

Ernest Stevens Trusts Management Committee - 18th April 2016

Report of the Strategic Director Place

Stevens Park, Quarry Bank

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Trust on the proposal to bid for funding from the Heritage Lottery fund to improve the Park building, and restore some of the main heritage structures.

Stevens Trust, Quarry Bank

2. The Friends of Stevens Park Quarry Bank, are keen to develop the masterplan for the Park which was part of the Liveability programme established 10 years ago. They have been successful with some smaller scale developments, but one of the largest projects on the masterplan was to improve the White house at the eastern entrance to the park which is currently very run down, and in a bad state of repair.
3. Some designs for the White house have been developed and some public consultation was carried out in 2014, to see what local people think about making changes to the use of the building, and how they would like to see it developed. The White house development would make a significant improvement to the park, acting as a hub for activity and providing a meeting space, training centre and community cafe.
4. Voluntary sector partners are being sought to help to take this project forward, so that the end use of the building can be sustainable. Unfortunately an appropriate organisation has not yet been found.
5. The success of the Heritage Lottery Projects at Priory Park and Mary Stevens Park has meant that Heritage Lottery could be a possible funder for this project. As these Lottery projects require a very strong heritage focus, a lot of research has been done about the previous uses of the site, and the main heritage features such as the bandstand, peace gardens and entrance features. The White house used to be a farm house called Tintern house before it was bought by Ernest Stevens, and it was used as council offices for Quarry Bank Urban District Council in the early 20th century.
6. If a funding bid to Heritage Lottery Fund were to be successful for the improvements proposed at Stevens Park Quarry Bank, a voluntary sector partnership would be required in order to continue to run a community facility within the building and to make the park thrive. It is suggested that a lease arrangement with the council maybe the best way forward for this partnership to operate successfully.

7. The Ernest Stevens Trust will need to consider whether a lease with a voluntary sector organisation to develop sustainable solutions to the long term maintenance of Tintern House is the best way forward.

Finance

8. The running of the building will be entirely the responsibility of the voluntary partner, removing maintenance obligation from the Council. A new use for the building will hopefully breathe life into the park and reduce the risk of Anti Social Behaviour.
9. The Council will work with the Friends group to find sources of external funding to match fund the proposed work including community forum funding. The volunteer time from the Friends and other volunteers will also help to draw down funding.
10. The bid will be dependent on obtaining match funding of approximately 10% of the total cost, this match funding will be found from a number of different sources. The Council has no revenue resources to commit to this project.

Law

11. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 which provides Councils with the general power of competence to do anything that individuals generally may do, subject to Sections 2 to 4, and Section 105, 117-123 of the Charities Act 2011 which gives power to authorise dealings with charity property.
In particular Section 117 (3)(d) allows the Council, as Trustee, to grant a lease to any beneficiary where; (i) is granted otherwise than for the best rent that can be reasonably be obtained, and (ii) is intended to enable the demised premises to be occupied for the purposes, or any particular purposes of the charity.

Equality Impact

12. The provision of funding for this project will enable training and development work with volunteers and young people, who might otherwise have difficulty accessing training programmes.
13. Heritage Lottery Funding and Big Lottery funding contributes towards the Parks for people programme. It is very important that the project has social outcomes such as improvements to accessing information and education. The project will provide opportunities for learning in an informal setting.

Recommendations

14. It is recommended that:-
 - The trustees consider the aspirations of the Friends who are very keen to improve facilities at Stevens Park, Quarry Bank, and to approve the proposal to bid for Heritage Lottery funding.

- Trustees consider the proposal to develop a partnership with a voluntary sector body in order to improve the use of the park building and put appropriate arrangements in place to make the partnership flourish. This maybe through a lease arrangement for the building or asset transfer subject to any necessary consultation and any necessary application to the Charity Commission.



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