

Management Committee

15 August 2017

Greenhill Gardens Gateway Project

For Decision

Portfolio Holder(s)/ Briefholder

Cllr Kate Wheller, Community Facilities

Senior Leadership Team Contact:

S Hill, Strategic Director

Report Author:

Tara Williams, Greenspace & Bereavement Services Manager

Statutory Authority

Purpose of Report

- 1 To present to the committee a grant request from the Friends of Greenhill Gardens to assist with open space improvements at Greenhill Gardens.

Recommendations

- 2 That Management Committee:
 - a) awards a one-off grant of £6,000 to the Friends of Greenhill Gardens as a contribution to the cost to install a 'Queen Elizabeth II Celebration Arch' at the entrance of the Gardens, to be funded from the reserves already set aside for once off projects;
 - b) gives delegated authority to the Strategic Director to agree the terms of a grant agreement with the Friends of Greenhill Gardens if the grant requested in recommendation 2 (a) is agreed.

Reason for Decision

- 3 To enable the council to assist with greenspace improvements to Greenhill Gardens.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

- 4 Greenhill Gardens are situated adjacent to the promenade in the centre of the built seafront, which borders the main Weymouth bay. They are maintained by the Borough Council in partnership with the Friends of Greenhill Gardens.

- 5 The gardens lie within the electoral ward of Melcombe Regis and are within the conservation area of Weymouth town centre. They are designated as such because of “the high architectural quality of the buildings and groups of buildings, many of which are included in the statutory list of buildings of architectural and historical importance”.
- 6 The Friends of Greenhill Gardens was established in 2007 and supports the council by carrying out extensive fund raising events to invest in projects that improve the gardens, including the introduction of a bandstand to host a variety of events throughout the year. The Friends also undertake renovation projects and actively market the site via leafleting and social media.
- 7 In 2016 the Weymouth Civic Society awarded the council a letter of appreciation for the work that has been carried out in Greenhill Gardens and a national Green Flag has been retained for 11 years. The Friends of Greenhill Gardens have contributed to this success and played an important partnership role in enabling the council to maintain the Gardens to a very high standard.

The Green Flag Award scheme recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world. The purpose and aim of the Green Flag scheme is as follows:

- To ensure that everybody has access to quality green and other open spaces, irrespective of where they live.
 - To ensure that these spaces are appropriately managed and meet the needs of the communities that they serve.
 - To establish standards of good management.
 - To promote and share good practice amongst the green space sector.
 - To recognise and reward the hard work of managers, staff and volunteers.
- 8 The creation of an archway over the main Esplanade entrance into the Gardens has been an aspiration of the Friends since 2012. The project has taken on renewed momentum as the Friends wish to dedicate it as the ‘Queen Elizabeth II Celebration Arch’ to honour England’s longest reigning monarch.
 - 9 The Friends have now raised £9,000, including donations from Weymouth Rotary £300, Weymouth BID £500, a private donation £100 and Tesco’s £1,000; the remainder has been raised via quizzes and events held in the gardens. The whole archway project is estimated to cost £15,000 and there is a shortfall of £6,000 to bring the project to fruition. The Friends have, therefore, approached the council with a request for a grant of £6,000 to enable the project to proceed.
 - 10 This request for a grant of £6,000 is, therefore, presented to Management Committee for consideration. The Friends appreciate that the borough council is facing significant financial pressures and does not have an established grants budget that can readily support such schemes.

However, the Gardens are a considerable asset to Weymouth and any improvements to the site will benefit both the council and the community.

Implications

- 11 **Corporate Plan *Empowering Thriving and Inclusive Communities*:** The Council will demonstrate its support for a partnership project, with the Friends of Greenhill Gardens, to shape growth and the quality of life in their neighbourhood.
- 12 **Financial** The council does not have a budget for grants to support community open space projects. Any additional financial support of the project will need to be derived from the reserves already earmarked for one-off projects. Once allocated to a project they will not be available for other schemes. The arch will improve the aspect of this part of the esplanade, encourage more visits and safeguard the potential footfall to the gardens and the businesses that are located there. This will help to maintain potential revenue from catering licenses within the gardens and also help to preserve Weymouth's appeal as a visitor and home/business re-location town.
- 13 **Equalities** The gardens play a vital role in offering outdoor space that is not available to many people with low incomes who live in houses of multiple occupancy, flats or shared accommodation that have no gardens or outdoor space. This is especially relevant to adult mental wellbeing and the mental and physical well-being of children who need space to play and develop.
- 14 **Environmental** The park and gardens are an important green space in the heart of an urbanised area. Important not only to people but also wildlife, as the park and gardens are adjacent to an RSPB SSSI nature reserve. Opportunities to conserve wildlife and to create and actively manage wildlife habitats are included in the landscape design and will increase people's access to wildlife.
- 15 **Economic Development** Well maintained and managed open spaces can contribute to economic growth by helping to reduce anti-social behaviour and by contributing to the development of health and wellbeing. Having high quality well maintained facilities for people and their families to use and enjoy, that are located close to housing, is important in making the borough attractive as a location to move to or re-locate business to.

Risk Management (including Health & Safety)

- 16 The Greenspace and Bereavement Service will adopt and maintain the structure so alleviating any health and safety risk.

Human Resources

- 17 With the exception of occasional painting and checking, the workload placed on the service, by the provision of the arch, can be met by the

existing staff as part of a wider review of working practice and recent changes to planting schemes in the gardens.

Consultation and Engagement

18 Consultation on the recommendations in this report has been undertaken with the briefholder for Community Facilities, Cllr Kate Wheller.

Appendices

19 None.

Background Papers

20 None.

Footnote

Issues relating to financial, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

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Date: 20 July 2017