

Committee	Full Council
Date	17 April 2023
Agenda Item	7f

To consider the opening and closing of gates at the Public Gardens

At a meeting between BDC and HTC councillors and officers on 14 March 2023, BDC made it clear that they will no longer open and close the gates, as they are trimming their budget. The implementation of this decision they have promised to delay until after the May elections.

HTC councillors stated that their preference is for the gates to continue to be opened and closed, so that anyone doing anything unlawful inside the park can be more easily prosecuted. The responsibility now falls to HTC.

The Clerk has been contacted by the 2 BDC employees who currently close the park on a daily basis, and are paid separately to carry out that task. In addition to locking the 4 gates, they take a walk around the gardens asking members of the public to leave. They would be prepared to continue to do this.

BDC have stated that in all cases the rate of pay is subject to personal on-costs of NI and Pension. Employers' NI contributions are currently . The rates are:

Monday to Friday - £14

Saturday & Sunday - £21

Bank & Public Holidays - £28

NI employer contributions are 13.8%

Pension contributions are 24.8%

At current rates the annual cost of closing would be £8246 including pension and employer's NI payments. For future years this would be included in the budget.

At present BDC officers are not sure about what will happen with the opening of the gates. This is currently done by a member of Street Scene at BDC and is included in their job, and not paid separately. BDC officers are unable to clarify whether this will continue after the elections. Members who made statements at the meeting may not be aware of the detail of how these services are paid for. It is possible that HTC may therefore need to find a similar sum for opening the gardens in future.

Bollard

Another option would be to install a bollard in the vehicular entrance to the public gardens to prevent vehicles entering at night. This could be removed by HTC or BDC if they wanted to drive their own vehicles in. This would be a cheaper option, particularly as those who wish to enter the gardens when the gates are locked will climb over the railings.

Recommendation: that costs for closing and possibly also opening be taken out of the unpredicted surplus for the financial year 22/23 to cover costs in 23/24, and that in future years these costs be included in the budget or that HTC decides instead to invest in a bollard..

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Greatorex". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Sarah Greatorex Town Clerk