

The Supporters of Ashton Gardens

We NEED YOUR VIEW



Our question to residents of St Annes is a simple one:

Do you think any of Ashton Gardens should be sold, even if it is only a small part?

Please mark only one box

Yes No

If you would like more information to help you decide, please read overleaf

Please give your postcode

Please return this by post - to arrive before 30th May - to:

Jon Harrison, 6 Nateby Close, Lytham St Annes, FY8 3PW

or take it by hand to your nearest address below

10 Dorset Road, St Annes FY8 2ED

10 Evesham Road, Lytham St Annes FY8 1HE

13 Lancaster Avenue, St Annes FY8 1DL

18 Sandhurst Avenue, St Annes FY8 2DA

8 Royal Beach Court, North Promenade

6 Nateby Close, Lytham St Annes, FY8 3PW

Tudor House Guest House, 32 St David's Road South, St Annes FY8 1TJ

or put it in a collecting box at any of the following places

- Pearson & Co (Estate Agents), 50 Wood Street, St Annes (next to the Post Office).
- Post Office, The Crescent, St Annes.
- Homesavers, 109 Headroomgate Road, St Annes.
- Post Office, 120 St Andrews Road South, St Annes.
- YMCA, St Albans Road, St Annes.
- Ashton Gardens Cafe, Ashton Gardens, St Annes.

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THE PROS AND CONS

1. The Supporters of Ashton Gardens exist to protect, preserve and enhance Ashton Gardens.
2. The Council has looked after the gardens since they opened in 1916. They have cut the grass and looked after the flowers, but the repair and renovation of bigger, more expensive things, like buildings, paths, walls and so on, has not been done. So a backlog of work developed.
3. In 1986, the Council was told it needed to spend £84,000 to bring the gardens up to scratch.
4. At the turn of the millennium the Council ordered a detailed survey and report costing £30,000. It said things had become worse, and the experts said it would now cost just over £2 million to fully restore the gardens.
5. The Council couldn't afford this. It agreed there were "essential" repairs of £700,000 - but if they did some of the restoration as well, at a total cost of £1.5 million, they could probably get a 75% Lottery grant. So the Council has to find 25% of the full cost (spread over three years).
6. To get this money the Council says it wants to sell a small part of the Gardens. You will know the area better as the Ashton Institute, (pictured overleaf) and some land adjoining it. We think they might want to sell this land for the block of flats they gave planning permission for a while ago, but other buyers may be involved.
7. The Gardens are in a conservation area, and Listed Grade II on the National Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. They are an important part of the character and history of our town, and were donated to the people of St Annes by Lord Ashton.
8. Whenever SOAG has asked the people of St Annes, they have said that none of the Gardens should be sold. In just 5 days, 3,800 people signed a petition opposing the plan for the flats. The local Civic Society also opposes the sale of any of the Gardens.
9. SOAG agrees with heritage experts who say the land should not be sold. Even the Council's own expert consultants said that not building on the Gardens was the key to keeping and restoring their historic character.
10. We also believe that once part of the gardens is sold, they are no longer original, and they start on a slippery slope that could lead to other parts of them being sold in the future.
11. We say the Council has money elsewhere that could pay their 25% share - for example:
 - a. Cash reserves of up to £2 million;
 - b. £2.5 million windfall income this year from selling off all the Council houses;
 - c. The difference between the 9.9% council tax actually charged, and the 5.5% that one experienced Councillor said was all that was needed to have "sensible reserves";
 - d. They could also borrow the 25% - like a home buyer would do with a mortgage - and spread the cost over several years. The repayments would only cost each Fylde taxpayer around 2p per week over a ten-year loan period.
12. But the Council have said they don't think the gardens are a high enough priority to use any of these ways to fund it - and anyway, money isn't the only reason they want to sell the land.
13. If SOAG don't agree to the Council selling the land, there is a chance the lottery bid will not be granted. But if we do agree, there is no certainty that the grant will be given. And, of course, if we don't support the bid, the Council may still try to sell the land anyway.
14. SOAG knows the Gardens belong to the people of St Annes, so we are asking for your view.
15. We believe that to sell any of the Gardens would be a betrayal of the generous gift Lord Ashton made to the people of the town, and if it comes down to it, we would rather they remained intact and original, even if that costs the lottery bid this time around, and we have to re-apply in the near future. We hope you will agree.