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HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

12 January, 2010

THE ESTATE OF THE LATE MRS LORNA DOREEN RUSSELL

With reference to article 11 of the minute of its previous meeting of 26 October, 2010, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Housing and Environment, which provided further details and clarity on the bequest by the Late Mrs Lorna Doreen Russell to the David Welch Winter Gardens and Duthie Park.

By way of background, the report advised that officers had been notified of the bequest in May, 2009; and at this point had been made aware that the residue of Mrs Russell's will was to be made over to "The City of Aberdeen District Council, or its Successor authority, for the purposes of extending, improving or otherwise refurbishing that part of the Duthie Park known as the Winter Gardens or alternatively for providing further facilities at the said park, all as the District Council in its sole discretion may decide."

The report explained that in September, 2009, it was estimated that the sums likely to come to the Council in terms of the bequest were (1) £464,164 in relation to receipts banked to date; and (2) £255,532, with a potential total of £719,696 in relation to the current value of share certificates held. It was noted that the share values could fluctuate, depending on the value of the Stock Market. The report confirmed that all holdings had been transferred into the Council's name and that all proceeds due to the Council, in connection with the transfer of the estate had now been received.

The report indicated that a working group had been set up and the group had identified a number of potential projects, and approximate costs, as follows:

1. Replacement of the two wooden link glasshouses off the Victorian Corridor - £213,000
2. Refurbishment of the two play areas in the park which were withdrawn from the Heritage Lottery Fund Stage 1 - £105,000
3. Create a new play area in the south-east corner of the park, known as the pony park - £200,000
4. Install a footpath to connect the new play area to the park paths - £30,000
5. Reorganisation of the restaurant and shop area within the David Welch Winter Gardens - £235,000
6. Creation of sensory area - £25,000
7. Improvements to the raised bed courtyard area within the David Welch Winter Gardens - £35,000

9. Installation of a plaque in the entrance to the David Welch Winter Gardens to commemorate Mrs Lorna Doreen Russell and the benefits that her bequest had brought.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) instructs officers to prioritise the proposals and spend the sum of the bequest as detailed in the report; and
- (b) report back to committee later in the year on the progress made.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to instruct officers to agree on a form of words for the commemorative plaque, in consultation with the Convener and Vice Convener of this Committee;
- (ii) to instruct the working group to only prioritise the proposals of the bequest to the value of the receipts banked to date as detailed within the report;
- (iii) **in relation to the timing of the sales of shares, to refer this matter to the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee of 1 February, 2011 to ask that they delegate authority to the Head of Finance, in conjunction with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, to take advice as necessary, make decisions, and action the sale of any or all of the shares pertaining to the bequest at a time they deem appropriate;**
- (iv) to request that a report be brought back detailing the recommended projects (and detailed costings) for committee approval;
- (v) to request that officers arrange to meet with the Friends of Duthie Park and incorporate the comments of the group into the report back; and
- (vi) to request that local members be provided with copies of the minutes of the working group.