

# **SEDBERGH PARISH COUNCIL – 15 September 2016**

## **Queen’s Garden**

### **Meeting with Hilary Taylor Associates:**

The Queen’s Garden Committee (Cllrs Lancaster, Allan, McPherson and Atkins) met briefly on 16 August to discuss the forthcoming meeting with Hilary Taylor Associates. It was agreed that the best approach was to have a general discussion on the future of the gardens without preconceptions and to seek to benefit from an independent professional view on the possible ways forward.

Cllrs McPherson, Allan and Atkins subsequently attended the informal meeting on 23 August with Hilary Taylor, her colleague Peter Vickers, and Sandy Roy. The meeting extended to three hours and included a walk around the gardens.

The preliminary discussions included a resume of the Council’s initiatives to date, the failed Heritage Lottery Fund bid in 2013 and the subsequent advice received from the HLF, the ongoing maintenance work to walls and gates and the involvement of the public at the Annual Parish meeting. The following points emerged from the more substantive discussions:

- Hilary Taylor Associates as a company is ‘winding down’ but Hilary and Peter confirmed that they remain willing to support the Parish Council in progressing the Queen’s Garden project.
- It was agreed that any further submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund should be on the basis of an application to the ‘Our Heritage’ programme (up to £100k) and that Hilary Taylor would be prepared to put together such an application (and possibly advise on project management but without any on-going insurance commitment).
- The application could include a sum for the carrying out of an arboricultural survey to inform the detail of the proposed work. The submission would focus on the physical works needed to repair and restore the ‘fabric’ of the gardens (walls, steps and paths) and to open up views whilst retaining the generally wooded character of the gardens. Having regard to the costs involved and the likely reaction of the HLF, the proposal to re-build the northern boundary wall and gates (in a position set back from the highway) should probably not be included in the submission.
- Should the Council decide to proceed on this basis, it would greatly assist the preparation of the HLF application if a survey plan was first commissioned showing the layout of the gardens, the position of significant trees and selected levels. In addition, the application should be supported by evidence that a ‘Friends of Queen’s Garden’ group has been established, together with any historical information on the gardens (perhaps including oral history contributions?).
- Hilary Taylor will submit a proposal letter setting out the work that would need to be undertaken to prepare an application to the HLF and the likely cost to the Council in terms of professional fees.

It was made clear at the meeting that the decision on how to proceed rests with the full Council. Both Peter and Hilary emphasised the desirability of the Council having a clear “vision” for the future of the Gardens and that they would be happy to advise on what the likely parameters for this vision would be both from a practical point of view and also from the perspective of what was most likely to find favour with HLF.