

## Brixham Town Council

<b>Report No:</b>	27-2019		
<b>Report Type:</b>	Public		
<b>Title:</b>	Beacon at Bonsey Gardens		
<b>To:</b>	Community Services	<b>Date:</b>	17.06.19
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Town Clerk	Tracy Hallett	
<b>Contact Details:</b>	info@brixhamtowncouncil.gov.uk	01803 859678	

### Purpose of Report

To consider a request from Brixham Arts and Theatre group to site a Beacon at Bonsey Gardens.

### Background

BATS commissioned a custom made metal beacon and stand for the 'Battle's Over' commemorations of the end of WWI. Unfortunately, it is not possible to position the beacon on Berry Head (where the old beacon stood until struck by lightning) because of new regulations regarding the horseshoe bats in that area.

They are keen to find a permanent site for the Brixham Beacon for the town's future use and, after much searching for alternatives, would like to install it in the Bonsey Garden in North Furzeham Road.

### Torbay Council's response

Torbay Council own the site and have advised BATS the following:

“Bonsey Rose Gardens is a quiet garden, with seasonal planting, memorial benches and small area of green space. The benches enjoy views across Brixham. As a peaceful garden the beacon and project is in keeping with the garden. However, there is a concern that given the limited greenspace the metal beacon will obscure views from benches and take up what limited space is left. Therefore, if you can provide the following information, ensure there is no liability with the Council and the scheme has community support there would be no objection.

- Provide location plan and installation details of the beacon
- Provide approval from Brixham Town Council and associated support from Ward Partnership and local Councillors
- Provide reassurance \ evidence that any liability does not sit with Torbay Council
- Confirm that Torbay Council is not responsible for repairs or removal if damaged”

Photos of Beacon





BATS advise that they have specially made stakes to be able to fix it securely into the ground should permission be given for it to be sited there permanently.

BATS further advise that “siting it in the gardens would mean that it is in a safe location, overlooked by houses, which would deter vandalism, in a high vantage point to be seen from the town centre when lit and more than sufficiently far enough away from any properties and with an enclosure wall to provide security to keep people a safe distance from it when in use.”

They aim to make it available for lighting for civic events and groups, as well as providing the beacon for any national chain of light events.

In addition, it could also be used as an ornamental floral stand when not in use as a beacon as the design lends itself perfectly to such a facility.

### **Comments on Facebook**

BATS have sought public approval on Facebook and the following comments have been noted:

**Comment A:** Lovely piece of work comrades of WW11 should come before any bats. Battery Gardens would be great or where it is

**Brixham Arts & Theatre:** Battery Gardens is impossible because it is a listed national historic monument. We really have tried very hard to find somewhere that would work. Bonsey Gardens is the only one left.

**Comment A:** Be great up there and if people are concerned about kids climbing it i would be more concerned about them climbing fence next to it with a 100ft drop

**Comment B:** Can I ask why the letter proposing this beacon to be placed on Bonsey Rose Gardens has not been provided to Queens Road and North Furzeham Road residents? It is us whom this proposal affects the most. The lighting of beacons attracts crowds, traffic, extra parking, you also mention vandals affected the placing of the sculpture at Berry Head and therefore that may be repeated when placed at Bonsey Gardens. It is only fair to make sure residents are made aware. At present letters only reached the first two houses in Queens Road?

**Brixham Arts & Theatre:** Because we are a group of volunteers and trying to be as informative as possible to everyone. We covered the houses in North Furzeham Road and the start of Queens Road that actually overlook the gardens. We will be printing off a lot more copies of the plan, photos and letter and putting them through doors in Queens Road tomorrow.

The whole point of this site is that the Beacon would be seen from the harbour and that is where people would congregate. The only people in Bonsey Garden would be the fire marshalls and those responsible for it. There would be no public gathering up there as there was at Shoalstone for the 100 years commemoration of the end of WWI!

The fire plate would not be left in the beacon so anyone with a reason to use it for a commemoration would have to apply to BATS for it, have proper beacon insurance and comply with a very long list of H & S requirements.

The last beacon lit on Berry Head was to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, then we lit this one last November so it is not envisaged that this will be a regular occurrence. The next national chain of lights will probably be when the Prince of Wales becomes King or the Queen's 100th birthday. Mostly it will be there as a beautiful sculpture.

If a group of residents would like to see the actual sculpture then please fix a time together and we will arrange a visit to where it is stored.

We are trying to keep Brixham in the chain of lights with the national beacons and if there is an alternative place you can think of that we have not already considered then please tell us.

**Comment B:** Thank you. And what health & safety provisions have been made for when the beacon is left unattended when not in use? Small children often use the gardens to play in.

**Brixham Arts & Theatre:** The Beacon has very long stakes that fix deep into the ground so it is quite secure and would not topple. Part of the insurance rules on the beacon when lit is that it is not left until every last spark is out. I sat for two hours at Shoalstone Pool in the dark after everyone left last November ensuring that this was complied with. BATS takes health & Safety criteria very seriously indeed.

**Comment B:** Thank you. I ask about health and safety in relation to children using the structure to climb on? It's a fairly tall structure, if a child climbed it and fell off? It might have been a good idea (when you brought the beacon structure to take your photographs) to plan the visit and invite residents to view it: the structures size, dimensions etc. They could see the impact with it in place. Perhaps the letter to residents needs to be far more informative and perhaps it would be helpful to bring the structure back again and invite residents to view it?

**Comment C:** Hi, who do we write to directly at Torbay Council about these plans?

**Comment D:** What an excellent idea. Well done.

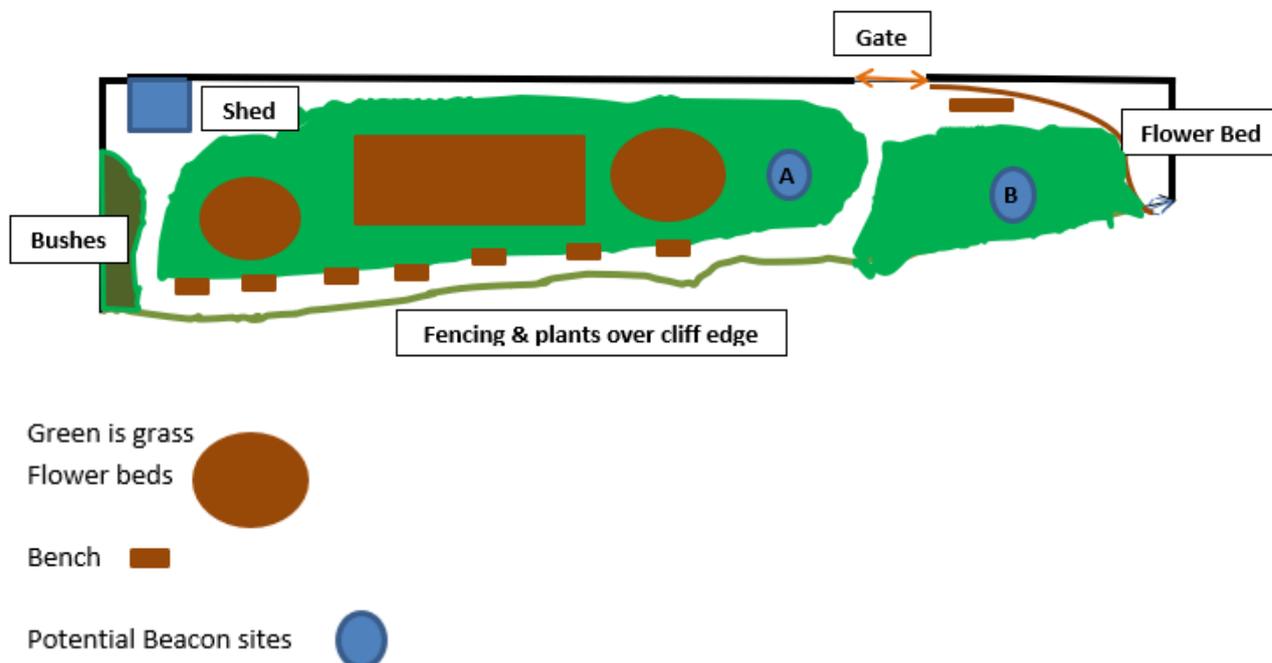
**Comment D:** What a lovely sculpture and a very fitting location!

**Comment E:** I think it would look amazing.

### Bonsey Gardens

Bonsey Gardens is located on North Furzeham Road and is also known locally as "Rose Gardens". Over the years it has had an extensive planning scheme with roses, palm trees and herbaceous borders.

The garden is approximately 64.76m long by 14.4m wide at one end and 7.4m wide at the other. BATS have advised that they have identified two possible positions, which is displayed on the plan below:



In addition, BATS advise that the potential Beacon sites both ensure clear visibility to the town views from all seats (the lone double seat on the right of the plan is at a slightly more rotated angle than can be shown at this scale). Both sites also ensure that, should the Beacon be used as part of national beacon chains in the future, there is no potential danger to housing or the flower beds or seats. Any public would be retained behind the garden road wall and access to the garden restricted for the event.

The garden is also identified in the Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan as a Local Green Space. This means that the local community has identified it as a site of particular importance. If the beacon was to be sited at this location, consideration should be given as to what, if any, additional local benefit would be gained.

Whilst we do not have the exact dimensions, it is clear from the above pictures that the beacon is of a significant height, with the stand alone being approximately 5.5ft. However, it is considered that ornate sculpture displays can add to the social value of the community. In addition, BATS have advised that there is an opportunity to use this as a planting display.

### **Recommendations**

That the Community Services Committee recommend to Full Council that:

The Town Council gives full support for the beacon to be located at the Bonsey Gardens on the condition that BATS have satisfactorily submitted the following to Torbay Council:

- Location plan
- Installation details of the beacon
- Confirmation of approval from Community Partnership and Ward Councillors
- Evidence that any liability does not sit with Torbay Council OR Brixham Town Council
- Confirm that Torbay Council OR Brixham Town Council is not responsible for repairs or removal if damaged

In addition, the Town Council should seek:

- Assurances from Torbay Council that a legal agreement is signed by both parties with conditions such as ensuring BATS must remove the beacon, if required due to vandalism and anti-social behaviour, for example.
- That Torbay Council confirms that they have considered the Local Green Space criteria within their response to BATS
- That all necessary permissions have been granted, such as Planning Consent, if applicable, prior to the installation.