



GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 90/15

12 OCTOBER 2015

The purpose of this paper is to ask Members to approve two developments in the Town Council's grounds maintenance responsibilities on the basis of recommendations from its Public Buildings Working Group.

No. DETAIL

1) BACKGROUND

- a) Discussions have been proceeding over recent meetings of the Public Buildings Working Group (PBWG) about the future development of the Cascade Gardens.
- b) Local concerns about the condition of the hedge in Hambrough Road have also been considered by the Working Group.
- c) The background to the recommendations in respect of both these areas is outlined in sections 2) and 3) of this Report.

2) CASCADE GARDENS

- a) Councillors Leigh Geddes and Brian Lucas have been exploring the potential engagement of the Botanic Gardens in the mid- to long-term development of the Cascade Gardens in the interests of developing plantings that are both more representative of the character of the town and more economic.
- b) Councillor Leigh Geddes attended the Group's meeting of 22 September to outline the proposals from the Botanic Garden and it was agreed that a meeting should be arranged with both John O'Connors' Stan Hayden and the Botanic Gardens' Chris Kidd along with Councillors Leigh Geddes, Brian Lucas and Jim Toogood.
- c) That meeting took place on Tuesday 29 September and found all participants positively endorsing collaborative development building on the strengths of both contractor and horticulturist.
- d) A briefing paper setting out the proposed way forward was presented to the meeting of the Group on Tuesday 6 October, a copy of which is attached for Members' information.
- e) As the purchases for the winter planting need to proceed immediately it was agreed that the first stages of the new direction should be implemented with the spring planting.
- f) Because the plants for that will need to be purchased in the current financial year, there will be a limited additional financial provision required; future financial planning can then take place within the Town Council's Budget discussions for 2016/17.

3) HAMBROUGH HEDGE

- a) The PBWG had already discussed the condition of several of the hedges in the portfolio where growth has been so out of control through underfunding that it is no longer possible to deal with them within the basic contract.
- b) The hedge on Hambrough Road is one of those and the residents whose view it now obstructs have requested that action be taken with a commitment from them to contribute to the cost.
- c) To remove the hedge to ground level in front of the seats leaving a small section of hedge to act as a barrier and cutting down the top half to the top of the railings as a one-off operation has been quoted by John O'Connors at £640.50
- d) The residents' group has offered £300 to that cost.

4) RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) In respect of the Cascade Gardens, the Town Council is recommended to:
 - i) agree the proposals for the future development of the Cascade Gardens under the guidance of the Public Buildings Working Group; and
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- ii) authorise additional spending of up to £1,700 on the 2016 spring planting of the Cascade Gardens to fund the first stage of that development.
 - b) In respect of the Hambrough hedge, the Town Council is recommended to:
 - i) accept the quotation from John O'Conner for the work required to restore the hedge to routine maintenance; and
 - ii) thank the residents' group for their contribution to the cost of that work.
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Note of a meeting between Brian Lucas, Jim Toogood & Leigh Geddes from Ventnor Town Council; Chris Kidd (Ventnor Botanic Garden); Stan Hayden (John O'Connors).

This short meeting took place at 8 am on 29 September 2015 on site at the Cascade to discuss future development and direction of the planting for the Cascade Gardens.

The purpose of the meeting was to develop the ideas outlined by Chris Kidd at the request of Ventnor Town Council for the planting at the Cascade over the next few years and to give Stan and Chris a first opportunity to discuss the project.

Chris Kidd outlined the Ventnor Botanic Garden proposal to revise the look of the garden, phased over several years; to suggest alternative plants for seasonal planting, with an emphasis on longer-lived plants which will make a dramatic show in years to come without the necessity of bi-annual replacement; interplanting the existing large plants with bulbs and plants of interest.

After a productive discussion we decided as follows:

1. Stan to order in the winter bedding as planned, with no change. This is time-critical and can't be delayed. To be confirmed to Alison Killick - done.
2. Chris and Stan to start planning the Spring bedding with an eye to including perennial plants or making changes in line with the proposals put forward in draft by Ventnor Botanic Garden. (For both these items there is a lead-in time of approximately six months).
3. Chris to look at a solution for planting the roofs of the toilets, where the sedum covering is struggling. Suggestion is tiny Lampranthus plugs (brightly coloured daisy-flowered succulents) which will take a while to establish.
4. We discussed signage to credit VBG and O'Connors' work – this needs to be agreed at a later date.
5. Brian suggested an informational sign on the pedestrian walk to give some background to the Cascade generally.
6. Chris suggested a follow-up piece to the Ventnor Historical Society's article in the Chronicle last week, to publicise the ongoing plans for the Cascade.
7. Brian and Jim to take the proposal back to the working group on 6 October and thence to the town council meeting the following Monday.