

# Sedbergh Parish Council

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## Queen's Garden Committee

### Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2017

#### **Present:**

Cllrs. Lancaster (Chair), McPherson, Allan, Atkins and Messrs Parratt & Archer

(The meeting welcomed David Parratt and Robin Archer as new members of the Committee.)

#### **Apologies:**

None

#### **Heritage Lottery Fund Project Enquiry:**

The meeting considered the initial response by the HLF Casework Manager to the Council's Project Enquiry (copy attached). There was a unanimity of view that the content of the response was disappointing with no evident expression of interest in the project and no comment on the comprehensive report by Hilary Taylor which accompanied the Enquiry.

In essence, the response indicated that the prospects of a formal grant application being favourably considered were slim unless the application was supported by additional survey work in order to more precisely estimate costs. The Council's Enquiry had included the undertaking of professional surveys as one of the main components of the project for which funding would be sought.

It was noted that the previous guidance from the HLF in 2014 indicated that a 'landscape condition survey' to determine the scope of the works would be necessary to support an application (not detailed surveys on trees and structures). The feeling of the meeting was that the Hilary Taylor report provided the level of detail expected. Additionally, it was noted that the published HLF guidance for the 'Our Heritage' programme confirmed that professional advice was one of the costs that the grant could cover.

Following a full discussion it was agreed that the invitation to speak (by 'phone) to the HLF Casework Manager should be pursued but that it should be made clear that the Council was not in a position to fund additional arboricultural or structural survey work to support an application for HLF grant which, at the end of the day, might be unsuccessful anyway. Members considered that such funds as the Council had at its disposal would be better spent on 'work on the ground'.

It was further agreed that, should the advice be substantially unchanged, the Council should not proceed to the next stage of submitting a formal application for HLF funding and should, instead, consider an alternative strategy for the restoration of the gardens.

Such a strategy might comprise a more flexible and incremental programme of works, based on Hilary Taylor's recommendation, with advice and possible funding from other sources, such as the YDNPA, the Dales Woodlands Forum and the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust. Other

sources of grant assistance, such as the Yorkshire Dales Sustainable Development Fund and SLDC's Locally Important Project fund, could be sought to support particular projects. This approach might well include the commissioning of professional arboricultural advice.

Members agreed that undertaking a programme of works in this way was now a more realistic possibility following the formation of the Friends and the appointment of the Parish Council Gardener/Handyperson with extended hours. The participation of other groups such as the Young Rangers and the Scouts could be explored in the future.

(The manner in which the gardens are restored primarily as a public park, whilst retaining its generally wooded character, will require careful assessment and review in the light of any further surveys undertaken and professional advice received.)

### **Maintenance Programme for the Gardens:**

The meeting briefly discussed on-going maintenance over the winter period to ensure co-ordination between the work being undertaken by the Council's Gardener/Handyperson and that being carried out by the Friends' gardening group. It was also reported that an initial survey had been undertaken of the various laurels and rhododendrons, as recommended in the Hilary Taylor report.

The meeting noted that the Sedbergh School Challenge Week (June next year) presented opportunities for some work in the gardens and that possible projects were being examined.

### **Retaining wall to the Bowling Green:**

It was reported that the Council was still awaiting the recommendations of the structural engineer (R G Parkins of Kendal). This will provide a specification for the repair of the wall to enable a tendering exercise to be undertaken.

The meeting finished at 8.15pm