RIPON CIVIC SOCIETY

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North Yorkshire Council (Harrogate area)
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14th April 2025

Dear Ms Benfold

Application Ref: ZC25/00658/FUL Erection of stand-alone wishing well structure for charity donations, Ripon Spa Gardens, Park Street, Ripon, North Yorkshire

Ripon Civic Society wishes to object to this application for a wishing well because of its proposed location in an historic park within Ripon Conservation Area in the settings of significant listed buildings. Whilst we want to be helpful to the Rotary Club in supporting the principle of this charitable fundraising installation, given the great sensitivity of this particular site, it is not a suitable location.

Ripon Spa Gardens are relatively intact traditional Edwardian gardens. Whilst they are not on the Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens, the Civic Society is of the opinion that they may be worthy of listing. There are, moreover, several Grade II Listed Buildings within and adjacent to the Gardens: the Statue of the First Marquess of Ripon; the Gate Piers at the entrance, the Bandstand, the War Memorial and the Spa Baths.

We fully understand why a position close to the entrance to the Gardens has been chosen for fund-raising purposes but the siting of the wishing well within the setting of the Grade II Listed statue of the Marquess and in the wider setting of the historic Ripon Spa Gardens is not acceptable on heritage grounds. The proposed wishing well, whilst it might be an attractive feature in a different location, is not compatible with the traditional design of an Edwardian planned garden and we find it difficult to see where else in the Gardens it could be sited.

We also have concerns about the proposed wishing well on community safety grounds. There is currently an improvement scheme for the Gardens funded by Community Safety with lighting and other measures because of longstanding vandalism and we are worried the well would become a target, as have the bandstand, bowling green and Alice sculpture.

We also understand that bespoke designs of wishing well appropriate to their setting have been approved elsewhere, including in Harrogate's Valley Gardens. We

therefore consider that, if a less sensitive location is found, consideration should be given to a Ripon-appropriate design.

We trust you will take these comments into account when considering this application.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Wigginton

Planning Lead
Ripon Civic Society