

Subject: Venetian Waterways and Boating Lake

Report to: Yarmouth Area Committee Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2016

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## **SUBJECT MATTER/RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Progress report and summary of the Venetian Waterways and Boating Lake Project**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

The Stage 2 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund was submitted in August 2016. We are awaiting a response, likely to be received in December 2016.

#### **2. MAIN BODY**

The scheme is underpinned by three core elements outlined below:

##### Restoration

To restore planting based on the original planting scheme, held in the council archive. Original beds now grassed or gravelled over will be reinstated. The original planting scheme was a radical move away from familiar seaside bedding plant displays and instead concentrated on perennials and annuals used in drifts. The combination of plants and design was considered innovative. The design was exhibited at the 1928 Royal Horticultural Society's International Exhibition of Garden Design, where it was considered "bold". The intention is to recreate the spirit of this planting and flower beds. This element of the project will also allow for research to fully understand the original scheme and its importance in terms of seaside planting history.

Rusticated thatched shelters, the boating lake, bridges and other structures which contribute so much to the special character of the place will undergo comprehensive repair. The boating lake will be repaired and brought back into operation.

##### Training

The project presents an enormous opportunity for training and engagement.

Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust has developed a model where projects are delivered by trainees and volunteers under the guidance of experts and professionals (Cemeteries, Hopton, Bulgaria). This successful model will be adopted for this project. The benefits are true community engagement and the development of a highly skilled local work force. It allows and enables ownership of the project and the heritage asset by the community.

As with other recent conservation led training initiatives, training is it fundamental to the success of the project and will provide real opportunities both during and after the project. Opportunities for training are broad and include initial research and survey, landscaping, propagation of plants, gardening and traditional building skills.

As with other Preservation Trust projects it is proposed to provide training and engagement at all levels including schools and colleges, those out of work, older people and other groups.

Previous training projects have been over-subscribed and it is anticipated that because of the level of interest in heritage as well as the level of interest in gardening, training and volunteering places will be in demand. The main focus of training will be gardening and traditional building skills. This will not only inspire people and generate skills, it will help to develop a skilled workforce.

Work to train people in traditional building skills is already well underway on other HLF supported projects in the town and is beginning to pay dividends in terms of a skilled workforce able to maintain the historic built environment. This project will complement and accentuate that work.

Two full time posts will be created to manage and coordinate the project, as well as manage the experts and professionals needed to provide the training and engagement activities.

### Legacy

A restored park will contribute to the borough council's ambitions to encourage year round cultural tourism and support the local economy. It will also contribute to the seafront heritage offer. It will safeguard an important heritage asset.

The skills developed during the project will be put to use maintaining the park into the future. This will be achieved by direct employment and by the creation of a Friends of the Waterways Group or a social enterprise, where volunteering will continue post project. The business plan is based on the intention that a social enterprise will manage and operate the Waterways and Boating Lake once the scheme is complete. Opportunities created by the scheme will include:

- Full-time Project Coordinator for 3 years
- Full-time Head Gardener (indefinite)
- Full-time Assistant Gardener (indefinite)
- Level 2 Diploma in work-based Horticulture Apprenticeship (18 months)
- 10 trainee placements in horticulture (part-time role for 2 years)
- 10 trainee placements in traditional building skills (part-time role for 2 years)
- 4/5 placements for Princes Trust students (2 weeks each)
- Artist in residence for two years
- 200 Volunteers/trainees for two years/ongoing

The benefits of providing opportunities to garden in a town with limited garden space, can create a legacy of well-being. The therapeutic benefits of gardening are well documented.

Comprehensive and robust management and maintenance planning and a firm continuing commitment from the Borough Council will ensure the project's success into the future.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Income Heading	Description	Secured	Current Figures (£)
Local authority	Transfer of maintenance funds for the Waterways from GY Services as well as additional contribution of £200,000	Yes	330,000
Volunteer in-kind contribution	Total value of Volunteer in-kind contribution £456,178. Max allowance of £50,000		50,000
GYBC Boating Lake lease in-kind	£2,600 annual lease		13,000
CCF Grant	To be underwritten by GYBC.	Pending	470,000
HLF Grant			1,462,373
Total Income			2,325,373

### 4. RISK IMPLICATIONS

### 5. CONCLUSIONS

### 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Refer to Venetian Waterways and Boating Lake Restoration Scheme, Policy and Resources Committee (26<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

See Conservation Plan.

*Areas of consideration: e.g. does this report raise any of the following issues and if so how have these been considered/mitigated against?*

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	
Existing Council Policies:	
Financial Implications:	
Legal Implications (including human rights):	
Risk Implications:	

Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	
Crime & Disorder:	
Every Child Matters:	