

Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board

Notes of a Virtual Meeting of the Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board held on the **3rd February 2021**

Present:

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman)
Cllr. Forest (Vice Chairman)

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

Apologies:

Cllrs Burgess, Dehnel, Grounds Maintenance Operations Manager

Also in attendance:

Cllr. Webb,
Sub Lieutenant (SCC) Bruno D'Agostino RNR, Commanding Officer, Ashford Sea Cadets (for item no 3 only)

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, Member Services Liaison Manager.

1 Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Post Meeting Note: Cllr. Webb made a Voluntary Announcement as she as the President of the Ashford Sea Cadets.

2 Notes of the Previous Meeting of the Board – 14th October 2020

- 2.1 The notes of the Meeting held on the 14th October 2020 were approved and confirmed as a correct record.

3 HMS Albacore; Ashford's Warship

- 3.1 The Board received a presentation from Sub Lieutenant (SCC) Bruno D'Agostino RNR, Commanding Officer, Ashford Sea Cadets.. Following the meeting a copy of the presentation had been circulated to all members of the Board and had been placed on Modern Gov.
- 3.2 Bruno D'Agostino explained that HMS Albacore was Ashford's adopted warship and had arisen from an initiative during the Second World War whereby cities, towns and villages across the country undertook fundraising

events to raise money to fund the commissioning of warships to help support the war effort. The initiative had taken place between October 1941 and March 1942 and HMS Albacore had been commissioned and a bond was created between the crew and the town of Ashford. He, however believed that the towns links with the ship had been forgotten but said that 2022 would see the 80th Anniversary of the fund raising event which was being branded as Warship Week and he considered that this was an opportunity for Ashford to commemorate this, together with the 80th Anniversary of the establishment of the Ashford Sea Cadet Unit.

- 3.3 The presentation provided detailed information on the technical aspects of the ship, which operated as a minesweeper and had also undertaken duties as part of escort convoys in the war. The ship had operated in North Africa, Sicily, Salerno and the crew had received medals of honour for their role in terms of sweeping the channels at Anzio. Bruno D'Agostino showed a slide showing the uniform of a Commanding Officer of the ship which was on display in the Ashford Museum and said that he understood that the Officer had lived in Tenterden for part of his life. In conclusion he considered that Ashford had a tangible link and memorial with the First World War with the Tank, and therefore the link with the Second World War via HMS Albacore needed to be similarly acknowledged and celebrated with the wider community.
- 3.4 Councillor Webb thanked Sub Lt D'Agostino for the excellent presentation and advised that a portrait of the ship was on display in the National Gallery. She considered that 2022 was an ideal time to celebrate the history of this event and said that the 80th anniversary of the commissioning of the ship would be on 28 February 2022. However to coincide with the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen in June 2022, Councillor Webb believed that it was appropriate to acknowledge the contribution and role the Royal Family played during WW2 as part of an overall series of events.
- 3.5 The Chairman said that it was his view that the event outlined during the presentation should be celebrated in 2022 and he said that he would like to commission a flag to mark the this event which could be flown at the Civic Centre on 28th February each year. He asked that Councillor Webb and Officers liaise with Sub Lt D'Agostino over developing a suitable design for a flag for HMS Albacore and to report back with options to a future meeting of the Board. The Chairman also considered that information on HMS Albacore needed to be incorporated in a future edition of the Ashford Magazine and also relayed to the local media and included as dedicated web pages on the ABC web site.
- 3.6 A Member suggested that research be undertaken in terms of whether there were any relatives of the crew living in the Ashford area, and also considered that there might be an opportunity for the event to act as a recruitment drive for the Ashford Sea Cadets. Sub Lt D'Agostino explained that he was happy for the Sea Cadets to assist in undertaking research as to whether any relatives of the crew still lived in Ashford and he also said that it was proposed that in June next year the Sea Cadets would parade with two of the Cadets

dressed in black caps and ribbons to reflect the uniform of the crew of the HMS Albacore shown in a photograph that he had displayed.

- 3.7 The Vice Chairman suggested that it would be appropriate for a floral tribute to represent HMS Albacore to be created for display in the Memorial Gardens in June next year. In terms of interpretation panels to accompany the display, the Chairman said that he was mindful of the potential cost but considered that this was something the Board could consider further in due course.

Resolved:

That (i) the Board support the organisation of a series of events/initiatives in 2022 to mark the 80th Anniversary of the commissioning of HMS Albacore and the formation of the Ashford Sea Cadets to coincide with the Platinum Jubilee of HMS the Queen; these events to include the commissioning of a flag for HMS Albacore to be flown from the Civic Centre on 28th February each year; undertake investigation into the possibility of a floral representation of the ship for display in the Memorial Gardens and the production of interpretation boards; research with the help of the Sea Cadets as to whether there were any relatives of the crew living in the Borough.

(ii) a further report on the ideas outlined in (i) above be presented the next meeting.

4 New Initiative – NHS and Frontline Workers Day – 5th July 2021

- 4.1 The Civic Engagement Officer summarised the content of her report which advised of a new national initiative called NHS and Frontline Workers Day which was proposed to be held on 5th July 2021. The report sought the support of the Board for the Borough Council to participate in the event.
- 4.2 The Civic Engagement Officer advised that the modest cost for the purchase of a flag to be flown from the Civic Centre could be met from the Mayoral Budget.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted and the Board support the participation of the Borough Council in the activities associated with event.

5 Update on the Ashford Borough Virtual Heritage Plaque Scheme

- 5.1 The Heritage Development Officer gave an update on the above scheme and explained that since the previous meeting images had been added together

with a map of the Borough and links via google maps to the respective locations. Links on the pages would also lead to further information on the recipients.

- 5.2 The Tourism and Heritage Manager also drew attention to the Tenterden Methodist Church WW1 Organ and explained that Cllr Knowles had funded a plaque from his Ward Member grant to be placed within the Church in recognition of winning the John Betjeman award. She also said that she wished to thank Officers from the Communications Team for their help in producing the Virtual Plaque web pages.
- 5.3 In terms of future recipients, Members suggested that Aphra Behn, playwright and John Kemp, former English Cardinal and Lord Chancellor, who had associations with Wye be considered for future virtual plaques. The Chairman agreed that Officers would investigate these two suggestions and said that if Members had others that they advise the Tourism and Heritage Manager accordingly.
- 5.4 The Heritage Development Officer then went through the list of the 12 potential initial recipients outlined in the report and sought the Boards approval to take these forward. The Board agreed to support numbers 1 to 3 and 5 to 12, with number 4 deferred for further research.

Resolved:

That (i) the update be received and noted.

(ii) numbers 1 to 3 and 5 to 12 be supported, and consideration of number 4 be deferred for further research.

6 Update on Holocaust Memorial Day

- 6.1 The Heritage Development Officer displayed the Council web pages dedicated to marking Holocaust Memorial Day on 27th January which also included information on subsequent genocides. He explained that due to the covid restrictions an On Line Exhibition had been organised and a pre - recorded ceremony had been broadcast and he thanked several Officers for their help in making this happen.
- 6.2 The Chairman and Vice Chairman expressed their gratitude to the Officers for producing this event.
- 6.3 The Tourism and Heritage Manager advised that the event had been publicised to all Members and Parish and Community Councils by way of a Leaders Briefing.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted

7 Anniversary and Events Calendar

- 7.1 The report of the Heritage Development Officer set out the above for 2021 and 2022.
- 7.2 The Chairman asked that consideration of this item, together with the following items be deferred to the next meeting due to lack of time.

Resolved:

That the report be deferred to the next meeting.

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

- 8.1 The Board received the update report on the above project which had been postponed in mid-March due to the pandemic.

Resolved:

That the report be deferred to the next meeting.

9 Victoria Park HLF Project update

Resolved:

That the item be deferred to the next meeting.

10 Carnival 2022

- 10.1 This item had been placed on the agenda at the request of Councillor L Suddards. Councillor Suddards said that she would like to see a carnival held in Ashford to reflect diversity and be a celebration of food, music and culture. Given the lack of time Councillor Suddards said that she would be happy to report further on this suggestion to the next meeting.

Resolved:

That this deferred to the next meeting

11 Date of Next Meeting

- 11.1 Date to be advised.

Councillor Clarkson
Chairman – Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board

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