Lower Central Gardens Trust Board, 16 September 2015

LOWER CENTRAL GARDENS TRUST BOARD – 16 September 2015

BOARD MEMBERS:

ELECTED MEMBERS: Councillor Robert Chapman – Chairman; Councillors Ian Lancashire, Pat Oakley and David Smith.

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: Mr Andrew Armstrong – Vice-Chairman; Mr Bernard Uzzell and Mr John Walker.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m.

SECTION I - BUSINESS RECOMMENDED TO THE CABINET

33. PARKS UPDATE REPORT

The Board considered a report which provided a comprehensive update on the general management and development of the gardens since the last meeting in July. The Parks Development Manager explained that the update on the Bournemouth Parks Foundation was being dealt with as a separate agenda item.

The Parks Development Manager reported that the planning application for the new aviary and cafe kiosk was due to be determined in late September/early October. While the funding for the cafe kiosk could be sought through the Council's capital programme and prudential borrowing, a decision had previously been made not to fund the aviary. It was therefore hoped that alternative funding, to which the Bournemouth Parks Foundation could contribute (see also minute number 38), would be found. The Board was advised that both parks and planning had objected to the proposed tree work suggested by the developer at the pre application stage in respect of the former tourist information centre in Westover Road. It had been made clear that any alterations to trees and planting in this area had to be for the benefit of the listed gardens and the developer was expected to take this on board in amending the application, which was for a restaurant. The Parks Development Manager would circulate a link to the formal planning application once it had been had been submitted to the Council.

The Board noted the work being undertaken by the Parks Operations Manager to cost and seek funding through sponsorship for solar powered compactors bins at a cost of around £100,000, to replace the existing bins, which were no longer fit for purpose. The Board also received an update on lighting within the gardens. Councillor Smith reported that one of the conditions attached to the Licet development was to contribute to CCTV provision in the gardens and he advised officers to contact the Council's CCTV Manager for further information.

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The Parks Operations Manager reported that the gardens had been among a number in Bournemouth to be awarded the gold standard at South and South East in Bloom, with Bournemouth also winning in the large coastal resort category.

Councillor Smith suggested that the Board may wish to consider recommending the introduction of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to prohibit specific activities taking place in the gardens. In particular he highlighted activities taking place by the Rockery and the Pavilion terrace area, including skateboarding, and groups congregating by the stream near the top entrance to the gardens.

The Board discussed a range of activities and anti social behaviour which took place in the gardens, including litter, music and noise nuisance, rough sleepers, as well as parkour and skateboarding. It was noted that some of these activities may not meet the criteria for inclusion in a PSPO but could be dealt with under existing provisions, such as the statutory noise nuisance process. The Board was advised that parks staff logged and reported every incident they encountered to the Police and/or the Council's anti social behaviour and housing teams as appropriate. The Parks Development Manager reported that damage to the Rockery had now been reduced by replacing the fencing.

The Board supported in principle the use of PSPOs in the Lower Gardens where it could be demonstrated that specific activities were of a persistent / continuing nature and were detrimental to the use of the gardens by others. This included skateboarding in the area of the Pavilion Terrace and the Street Food Terrace. The Board agreed that that further advice should be sought from the Council's legal services and anti social behaviour team on whether any of the other activities highlighted in the discussion could be the subject of a PSPO.

DECISION MADE:

Recommend to Cabinet -

The Board asks Cabinet to consider the introduction of a Public Spaces Protection Order in the Lower Gardens to prohibit skateboarding in the area of the Pavilion Terrace and the Street Food Terrace. The Board also recommends that advice be sought from the Council's legal services and anti social behaviour team to establish whether any of the other activities of anti social behaviour in the gardens meet the criteria for inclusion in a PSPO.

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SECTION II – BUSINESS DECIDED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

34. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests by members on the Board.

36. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 27 May and 13 July 2015 were confirmed.

37. PUBLIC ITEMS

There were no Public Questions, Deputations or Petitions to present at this meeting.

38. UPDATE ON BOURNEMOUTH PARKS FOUNDATION

The Board received an update from Mark Holloway, Countryside Project Manager, and Michael Rowland, Parks Development Manager, on the development of the Bournemouth Parks Foundation.

The Bournemouth Parks Foundation was established as an independent charitable trust in January 2015 following a successful bid of £76,000 from 'Rethinking Parks', a national innovation programme led by NESTA, the Big Lottery Fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund. The idea of a foundation to involve the community in supporting public parks and open spaces had been considered for some time. The advantages of this model were that people would be more likely to support a non political organisation which was independent of the Council and as a charitable trust it would have access to more funding streams. It was important to maintain a clear distinction between the responsibility of the Council in the ongoing maintenance of parks and the role of the foundation in finding new ways to enhance and invest in public open space.

The Board was advised that money from the funding bid had been used to set up the charity, appoint trustees and recruit a programme manager to oversee the day to day running of the project. Mark Holloway and Michael Rowland had agreed to be trustees for the time being in order to provide the necessary advice and support at this early stage in the foundation's development. It was noted that there were

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safeguards in place to negate any conflict of interest in their roles as Council officers and as trustees, including a quorum of other trustees being required when decisions were made.

The main aim of the project was to turn the regard which people had for their parks and gardens into giving, whether by donation or legacy or by volunteering, to help ensure the long term sustainability of parks in Bournemouth. The foundation had started to trial innovative ways in which people could donate money, particularly by digital means. This included a large parrot sculpture located near the aviary to help fund its redevelopment, where people could give by cash, text or smartphone to hear the parrot talk. So far this had raised around £1,700 in a month, mostly in cash, which was more than had been raised previously in a whole year. There was also a park bench installation which would tell a story if a donation was received. The foundation was also looking to develop opportunities for people interested in parks to leave a legacy in a will. This could form an important source of income for the foundation.

The Board discussed a number of issues relating to the development of the foundation, including:

- The charitable purposes of the foundation, which were based around investing in public place and enhancing open space. Bournemouth had adopted a model similar to that used by Milton Keynes.
- The success of parks foundations abroad in places such as Seattle and San Francisco and the general culture of giving in the USA.
- The support the foundation could provide to 'Friends of' and community groups, for example by being able to hold funds for them in one centralised bank account.
- The need to self finance the day to day operation of the foundation once the initial funding had been used. There may be opportunities to seek further funding on specific elements of the project, for example researching and developing applications.
- Whether the numerous awards given to Bournemouth parks made funding bids more or less likely to succeed.
- As well as legacies the foundation also wanted to explore other commemorative ideas. A Board member suggested having a wall of remembrance and it was noted that the new Hengistbury Head Visitor Centre had commemorative bricks.
- Information leaflets about the Bournemouth Parks Foundation had just been produced and would initially be available in parks. Ideas for wider distribution were welcome, one suggestion being to circulate to hotels and restaurants to target visitors with an affinity for parks as well as local residents.
- Commercial opportunities and sponsorship – these could be explored subject to legal advice.

The Board was told that the foundation would welcome any ideas, suggestions and useful contacts to take forward in its development.

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DECISION MADE:

The Board noted the progress made in establishing and developing the Bournemouth Parks Foundation, and thanked the Project Manager and the Parks Development Manager for their presentation.

39. BANDSTAND 2015 PROGRAMMING

The Board considered a report which provided an update on the use of the bandstand in 2015. Due to the budget reductions the Council was no longer able to pay for performers in the Lower Gardens but was enabling them to raise money in other ways during their performance and would continue to seek sponsorship for the programme.

The Board was circulated with the programme of events for 2015. It was reported that there had been a reduction in the number of performances compared with 2014 although this had been less than originally anticipated.

DECISION MADE:

The Board noted the bandstand programme for 2015.

40. UPDATE ON CHRISTMAS EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Board received a verbal report from the Head of Resort Marketing and Events which gave an update on the Gardens of Light and Christmas Festival plans since last presented to the Board in July.

Members were reminded that the THAT Group was operating the ice rink for the winter 2015/16 season. Work was due to begin on site on 3 November with the ice rink operating from 19 November, with an improved alpine style facility and catering offer. The operation had been extended into January 2016 to coincide with the opening of the Hilton Hotel, the date of which had not yet been confirmed. Proposals for the Gardens of Light included an extension of the GOBO lighting from The Square to the crossroad of paths, to be joint-funded with the Town Centre BID. It was hoped that funding from the Coastal BID would enable the lighting to continue towards the Pier Approach. Entrances to the Gardens would be illuminated with special lighting features and 4 or 5 of the pods would be adapted into light installations. The main focus of the lighting display would be at the crossroads.

The Board was assured that the ice rink contractor would be responsible for funding the relaying of turf. The Head of Resort Marketing and Events also explained that the light pods would result in some footfall but they would be placed in a different area of the grass than previously to minimise damage.

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DECISION MADE:

The Board noted the update on the plans for the ice rink and the Gardens of Light.

The meeting closed at 3.25pm

Please note that the scheduled meetings of the Lower Central Gardens Trust Board will take place at the Pavilion on the following dates:

Wednesday 27 January 2016 at 2.00pm
Wednesday 18 May 2016 at 2.00pm
Wednesday 28 September 2016 at 2.00pm

It is recommended that you double check this information with Democratic Services nearer the scheduled date of the next meeting in case the arrangements have been changed.

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