

14. AVON RIVER - WEEPING WILLOWS



Officer responsible Parks & Waterways Manager	Author Walter Fielding-Cotterell, DDI 371-1630
Corporate Plan Output: Central City	

The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of a proposal to install a commemorative plaque on the banks of the Avon River in Victoria Square.

The legend of the origins of the weeping willows planted along the banks of the Avon River is well known in Christchurch and has been the subject of many articles in the local press and historical literature since the 1860s.

Francois Le Lievre, a whaler who subsequently settled in New Zealand, has long been credited with bringing the first weeping willows to this area of Canterbury. Francois stopped over at the island of St Helena on his first voyage to New Zealand and, while there, took cuttings from the weeping willows surrounding the grave of Napoleon. Landing in Akaroa he planted the cuttings, two of which grew to provide the source for the weeping willows later to be planted in Christchurch.

In view of the wide public interest expressed on this subject over the years, it is proposed that a commemorative plaque, mounted on a rock, be erected on the Victoria Square riverbank near three large weeping willows. The plaque will be of considerable interest to the citizens of Christchurch and tourists alike. The text of the commemorative plaque is attached.

Francois' great-great-granddaughter, Marie Le Lievre, who lives in Akaroa, initiated the idea of erecting a plaque to commemorate Francois and his association with the weeping willows of Christchurch.

The plaque is to be unveiled on 29 March 2001, by Councillor Sally Buck.

Recommendation: That the information be received.

Chairman's Recommendation: Not seen by the Chairman.