

**BRIDGE END GARDENS TASK GROUP held at the COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 4.30 pm on 8 MAY 2006**

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

Also present:- Mr C Goldie.

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

BEG121 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R P Chambers, R F Freeman and A J Ketteridge.

BEG122 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hughes declared a personal interest as member of the Friends of Bridge End Gardens.

BEG123 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

BEG124 MATTERS ARISING

Mr Goldie confirmed that the Friends would continue to open the Maze from 10.00 am to 5.00 pm on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays until October. The times would be scaled back during the winter months. Councillor Morson asked that Mr Goldie pass on the Task Group's appreciation to the Friends.

BEG125 PHASE 2 PROJECT UPDATE

The Restoration Manager reported that the project planning work had now been nearly completed by Liz Lake Associates. He said that he was pleased with the consultant's work which respected the character of the Garden and provided a simple solution and emphasised that the restoration of the two glass houses would act as a focal point. He said that a sensory garden and an Auricula theatre would be included within the project.

He added that there had been great success in involving the local community including schools, Harlow young offenders, North West Essex Community Health and the Bell College. He concluded that he was confident that the scheme would not incur additional maintenance work. He said that the estimated cost had been £250,000 and the estimate to be submitted to HLF

was in the sum of £220,900. The application to the HLF would be submitted by 31 May 2006.

Mr Goldie said that the Friends fully supported the scheme and previous concerns about maintenance and glass had been addressed. In answer to questions the Restoration Manager confirmed that the site would be available for functions although the insurance cover would need to be revised to take account of the new glass houses.

BEG126 INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS

The Executive Manager Quality of Life reminded Members that the Restoration Manager had been offered a contract for services for the first period of the scheme up to the end of May 2006. She suggested that a similar contract for services would be offered to the Restoration Manager for the second period to enable him to deal with responses to the HLF and confirmed that funding for this was available in the Quality of Life budget.

The Task Group also considered the long term arrangements and felt that, should the HLF bid be successful, the appointment of the Restoration Manager for a period of one year to attend to the duties three days a week on a salary of £20,000 be supported in principle. The Executive Manager reported that financial regulations normally required three written quotations for a contract of this nature but if the circumstances were appropriate this requirement could be waived. She confirmed that she felt that this was the case and intended to proceed along those lines if Members supported the proposals. Having regard to Mr Bosworth's extensive experience in project management on this site and a proven track record in respect of Phase 1 restoration, Members supported the proposals as set out above.

BEG127 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was noted that it would be recommended at Annual Council that the Task Group should continue to operate if the HLF bid was successful. Officers also confirmed that the maintenance arrangements were now the responsibility of Environment and Cultural Services and that sufficient resources were in place to enable the restoration to be completed and for continued maintenance to be provided. The Chairman asked that the Executive Manager Environment and Cultural Services be invited to attend the next meeting.

The Chairman thanked Mr Bosworth for all the hard work and attention to detail which he had put into the HLF bid.

The meeting ended at 5.25 pm.