

**BRIDGE END GARDENS TASK GROUP held at the COUNCIL OFFICES  
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 5.00 pm on 19 DECEMBER 2005**

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

Also present:- Councillor S C Jones.

Officers in attendance:- J Bosworth, C Hughes, S McLagan and M T Purkiss.

**BEG116 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R P Chambers and Mr C Goldie.

**BEG117 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**BEG118 BUSINESS ARISING**

Councillor Morson said that he would be contacting the Friends regarding the possible opening of the Maze on Sundays during the winter months.

**BEG119 HLF GRANT**

At the last meeting the Task Group had discussed the possible Phase 2 project which involved the transformation of the Walled Garden into a Victorian fruit garden. The estimated cost was £200,000 - £250,000 and the HLF had offered a 90% Project Planning Grant of £9,000 for the engagement of a consultant to develop detailed proposals in respect of Phase 2.

At the meeting on 12 December, Members had requested further information and justification relating to the time required by a Project Officer to undertake the tasks involved in the three distinct periods of the project. The first period would be from January 2006 to the end of May 2006 and work would be concentrated on preparation of a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The second period of work would involve liaison with the HLF whilst the application was being considered and, if the bid was successful, the final period would be the completion of the project and the current proposal is to include the costs for this within the HLF bid.

At the last meeting Members had asked for details of the employment costs of the appointed Project Officer and how they were justified. A detailed schedule was set out which explained the estimated time for completing each of the main tasks. The report considered at the last meeting had assessed the employment costs of a Project Officer from 1 January to 31 May to be £10,000 and it was noted that the total hours required for this period of the

project would be 500 hours based on the Project Officer working three days a week.

At the last meeting Members had also asked for officers' views on whether the HLF Project Planning Grant already approved would guarantee an HLF approval for the Phase 2 Restoration. Officers advised that, whilst no firm guarantee could ever be offered in such situations, it was likely that such an approval was probable if a competent bid was submitted. The Project Manager said that it also needed to be borne in mind that the HLF Phase 1 bid had been held in high esteem and the Independent Heritage Lottery Monitor had stated that "I am sure your success is predicted on your outstanding performance in delivering the Phase 1 Grant on time and within budget....value for money indeed." He added that the second phase works were essential for the public to really be able to understand and actually witness what an early Victorian pleasure ground was like.

The Project Manager then explained the work involved in more detail and answered Members' questions. He then left the meeting whilst Members considered their decision.

Members recalled that at the last meeting it had been reported that the Project Manager was due to retire on 31 December 2005 but had expressed an interest in undertaking the work for making a further HLF bid and carrying out the project management work involved in its completion. The Task Group discussed whether this would be the best and most useful way of progressing the project and concluded that it would provide best value for money.

Members then discussed the options for engaging the current Project Manager which could be as a consultant at a day rate, a contract for services with tasks to be completed, or extending the period of employment of the Project Manager with reduced hours or offering a temporary contract. It was noted that the last option would incur on-costs and the first may increase costs if the project took more consultancy days than planned for.

The Executive Manager Human Resources reported that if Members supported the continued involvement of the Project Manager it could be progressed by officers without further Committee approval. It was confirmed that there was money in the Quality of Life budget for the first stage of the project.

Members then expressed their support for the engagement of the Project Manager on a contract for services basis up to a maximum budget of £10,000 with a further budget for expenses to be managed by the Executive Manager Quality of Life.

## BEG120 **SEASON'S GREETINGS**

The Chairman wished Members and Officers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The meeting ended at 5.40 pm. Page 2