

# **Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board**

Notes of a Virtual Meeting of the Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board held on the **26<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

## **Present:**

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

Cllrs. Harman, Charles Suddards, Webb (ex-officio).

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2 (iii) Councillors Harman and Charles Suddards attended as Substitute Members for Councillors Ovenden and Lyn Suddards respectively.

## **Apologies:**

Cllrs. Burgess, Feacey, Ovenden, Lyn Suddards.

## **Also Present:**

Assistant Director of Environment, Property and Recreation, Tourism and Heritage Manager, Grounds Maintenance Operations Manager, Civic Officer, Tourism and Heritage Development Officer, Policy and Democratic Services Assistant, Member Services Manager.

## **1 Declarations of Interest**

- 1.1 Councillor Webb made a Voluntary Announcement as President of the Ashford Sea Cadets.

## **2 Notes of the Previous Meeting of the Board – 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

- 2.1 The notes of the Meeting held on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022 were approved and confirmed as a correct record.

## **3 Platinum Jubilee Civic Awards 2022 - Feedback**

- 3.1 Both the Leader and the Mayor wanted to stress what a special evening this had been. They wanted to thank the staff who had work tirelessly to arrange the event, Kent Music for their delightful string quartet and the sponsors who had been so generous. The evening had provided an opportunity to recognise individuals who gave their time to do so much for the people of Ashford. The awards themselves had taken the form of a handmade crystal tree on a plinth of English oak, which had been a fitting tribute to Her Majesty the Queen in the year of her Green Canopy. Members who had been present said it had

been a joy to be present and a very humbling experience to meet the award recipients and their families and hear their stories.

**Resolved:**

**That the report be received and noted.**

#### **4 Civic Office Update (including Remembrance Sunday – 13<sup>th</sup> November 2022)**

- 4.1 The Civic Officer introduced her report which gave an update on activity in the Civic Office including: - Merchant Navy Day on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September; the Death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the implementation of Operation London Bridge; the Civic Twinning visit to Fougères; Remembrance 2022; and the HMS Albacore Flag Raising and Plaque Dedication Ceremony.
- 4.2 With specific reference to the Twinning Visit to Fougères, the Civic Officer advised that the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress had attended this in place of the Mayor and Consort who were unable to travel. Despite the tragic passing of Mike Bennett during the trip, feedback on the trip and the hospitality and sensitivity of the hosts had been extremely positive and it was felt that bonds had become even stronger as a result. The Vice Chairman, as the Council's Twinning Champion, advised that the timetable had changed and they would now be visiting Bad Münsteriefel, Germany in 2023 with Ashford hosting in 2024. 2024 would be a significant year for Ashford to host as it marked the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary (26 August 1964) of the Twinning between Ashford and Bad Münstereifel, the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning between Ashford and Fougères, as well as the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Borough Council itself.
- 4.3 The Mayor introduced the second part of the HMS Albacore commemorations which would include the flying of the specially designed ensign from the Ashford Sea Cadets at the Civic Centre. This was planned for 28<sup>th</sup> February annually (which was the date in 1942 that the civil community of Ashford formally adopted the HMS Albacore after a successful fundraising Warship Week). It was also planned to have a small ceremony to unveil the hand crafted wooden copy of the minesweeper's badge created by Ben Sharp and it had been suggested that this could be securely hung in the Civic Corridor on Level 2 of the Civic Suite alongside a photo of the ship and some detail and history of the affiliation. If agreed, it seemed sensible for this dedication to take place on the same special day – 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023. This could include a small reception to celebrate the occasion.

**Resolved:**

**That the report be received and noted.**

**Recommended:**

- That (i) the flying of the newly adopted HMS Albacore flag on the official date of 28th February each year be agreed and included in the Council's flag flying programme.
- (ii) a ceremony take place on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023 to hang the badge and some information about the history of HMS Albacore in the Civic Centre, along with a small reception.

## **5 Update on AIMREC Plans to Celebrate of 180 Years of Railway in Ashford**

- 5.1 The Tourism and Heritage Development Officer gave an update on planned events by AIMREC to recognise the 180<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Railway arriving in Ashford in November 1842. The Council has assisted AIMREC with marketing, promotion and printing.
- 5.2 The Vice-Chairman said it was important to recognise that AIMREC had arranged this programme themselves, with the Council's support. It was very positive that they had taken the lead and he looked forward to the events.

**Resolved:**

**That the report be received and noted.**

## **6 Civic Twinning**

- 6.1 Councillor Forest advised that this had largely been covered under the Civic Office Update but one thing to add was that there would be an update on the recent visit, and Twinning more generally, in the Ashford For You magazine. He also advised that the Ashford Twinning Association had been working closely with the British German Association, with a view to inviting representatives to their AGM in March next year. He said there was a really interesting relationship developing and Ashford was seen by the British German Association as one of the leading Twinning Associations in terms of the work they were doing to raise the profile of Twinning. He considered this was exciting news.
- 6.2 The Leader said he personally wanted to recognise Councillor Forest, as the Council's Twinning Champion, for the way he had handled such a very sad and difficult situation on the Fougères visit. He understood they had just arrived and the incident had happened on the first evening. Feedback had been that it had been handled in such a sensitive way and support from the French colleagues and friends had also been absolutely brilliant.

**Resolved:**

**That the report be received and noted.**

## **7 59th (Newfoundland) Heavy Regiment Royal Artillery – Ashford’s Forgotten History**

- 7.1 The Tourism and Heritage Development Officer introduced this item and gave some of the background to the discovery of links between this Canadian Regiment and Ashford, whereby the Regiment had been based at Ashford School during the Second World War, chiefly engaged with coastal defences in South East England. A grave of a member of that Regiment, Walter Pike, had been discovered in Bybrook Cemetery by a local lady, Judith Holloway, who had made contact with the family in Canada who were unaware. Consequently she had undertaken research in to the Regiment, obtained some really interesting documentation about the Regiment including diary entries and had forged links with both the School and in Canada.
- 7.2 Officers considered these discoveries were extremely interesting and exciting, not least as they reflected pieces of forgotten history for Ashford and this was something that deserved to be better known about. They had agreed to bring this back to this Board to update Members and were looking for permission to form a small informal working group to examine ways for this story to be better promoted and published.
- 7.3 The Board was extremely supportive of the formation of a working group and the potential for installing some sort of permanent memorial to the Regiment in Ashford. The Leader asked if a report could be prepared for the Cabinet to make them aware and perhaps something could be included in a future edition of Ashford For You magazine.

### **Resolved:**

**That an informal working group be established between ABC Officers, Ashford School, the Royal British Legion and other interested parties, to promote this part of Ashford’s forgotten history in order to appropriately commemorate the 59th (Newfoundland) regiment in the wider context of the history of the Borough.**

## **8 Events Calendar**

- 8.1 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. Members were encouraged to input with any events that they were aware of for addition to the calendar.

### **Resolved:**

**That the Events Calendar be received and noted.**

## **9 Coronation of King Charles III**

- 9.1 It was noted that this had now been set for Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2023. With the Local Elections on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup>, and Election Count on Friday 5<sup>th</sup>, it promised to be a busy weekend for the Council. The Leader said that whilst they must wait for official advice from the King's Pageant Master, he would like the Borough to embrace this and do something special to mark the occasion.
- 9.2 Officers asked for guidance on the type of celebration envisaged – for instance should it be similar to the Platinum Jubilee with an arts trail, beacon lighting and civic church service? The Leader said he was keen to see something take place in the urban area of Ashford – possibly a street or coronation party in either the Civic Park or Victoria Park. It was, however, considered prudent to wait first for the official guidance from the Palace.
- 9.3 A Member said that she was sure Parishes would organise their own events and beacon lightings to mark the occasion, but it would be good to have the support of Ashford Borough Council and KALC to help support each other and make a memorable chain of events.

## **10 Newtown Memorial**

- 10.1 The Leader gave a verbal update on the Memorial that was planned for the Newtown Works site. This would commemorate those who lost their lives at a bombing raid at the railway works in 1943, the largest single loss of life in Kent during the Second World War. The Memorial would also recognise the railway works itself dating back to 1847, as well as the RAF who defended this part of Kent during the war. He showed drawings of the proposed design for the Memorial, which would include the installation of two granite benches, and he hoped the Memorial would be unveiled by a member of the Royal Family during 2023.

## **11 Queen's Platinum Jubilee Park**

- 11.1 The Leader updated on the news that Ashford had been granted permission by the Cabinet Office to use the name "The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Park" for the area provisionally known as Discovery Park. This was where a number of the 135,500 trees would be planted for the Queen's Green Canopy project. There had been some discussion about local people not being consulted and he advised that the name did not have to be used, but it seemed a shame considering permission had been granted, and particularly in this special year.
- 11.2 The Board were united in considering that the name should be used and that a vast majority of local people were likely to support this, without the need for a lengthy consultation process. The granting of permission to use this name should be seen as an honour, particularly during the 70<sup>th</sup> and final year of Queen Elizabeth II's reign.

## **12 The Mayor's Long Service Certificates**

- 12.1 The Mayor advised that she and the Leader had recently presented a number of long service certificates and medallions to members of staff who had worked for Ashford Borough Council for more than 25 years. She said it had been lovely to spend an afternoon with those long serving members of staff and she had actually been quite surprised just how many people had worked at the Council for such a length of time. She considered it was quite an accolade that people had stayed that long at one workplace.

## **13 Ashford Honorary Ambassador Award**

- 13.1 The Leader advised that the first of these awards had been presented in 2018 to Dr Liliana Turoiu of the Romanian Institute for her work in bringing the statue of Queen Marie of Romania to Ashford. The Award was created to recognise and honour individuals who had made, or were making, a significant contribution to the development, wellbeing, strength and/or civic dignity of the Borough of Ashford, and he now proposed to make the second award to Jasmin Vardimon, on the opening of their new premises in Ashford.
- 13.2 A Member said he would like to understand a little more about the work Jasmin Vardimon did in Ashford because he did not think the people of Ashford had got much of a benefit from the association and investment and whether there was any commitment to do this, or whether this was just done on a voluntary basis. Other Members advised that the Company did a huge amount locally and often gave their time freely. The Vice-Chairman said he had previously extended an invitation to the Member to visit the new site and meet with the Executive Director of the Company to discuss their bursaries and activities and this had not been taken up. He was sure that offer still stood and would be happy to arrange something should the Member so wish
- 13.3 The Leader said that as part of this award it would be important to publicise the work of Jasmin Vardimon and just how much she did in Ashford. He would look to release a Leader's Briefing on the subject and include something in the Ashford For You magazine.

## **14 Permanent Loan of the Tenterden Rural District Council Badge of Office**

- 14.1 The Leader advised that since the Local Government re-organisation of 1974, the Council had housed the Chain of the former Tenterden Rural District Council in its Mayor's Parlour. It had been considered appropriate for some time to return that to Tenterden Town Council as it was really their history and it would reinforce bonds between the two Authorities. Therefore, a small ceremony had been arranged for 31<sup>st</sup> October in the Council Chamber whereby the Chain would be handed over by the Mayor of Ashford to the Mayor of Tenterden. A legal document had been drawn up to facilitate a

'permanent loan', with the Badge of Office coming back to ABC if circumstances were to change in the future, and this would be signed by both the Chief Executive of ABC and the Town Clerk of Tenterden on the day.

## **15 Date of Next Meeting**

**The next Meeting of the Board is currently scheduled for Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 2.30pm.**

Councillor Clarkson  
Chairman – Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board

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