

Rethink plea over jobs axe

MESSENGER 15/7/10

By Robert Downes

A PETITION containing about 3,000 signatures will be handed to Trafford council chiefs this week calling for a rethink on the axing of 27 jobs in the parks department.

Town hall bosses announced the redundancies earlier this summer, and outlined alternative plans to manage the borough's parks in the form of teams of mobile gardeners working on an ad-hoc basis.

It would mean the end of gardeners being based at parks, news which has angered park Friends groups and park users, who have co-ordinated the petition to register their protests.

Labour councillor Jane Baugh attended a meeting at the council's Waterside offices earlier this month to discuss the controversial proposals with executive councillors and officers.

She told *Messenger*: "The

changes will affect the parks, and the worry is without fixed staff in place the upkeep of the parks will suffer.

"The head gardeners take a pride in their work and responsibility for their park and have a sense of duty.

"Since having a permanent presence in our parks vandalism has dramatically reduced.

"The public know this, they relate to the head gardeners, appreciate and support them and know how important they are as leaders in our community.

"Much of what has been good will be lost by these proposals, and getting rid of the people who have done so much to strengthen our communities and raise our parks to some of the highest standards in the country will be to the detriment of the service."

Chairman of the Friends of Victoria Park in Stretford, Shelly

Quinton-Hulme, said the change in the way the parks were managed was 'short-sighted' of the council.

"We are very upset to lose our head gardener, who does a fantastic job day in day out in the park," she said.

"To move gardeners to a mobile team has been done before, about 10 years ago.

"It failed and was reversed as the decline in our parks was so quick, and it has taken this long to return the parks to how they should be.

"At a time when parks are used so frequently and diversely, and when all studies and guidance from central Government and associated bodies say there should be more staff presence and more investment in our parks, it troubles me Trafford is taking such a short-sighted approach to our parks."



Victoria Park

