

Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board

Notes of a Virtual Meeting of the Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board held on the **22nd December 2021**

Present:

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman)

Cllrs. Burgess, Harman, L Suddards, Webb.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2(c) Councillor Harman attended as Substitute Member for Councillor Ovenden

Apologies:

Cllrs. Forest, Knowles, Ovenden.

Head of Culture, Tourism and Leisure, Grounds Maintenance Operations Manager, Heritage Development Officer.

In Attendance:

Head of Environment and Land Management, Tourism and Heritage Manager, Civic Officer, Senior Executive Assistant, Member Services Manager.

Jasper Bouverie – Funder Films CIC (Item 3 only)

1 Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Councillor Burgess made a Voluntary Announcement as he was the Council's appointed representative on the Marshlink Steering Group which had received a presentation on the Ashford Railway Theatre Project and he had been in touch with the organisers with a view to assisting with funding.
- 1.2 Councillor Webb made a Voluntary Announcement as she was the President of the Ashford Sea Cadets.

2 Notes of the Previous Meeting of the Board – 29th September 2021

- 2.1 The notes of the Meeting held on the 29th September 2021 were approved and confirmed as a correct record.

3 Ashford's Hidden Treasures

- 3.1 Jasper Bouverie of Funder Films CIC gave the Board a brief presentation updating on his work, and in particular the Ashford's Hidden Treasures

Project. He said that Ashford's Hidden Treasures had arisen out of a film he had made last year called "Ashford in 100 Buildings". This had documented the history of the Borough from the year 1100 to present with pictures of buildings. The film had been funded by the Kent Community Foundation, with a contribution from Ashford Borough Council and had been given to activity leaders in Care Homes in the Borough to help stimulate conversations at a difficult time. He said he had always wanted to do a film on objects as well, inspired by the BBC Radio 4 series "The History of the World in 100 Objects". He successfully applied for a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and with the help of local curators, archivists, museums and History Societies, he had embarked on the project in April 2021. He showed a short video providing a summary of some of the objects and explaining how the project had gone.

3.2 Mr Bouverie said he had really enjoyed running this project. Everyone he had met had been incredibly enthusiastic and he wanted to continue bringing Ashford's amazing history to people's attention. In February he was due to speak to the Wye Historical Society on his highlights from Ashford's Hidden Treasures and going forward he has been speaking to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Centre for Local History in Leicester about taking the project elsewhere as there seemed to be a formula that could be replicated in other areas. In the short term, Funder Films was currently working on a film called "Dear Ashford, Alabama" with some of the young people at Sk8side. The film, funded by the Frank Brake Foundation, was in the form of a letter, explaining the town to people who lived in a much smaller and somewhat deprived town called Ashford in Alabama. There had been some delays in production but it should be finished in the New Year. He couldn't go into more detail about the projects for 2022 as the grant forms had not yet been written, but he could say that Funder Films was keen to do more work in Ashford and to meet people in the Borough who were interested in film, history, or supporting some of the community's more isolated groups. Any help the Council could give would be gratefully received. He concluded by thanking the Heritage Development Officer, at the Council for his help so far and to Members for giving him the opportunity to address the Board

3.3 The Leader thanked Mr Bouverie for his presentation and Board Members said they had found it fascinating. The Leader requested that links to the videos referred to be circulated to Board Members as he would be very interested to view them all. In the course of discussion Board Members made the following points: -

- Councillor Harman said she had followed the films with interest on Facebook and would be interested in pursuing a project on the Borough's agricultural history. She was particularly interested in 'Living History' and Funder Films' work with local Care Homes and would be keen to work further with Mr Bouverie on this.
- Councillor Webb advised that her family had donated some documents to the County Archives in Maidstone, including some related to

Elizabeth Quinton Strouts and the Earls of Thanet, which may be of interest. They had been archived under “the Webb Collection”.

- Councillor Lyn Suddards said she was fascinated by this whole topic and local history in general. Anything based on the railways seemed to have been particularly popular and she knew there was some good material out there about the Trade Unions and the first female railway workers in Ashford.

3.4 Mr Bouverie said he would be happy to make contact with anyone who was interested in getting involved in future projects and would pass on his contact details.

Resolved:

That the update be received and noted.

4 Event Updates

Holocaust Memorial Day and 80 Trees for 80 Years

- 4.1 The Heritage Development Officer had submitted a report updating on progress since the last meeting. Plans were all now in place to hold a tree planting ceremony and unveiling of a plaque in Woodchurch on Holocaust Memorial Day – 27th January 2022. A suitable location for the planting of the oak tree had been agreed on the village green and invitations to the ceremony had been sent out. In response to a question it was advised that there would be a religious element to the ceremony. The Leader asked if joining instructions could make it clear whether there was a dress code and whether medals and decorations should be worn.
- 4.2 As an aside, the Leader said that he had found the discovery of information about Woodchurch’s links to the Holocaust fascinating, as he had with other recent discoveries about Ashford’s history. He wondered if consideration should be given to the honorary appointment of some sort of Borough Historian or Civic Archivist. This had support from the Board and was something the Leader would give more thought to.

Ashford’s Railway Theatre Project

- 4.3 The Arts and Cultural Industries Manager had submitted a report updating on the “All Change for Ashford” theatre show which was now due to take place in April/May 2022. The Tourism and Heritage Manager advised that there was a potential small shortfall in the funding of around £1,045 and some Members had been approached to assist from their Members Grants, The Leader advised that if this funding was needed, it should not come from individual Member Grants and the Council would be able to find it from elsewhere. Given the amount of match funding already obtained by the project, the Board said they would be keen to support this.

Events Calendar

- 4.3 This set out the above for 2022 - 2026. This was a live document and it would be updated as Officers became aware of new anniversaries and events. Members were encouraged to input with any events that they were aware of for addition to the calendar.

Resolved:

- That (i) **the updates be received and noted.**
- (ii) **if necessary, the Council would assist with the shortfall in funding for the Ashford Railway Theatre Project.**

5 Jubilee and Albacore Event Programme 2022

Jubilee Programme including Commissioning of HM the Queen's Community Project

- 5.1 The Tourism and Heritage Manager advised that, subject to contract, Animate Arts Ltd. had been chosen to run the Queen's Community Project. They had developed some really exciting ideas around a theme of "The Queen's Trees". It was hoped that local communities, particularly the young and schools, as well as Community Groups and local businesses, would embrace it and get involved, designing wooden trees and hand-made decorations. The decorations that adorned each tree would be made from recycled materials and would have a theme that represented the Queen's achievements, passions and iconic symbols from her reign. She further advised that a creative programme and workshops would be used to promote recycling, re-purposing and reusing of waste materials and so the whole project closely aligned with the Council's Carbon Neutral Action Strategy. Central to these installations would be the Jubilee Blossom Tree - made entirely from paper and cardboard. Its branches would be adorned with hand-made paper blossom and each flower would carry a handwritten message of hope for 2022 and beyond. The artistic team would invite the public to make blossom for this collaborative tree artwork. The tree would be designed so that it could be moved to different locations and the plan was for it to 'light up' and 'pop up' at the beacon lighting event. There were also proposals to work closely with the Council's Waste and Recycling Education Officer on a Civic Eco-Warriors project and with the Love Ashford team to maximise the impact of the whole project.
- 5.2 The Tourism and Heritage Manager further advised that discussion on plans around the Civic Beacon Lighting event and the Civic Thanksgiving Service at St Mary's Church, were also underway.
- 5.3 Board Members welcomed the plans. A Member asked how Parish Councils and Primary Schools in the rural areas could get involved as she knew many

already had their own plans and it would be important not duplicate. She also wondered if the interactive map planned for the Queens Trees project could be extended to include all events taking place in the Borough that weekend? The Tourism and Heritage Manager advised that Parish Councils had already been contacted and asked to advise of their own plans so these could be co-ordinated on the Council's website. All of the Borough's schools would be contacted to be part of the Queen's Trees Project and a free downloadable creative pack would be available to anyone who wanted to take part.

- 5.4 Road closures for street parties would also be an important consideration. The Leader said he understood KCC would be taking a 'lighter touch' approach to these but there would be a lead-in time to consider. Full guidance about this issue, and others, had been included on the Council's dedicated web pages.

HMS Albacore Programme

- 5.5 Councillor Webb gave an update on this programme. There had been a lot of exciting developments recently, including the donation of a ship's anchor and chain to be used in a new permanent installation in the Memorial Gardens. A local company had kindly agreed to shot blast and paint the anchor free of charge and an initial design and location had been identified by Aspire, including stone boulders, the anchor and chain, hard core and rope and sea thrift planting. A final design would be brought back to the next meeting of this Board and in the meantime it was hoped that some suitable stone boulders could be sourced.
- 5.6 It had been discovered that a painting of HMS Albacore currently sat in the National Gallery in London. The Leader said he would write to the National Gallery and see if a copy could be produced for Ashford to display.

Event Communications

- 5.7 The Tourism and Heritage Manager advised that following Cabinet agreement in October, a press release had been issued about the overall Jubilee and Albacore programme. A series of web pages had been put together on the Albacore commemorations (and the history behind Albacore), the Jubilee (the national and Ashford events) and the Queen's Trees information would follow when finalised. There was also guidance about organising street parties and an on-line submission section for Parishes and Community Groups to complete to advise about their events. There was also a section on Jubilee funding opportunities from Heritage Lottery Fund and the Arts Council. A communications strategy would be developed early in the New Year with the Council's Communications team. The Leader asked if Leader and Borough Briefings could also be produced on all of this in the New Year as not everyone always looked at websites.

Resolved:

That the updated be received and noted.

6 Civic Update (Including Remembrance Sunday)

- 6.1 The Civic Officer had submitted a report giving an update on activity in the Civic Office. The Member Services Manager drew attention to feedback received from the Remembrance Sunday event, which had been a success, but had flagged up some lessons learned and potential areas for improvement for future years. The principle point was the possible installation of power at the Memorial Gardens to ensure good coverage for the PA system and the company video streaming the service. The Leader said he agreed that sound could have been a lot better at the Service and in his view this was a combination of the PA system used being insufficient and those speaking not getting close enough to the microphone. He would support investigation in to the possibility of power being installed during 2022.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

7 Date of Next Meeting

- 7.1 The Leader asked if the next meeting could be brought forward to February rather than March 2022.

Post Meeting Note:

The next Meeting of the Board will take place on Friday 25th February 2022 at 2.30pm.

Councillor Clarkson
Chairman – Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board

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