REPORT TO: **PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE – 28 September 2009**

REPORT BY: **THE HORTICULTURAL CONSULTANT**

REFURBISHMENT OF THE POND AND ROCK GARDEN

Purpose

1. This report explains the work required for the refurbishment of the Pond and Rock Garden and the cost of these works.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Garden Improvement Fund be used to fund the scheme for the refurbishment of the Pond and Rock Garden and that any shortfall in funding be met from the general grounds maintenance budget.

Background

2. The pond and rock garden area was laid out approximately 30 years ago and has been maintained regularly ever since. The pond includes a lower, middle and upper pools (or ponds) with water cascading from the upper level. In the rock garden area very little pruning has been carried out which has meant that the dwarf conifers have now grown very large and are not in proportion to the garden. Pruning is not now an option and removal is the best way forward.

3. The pond has a butyl rubber liner to keep the water in. Liners of this type usually have a life of 20-25 years so the fact that it has lasted this long is exceptional. We do however now have a small leak which we are unable to trace, so replacement of the liner is really the best option given the liner's age.

Summary of the Work Proposed Brighstone's Quote

4. I have discussed with Brighstone Landscapes, the Crematorium's grounds maintenance contractor, the extent of work required at the pond and rock garden area and the options available. In response Brighstone Landscapes prepared a very comprehensive report of what needs to be done to improve the situation in line with my requests, and this can be summarised as follows –

    - Removal of fish and construction of temporary storage facility;
    - Pump out ponds and remove silt and debris;
    - Remove all unwanted conifers and large shrubs;
    - Reduce level of pond perimeter paving;
    - A range of earthworks to include re-landscaping;
    - Provision of new rubber liners;
    - Removal and relaying of pond perimeter stonework;
    - Building new cascades between each pond;
    - Checking and installation of pipe work and filtration system;
    - Refilling ponds, testing, and re-instatement.

Financial Position

5. The estimated cost of the proposed works quoted by Brighstone is £15,725. It was anticipated that this scheme would be funded from the Garden Improvement Fund. However it is expected that this Fund will stand at £9,000 for the year ending March 2010, therefore leaving a shortfall of £6,725. It is proposed that the general grounds maintenance programme be adjusted so that the funding shortfall for the pond works can be met from the current year's grounds maintenance budget.

Conclusion

6. This type of work to improve the grounds is usually met by the money donated to the Garden Improvement Fund. Improvements paid for in the past in this way have been the summer house and stone pathway around the garden. With insufficient funds in the Garden Improvement Fund the balance of the scheme costs could be met from the existing grounds maintenance budget.

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15 September 2009