

Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board

Notes of a Virtual Meeting of the Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board held on the **14th October 2020**.

Present:

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman)

Cllrs. Burgess, Link (ex-officio), L Suddards,

Apologies:

Cllrs. Forest, Ovenden, Grounds Maintenance Operations Manager, Assistant Grounds Maintenance Operations Manager.

Also in attendance:

Cllr. Webb.

Head of Culture, Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications, Head of Environment and Land Management, Tourism and Heritage Manager, Heritage Development Officer, Civic Engagement Officer, Arts and Cultural Industries Manager, Volunteer and Community Engagement Officer, Member Services Liaison Manager.

1 Notes of the Previous Meeting of the Board – 19th February 2020

- 1.1 The notes of the Meeting held on the 19th February 2020 were approved and confirmed as a correct record.

2 Remembrance Sunday 2020 - Update

- 2.1 The Member Services Liaison Manager drew attention to his report and advised that due to the Covid pandemic he had discussed the format of this years event with the Leader and the Member Champion for Military Covenant and Ceremonial Liaison. Arising from this discussion it was agreed that the event should be 'closed' and much reduced and would be confined to the area of the Gardens around the War Memorial. He further explained that a meeting with the Royal British Legion, REME and Sea Cadets had taken place and said that they were supportive of the much reduced event.
- 2.2 He referred to paragraphs 10 to 12 of the report and sought the Boards views on the suggested reduction in the number of the Council representatives to participate in the event to ensure that social distancing could be respected. He also explained that arrangements were in hand for the event to be live-

streamed on the Council's facebook page to ensure that the public would still be able to watch the event and that appropriate advanced publicity would be undertaken.

- 2.3 He also sought the Boards support to closing the entrances to the Gardens from Vicarage Lane and Station Road for period of time before and after the event to avoid the situation of members of the public gathering in the gardens adjacent to the access track. The Head of Environment and Land Management confirmed that Aspire would be on hand to assist and would also place appropriate signage on the gates advising of the temporary closure of the gardens.
- 2.3 The Board supported the proposals for the event and also the revised Borough representation as set out in paragraph 12 of the report with the addition of Mrs Clarkson who would accompany the Leader.

Resolved:

That the Board supported the proposals for the event as set out in the report.

3 Feedback on Victory in Europe (VE) and Victory in Japan (VJ) 75th Anniversary Celebrations; Battle of Britain 80th Anniversary Commemoration and Mr Harper's Birthday

- 3.1 The Heritage Development Officer summarised the content of his report which gave an update on the above events which had taken place since the last meeting of the Board. He displayed the various web pages comprising Ashford Remembers World War II which had been developed and produced to provide information on each of the events.
- 3.2 The Chairman commended the detailed content of the web pages and congratulated all those who had been involved with the various events.

Resolved:

That the progress report be received and noted.

4 Feedback on Armed Forces Day; Merchant Navy Day and Civic Office Update

- 4.1 The Civic Engagement Officer's report gave an update on the above events which had taken place since the last meeting of the Board together information on the work of the Civic Office.
- 4.2 The Civic Engagement Officer explained that the Armed Forces Day had been the first physical event to be held under Covid with appropriate social

distancing measures in place and said that this event had been used as the template for subsequent events.

- 4.3 Councillor Webb said that in her role of Mayor at that time it had been her privilege to undertake the video message at Easter and she thanked the Civic Engagement Officer for her work in enabling that to happen.

Resolved:

That the update be received and noted.

5 Ashford Borough Heritage Plaque Scheme

- 5.1 The Tourism and Heritage Manager explained that last year the Cabinet had approved the provision of £25k for this scheme and that the Board had agreed to progress 4 plaques. However due to the Covid pandemic work on this had ceased and indeed the funding was now no longer available and was not in the Council's Recovery Plan.
- 5.2 As a way of still taking this initiative forward, the Tourism and Heritage Manager explained that a digital version of the scheme could be developed. Draft web pages created in house were displayed which would allow the user to hover over each site and information about the person and the name of the building would be shown. There would also be a link to google maps to enable directions to be provided. The Tourism and Heritage Manager also said that it might be possible to work up a scaled down version of the scheme for approximately £5k for up to two plaques and that officers could seek sponsorship to cover the costs.
- 5.3 The Chairman said that he was supportive of the digital scheme and considered that there was a need to show a picture of the actual plaque on the relevant web page. He also said that subject to the views of the Board he would discuss potential funding options for the continuation of the physical scheme with both the Chief Executive and the Head of Culture. The Board supported the intentions of the Chairman.

Resolved:

That (i) the digital version of the scheme be progressed.

- (ii) the Chairman discuss potential funding options for the continuation of the physical scheme with the Chief Executive and Head of Culture.**

6 Audit of Monuments, Statues and Plaques in the Ashford Borough

- 6.1 The Board considered the report of the Tourism and Heritage Manager which advised that in the view of damage to statues in various parts of the Country the Kent Police had had asked the Borough Council to identify any iconic

statues or sites at potential risk, due to links with colonisation or slavery in the Borough.

- 6.2 Officers had undertaken the review and the report set out those statues and monuments which had been examined. Arising from this exercise the Portfolio Holder and Management Team were consulted and who had agreed that no further action needed to be taken.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

7 Ashford Railway Theatre Project update including Ashford Borough Museum Oral History Project

- 7.1 The Board considered the update report on the above project which had been postponed in mid-March due to the Covid - 19 pandemic. The Arts and Cultural Industries Manager explained that despite The Company identifying additional funding for the project they had not been able to run the event and accordingly the Council had decided not to pay the final contract payment of £12k.
- 7.2 The Arts and Cultural Industries Manager explained that The Company had kept in contact with many of the groups involved in the production throughout the pandemic and that they were still looking at alternative ways by which the project could be delivered. He asked for the support of the Board to formally thank The Company for all their efforts in attempting to bring the project to fruition. He also explained that the script and oral history was still available and asked how the Board would like to see it progressed. In response to a question he indicated that in the region of £10k would be needed to produce a scaled back version of the production by perhaps producing a radio show.
- 7.3 The Chairman indicated that he was in discussion with the developer of the former Newtown Works site with a view to a memorial being placed on the site to commemorate the people who had been killed when a WWII bomb had been dropped on the railway works and he considered that there was perhaps an opportunity to tie this in with a scaled back delivery of the Railway Trilogy. The Civic Engagement Officer also drew attention to the fact that the autumn of 2022 would see the 180th anniversary of the railways arriving in Ashford and suggested that a whole series of events could be based around this particular theme. The Head of Environment and Land Management said that Aspire still had the coffee pot train which could also be used as part of the overall event.

Resolved:

That the progress be noted and the ideas set out in paragraph 7.3 above be supported.

8 Victoria Park HLF Project update

- 8.1 The Volunteer and Community Engagement Officer reported that three members of the team had joined during the pandemic and the first event that they had been involved with was the birthday celebrations for Mr Harper. Work was also being undertaken with the community for them to share their memories of the park and there was also an initiative being run to find out more information about the missing stags from around the fountain.
- 8.2 Steps were also being taken to find out more information about the history of the park, particularly the period between the two world wars, and this would include research of Council Minutes via Kent Archives. Other events included Arbour Day, which was intended to be a village green type event and also annual tree planting. It was also hoped that in future the organisation of Mr Harpers birthday could be organised by the local community. £15k was available for the refurbishment of the actual fountain itself. This meant that the external appearance of the fountain and internal workings would not have a full refurbishment as a result of this project. The bowl and surrounding patio were covered by the capital works budget so they would be refurbished.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

9 Anniversary and Events Calendar – update on forthcoming events

- 9.1 The Heritage Development Officer summarised the contents of the Anniversary and Events Calendar and explained that 2021 was currently quite a quiet year with the Holocaust Memorial Day in January and the postponed event from 2020 in Charing marking the visit by King Henry VIII on his journey to the Field of the Cloth of Gold. He said that 2022 would be very busy and would include Warship Week, the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the 180th anniversary of the railway in Ashford and Ashford would also host the Civic Twinning Visit.
- 9.2 The Head of Culture said that as 2021 was a relatively quiet year it would allow Officers to plan for 2022 which would see a large number of events, including the possibility of the giraffes (Snow Dogs 2). Councillor Webb drew attention to the event in 2022 to mark the 80th Anniversary of Ashford Sea Cadets and HMS Albacore and said that the Board might wish to invite Sub Lieutenant D'Agostina, of the Sea Cadets to give a presentation on their history.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted and Sub Lieutenant D'Agostina of the Sea Cadets be invited to the next meeting.

10 Date of Next Meeting

10.1 Date to be advised.

Councillor Clarkson
Chairman – Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board

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