



Green Heart Partnership



PRESS RELEASE

16 July 2008

Get involved in the Stevenage Town Centre Gardens

You'll have noticed work going on recently in the Town Centre Gardens to make it a more useable and friendly space. This includes upgraded lighting, new trees, a new footpath and a brand new jogging track in the northern area of the park. This is the beginning of an exciting **£3 million long-term project** to transform the park into a green, user-friendly and vibrant public space for the whole community to enjoy.

We want to ensure the Town Centre Gardens are designed for the community and reflect their needs and aspirations, so **your help and ideas** are needed for a really successful project! Local people have already contributed enormously to the masterplan for the park developed for Stevenage Borough Council by HTA Landscape Design and Green Heart Partnership. Your continuing input will inform the plans for the future use and maintenance of the park required to secure the rest of the funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Subject to a successful bid, work on the implementing the rest of the masterplan will begin in April 2009.

John Gardner, Deputy Leader of Stevenage Borough Council, said, "*The redevelopment of Town Centre Gardens is a really exciting project which will benefit all of Stevenage. This is an opportunity for people to have their say and tell us what facilities they want to see.*"

Artist **Simon Grennan** has been spending time in and around the park, talking to members of the community about the kind of activities they would like to participate in and help establish in the park. He is also recruiting a group of local people interested in being involved in the park through volunteering and a 'Friends Group'. Simon will work with this group to organise a **community fun day** in the park on **Sunday 31 August**. We hope as many people as possible will come along to the event to show their support for activities like this taking place in the park in the future.

If you would like to help organise the event or for more information on the event please contact Simon Grennan, tel: 01978 780540

To get involved in the Friends group in the park, please contact Gordon Drake at Stevenage Borough Council: email: Gordon.drake@stevenage.gov.uk, tel: 01438 242 698

"Meeting with people in the town centre and Bedwell area of Stevenage adjacent to the Town Centre Garden has been a real eye-opener. People young and old have a great fondness for the Garden and are delighted to hear that more renovation, improvement and development is underway. A whole range of people have said that they want to participate in the future development of the Garden, both in terms of its physical maintenance and growth and also in terms of the types of things that might happen there, from organised play for little ones, games and competitions, through to soothing music events with a sit down and a cup of tea. People are particularly enthusiastic about the idea of a possible full-time 'parkie' for the Gardens, to

coordinate, motivate and focus support. It's very exciting!, said Simon Grennan and Christopher Sperandio

Notes to Editors:

- The *Stevenage Town Centre Gardens Masterplanning* project was a Perception AREA *Placemaking* project with Green Heart Partnership, Stevenage Borough Council, HTA Landscape Design and the community of Stevenage. The *Stevenage Town Centre Gardens Masterplanning* document is available at www.greenheartpartnership.org/towncentregardens
- GHP was launched in 2004 and is project managed by Landscape+Arts Network Services
- Green Heart Partnership is the Arts Council England, East Arts Generate programme in Hertfordshire.
- Simon Grennan has been collaborating with fellow artist Christopher Sperandio for over 18 years. Together they develop comic book, animation and community projects in collaboration with people from all walks of life

