

Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board

Notes of a Virtual Meeting of the Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board held on the 27th July 2022.

Present:

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

Cllrs. Burgess, Ovenden, Webb (ex-officio).

Apologies:

Cllrs. Feacey, L Suddards, Heritage Development Officer.

Also Present:

Tourism and Heritage Manager, Grounds Maintenance Operations Manager, Civic Officer, Member Services Manager.

1 Notes of the Previous Meeting of the Board – 27th April 2022

- 1.1 The notes of the Meeting held on the 27th April 2022 were approved and confirmed as a correct record.

2 Review/Evaluation of Ashford Celebrates the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

- 2.1 The Tourism and Heritage Manager and Civic Officer had submitted a summary and evaluation report of the Platinum Jubilee weekend's events (2nd – 5th June 2022) and the Ashford Tree Trail. The Leader said what the Council had put on had been a very impressive series of events and he thought all should be quietly proud of that. He had already expressed his thanks to the key staff involved in the weekend, including Aspire, but wanted to reiterate those thanks on behalf of this Committee. The Mayor said it had been such a memorable weekend and the three main events had all been a joy to behold. She also thanked all those, from inside and outside the Council, who had worked so hard or contributed to making the weekend so successful.

Recommendations:

- That (i) **for business continuity, the Council should aim to establish a cross department working group for all future major events of this type, including potential anniversaries in 2024 and notable events of national importance.**

- (ii) a **Communications Officer be assigned to manage social media for the duration of each such event, to avoid missed PR opportunities.**
- (iii) **an additional communications budget be considered for media planning, paid advertisements, photographer, videographer and live streaming of events.**
- (iv) **the installation of annual festive bunting and festoon lighting in Civic Park, the Memorial Gardens and other appropriate locations such as the town centre, be considered.**
- (v) **the challenges of delivering such events if it wasn't for the generous sponsorship and in-kind support of local businesses, community groups and colleagues such as Aspire, be acknowledged.**

3 Evaluation of 'All Change for Ashford' (Railway Theatre Project)

- 3.1 An evaluation report of this project had been submitted. The Leader said he had been delighted to receive this report and the accompanying CD and he wanted to promote it more widely. This project appeared to have been a real success, particularly given the delays from conception to delivery given the pandemic. Enthusiasm had been maintained and that was to organisers' credit. In response to a question, the Tourism and Heritage Manager advised that she would see if more copies of the CD could be obtained for distribution.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

4 Celebrations of 180 Years of the Ashford Railway – 19th/20th November 2022

- 4.1 The Tourism and Heritage Manager introduced the report which outlined planned events by AIMREC to recognise the anniversary of the South Eastern Railway arriving in Ashford in November 1842. A provisional programme of events across different venues in the town centre and Newtown had been drawn up to take place over the weekend of 19th/20th November 2022.
- 4.2 The report also drew attention to AIMREC's 'Ashford 180 Community Model and People's Library' project. This sought to create a scale model of the Ashford Railway Works, incorporating oral histories and a unique audio-visual record. They were seeking funding so Members and/or the Council may receive requests. The Leader reiterated that such requests should be directed towards the main Community Grants fund, rather than individual Ward Member grants.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

5 Virtual Heritage Plaque Scheme – Verena Holmes

- 5.1 The report advised that the plaque to Ms Holmes had been launched on 23rd June, to coincide with her birthday and International Women in Engineering Day. Work on another six plaques that had previously been agreed by this Committee was also underway.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

6 Civic Office Update (including Remembrance 2022)

- 6.1 The Civic Officer had submitted a report giving an update on activity in the Civic Office including the Mayor's Civic Service which had taken place on the 17th July; Flag Raising events both past and upcoming; Remembrance 2022 and the rearranged REME Freedom of the Borough Open Weekend and Parade, provisionally planned for February 2023 (dependant on operational commitments).
- 6.2 With specific reference to Remembrance, the Member Services Manager advised that there had been an initial meeting on this with the new Ashford Branch of the Royal British Legion (RBL). It had been positive with the Legion endeavouring to take back a lot of the elements of responsibility for this event include appointing a dedicated Parade Marshal. The Council ideally wanted to revert to being a facilitator, with the RBL leading the preparations and getting the event they wanted. The Council would still be assisting with everything, including seeking a better audio solution to allow everybody to better hear the service. These would be complemented with a livestream. The Leader said that the audio was vitally important and the Committee supported a slightly increased budget to ensure this was done properly.
- 6.3 The Leader advised that Councillor Peter Feacey had been appointed as the Member Champion for the Armed Forces and Military Covenant, but he was also seeking senior member of the Armed Forces to assist him in this role. The Board agreed this way forward.
- 6.4 A Member recommended that some of smaller services and ceremonies attended by the Mayor could be live streamed or recorded to ensure maximum coverage. There were some wonderful events happening, but they sometimes got lost in the shuffle due to a lack of coverage/attendance.

Resolved:

- That (i) **the report be received and noted.**
- (ii) **the Council continue to fly the NHS flag on the 5th July annually as a thank you to the NHS, but an annual ceremony is no longer required as a matter of course.**

7 Events Calendar

- 7.1 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. The also now included dates that were part of Ashford's Events Framework. Members were encouraged to input with any events that they were aware of for addition to the calendar.
- 7.2 The Leader said it was important to include events happening in Tenterden as there was a lot happening there. The Tourism and Heritage Manager mentioned 'Tenter-dine', an emerging event between 14th and 23rd October, promoting local restaurants and food experiences, and the Council would be helping to promote that.

Resolved:

That the Events Calendar be received and noted.

8 Civic Awards Update – 23rd September 2022

- 8.1 The Tourism and Heritage Manager and Leader gave a verbal update on this item. The Platinum Jubilee Civic Awards would take place on Friday 23rd September at Chart Hills Golf Club, Biddenden. This had last taken place in 2018 to mark end of the First World War and before that in 2012 for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The aim of the Awards was to recognise unsung community heroes in the Borough who went above and beyond, selflessly helping the lives of others. Nominations for the Awards had opened on the 16th June and were due to close on the 3rd August. The Awards had been widely publicised via Leader's briefings, media releases, boosted social media posts, traditional posters and flyers, a promoted page on the website, and emails and contacts made with key partners.
- 8.2 To date a number of quality nominations had been received with more expected before the deadline. The Civic Honours and Awards Panel would meet in early August to judge the awards and decide the winners. Six key business sponsors had also been secured and entertainment was being provided by Kent Music School. The awards themselves were being designed by a local glass artist, Annie Ross, who had produced the 2018 award.
- 8.3 A photo of the example award was displayed – a glass sculptured lime tree on an oak base, with a brushed platinum plaque and ABC and Queen's Jubilee

badges. It was agreed that the award looked better without the green colouring to the glass. Both shortlisted and winning candidates would have their details included in an official Civic Awards bound book and it was planned that a tree would be planted for every nominee in the new Queen's Platinum Jubilee Park.

Resolved:

That the update be received and noted.

9 New 'The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Park'

- 9.1 The Leader gave a verbal update advising that the Cabinet Office had responded to the Council's request and given authority to use the name 'The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Park' for the new park at Chilmington Green (working name Discovery Park). This was actually seen as a better name than the one originally suggested. Now that the Council had that permission, it had the option to use that name if it wanted to and the Full Council could be asked to agree that at a later date.

Resolved:

That the update be received and noted.

10 Date of Next Meeting

The next Meeting of the Board is currently scheduled for Wednesday 26th October 2022 at 2.30pm.

Councillor Clarkson
Chairman – Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board

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