Goldie said that a consultant would be particularly valuable in planning the year's work and in providing horticultural expertise. He suggested that regular meetings should be held between the consultant and the garden staff to address these issues. The Chairman suggested that if Richard Ayres accepted the appointment, a meeting could be arranged to discuss future arrangements.

BEG100

FEEDBACK FROM THE FRIENDS

Mr Goldie reported that two more weeding days were planned before the official opening on 8 July and he said that there were an increasing number of Friends who were working at other times in the gardens. He said that he was very impressed with the high number of visitors which had been attracted to the gardens in recent months. He added that the Friends hoped to organise a further open day on Sunday 4 September where members of the Friends would be able to provide advice and information on aspects of the restoration project. He said that once the project had been completed it would be necessary to discuss the role of the Friends in the future and arrangements would be made for a meeting to take place.

Councillor Freeman said that the open day planned on 4 September coincided with an event organised by the Town Council at the Anglo-American Memorial and he would discuss the matter with the Town Council to see whether these events could be co-ordinated.

BEG101

FUTURE ROLE OF THE TASK GROUP

The Chairman reported that the view of the Constitution Task Group was that task groups should be wound up once their purpose had been achieved. The Task Group felt that unless other important issues arose and once the staffing situation had been resolved at the gardens, it would be appropriate for the Task Group to be wound up. However, there would be a need to continue liaison with the Friends and it was suggested that Mr Goldie could be invited to appropriate meetings of the Community and Leisure Committee.

In conclusion, the Chairman expressed his thanks to all those who had been involved in the restoration project and paid particular tribute to the work of the Project Manager.

The meeting ended at 5.10 pm.