

## **Proposed New Vehicle Access – Westbourne Gardens**

*The Town Council has recently taken over the management of Westbourne Gardens from Cornwall Council.*

*A new vehicle access has been proposed to enable direct access from Dean Street for moderate size vans and trucks to assist in opening up the gardens for more events and greater community use.*

*A scheme was drawn up proposing a new entrance at the junction of the service entrance to Dean Denver House and Dean Street. There is a considerable difference in levels so it would be necessary to excavate a portion of the bank and build a retaining wall to allow a roadway to be constructed into the gardens.*

*This, the scheme proposed, would require the felling of 2 trees to the east side of the entrance and 2 further trees in the path of the proposed roadway within the Gardens.*

*We have now had a meeting with the Cornwall Council Forestry Officer who has made it clear that several more trees would also be affected as they would be made unstable and we would also need to keep at least 25m from the ancient Hornbeam which is close to the route of the roadway; this would push the path of the roadway closer to the treeline on the bank thus affecting yet further Yew trees. A turning circle would also be required, and this would have to be accommodated without affecting other trees. Additional protection to the root systems of some trees may be needed where they are not close enough to need felling, but could be affected by traffic passing over their roots.*

*All the trees likely to be affected would need to be studied and their protective root area calculated. Trees affected close to the highway would also have to be felled, as unstable trees are a Highways risk. This could remove a significant section of the established trees at the southernmost corner considerably affecting the street landscape scene. Objections from local residents could be expected.*

*The surrounding area is mainly listed, though the wall fronting the southern boundary is not and none of the trees are currently subject to tree preservation orders.*

*If the Council was to proceed with this project a number of factors must be considered and taken into account.*

### **1. Expected Benefit to the Community**

*The entrance would encourage more activities to be put on in the Gardens; currently only the Ploughman's Festival is staged and which requires vehicular access. The Council does not have any knowledge of, or enquiries of any other prospective events, which may wish to use the Gardens and require vehicles to access the Gardens.*

*Currently the main use is by dog walkers and persons enjoying the solitude of the gardens in a peaceful setting.*

### **1. Costs and Budget**

*A preliminary budget calculated about 2 years ago put the cost of constructing a new entrance in the region of £80K. We can now expect additional planning related costs from tree surveys, arboreal consultants, additional replacement tree planting and the extra costs associated with constructing a turning circle. A budget in excess of £100K can be anticipated.*

### **1. Planning**

*Several mature trees will need to be felled, both those in the line of the access road and those nearby due to destabilisation of their root base. The route will also have to run closer to the boundary treeline to avoid the Hornbeam, causing more trees to be felled.*

*Overall this will cause a significant impact on the landscaping of the northern aspect of that section of Dean Street and may well meet local objections.*

## **1. Cost/Benefit Considerations**

*The cost of this project will be substantial with no clear benefit to a significant section of Liskeard townspeople. Currently there is only one organisation using the gardens for a community event and they do have an alternative access through a neighbouring property.*

*Meanwhile other projects of the Council, including those arising from the Neighbourhood Plan and the Economic Development programme may make substantially better use of the £100K investment within Liskeard.*

***The recommendation to this committee is not to proceed further at this time with the proposed new entrance because of the potential cost, expected planning difficulties and minimal extra utility to the users of Westbourne Gardens and Liskeard residents.***

### ***Electricity Supply & Water***

*There is a proposal prepared by the Facilities Committee, to introduce a supply of water and electricity to the Gardens. Power and water are available adjacent to the SE corner of the Gardens in the public track the other side of the boundary wall. The supplies will need to be bought in under the boundary wall. The tree officer noted an even spacing of trees along the border between the path and the boundary wall, whose root systems could be compromised by trenching a supply through them. However, he identified a location where he considered that tree root systems would be minimal, and thus would be a suitable location for the supplies to enter the Gardens. He indicated that he would not foresee raising objections to such a proposal if it were to formally be presented to him as part of a planning application. The Facilities Manager agrees that this is a suitable location for the installation of electric power and water to serve the Gardens.*

***It is therefore recommended that costing's are finalised with the supply utilities and a planning application submitted for the installation of these services.***

***Councillor Smith 25/2/19***