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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

of the meeting of the **Working Party** formed to oversee repairs to the **Town Hall and Malling Community Centre**, held on **Tuesday 6th May 2014**, in the **Yarrow Room, Town Hall**, Lewes at **11:00am**.

PRESENT Cllrs S Catlin (Wischhusen); M Chartier; J Daly (*Chairman*); R Murray; S Murray; also (*not appointed to Working party*) Dr M Turner.

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*); Mrs F Garth (*Civic Officer/Asst TC*); L Symons (*Town Hall Manager*) B Courage (*Town Ranger*); Mr Jon Siley (*BLB Chartered Surveyors*)

THRWP2013/09 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies were received from Cllr Milner, who was working, and Cllr O’Keeffe who had an ESCC commitment.

THRWP2013/10 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** there were none

THRWP2013/11 **QUESTIONS:** There were none. (No members of the public present.)

THRWP2013/12 **REMIT of the WORKING PARTY:**
Members noted the remit of the Working party, had been extended to include oversight of the project to refurbish the Malling Community Centre, and refurbishment of offices at the Town Hall.

THRWP2013/13 **BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:**

1 Members began with an inspection of the Town Hall office suite, to familiarize themselves with the layout and condition. Preliminary suggestions were introduced for minor works that would increase usable space; improve light and air circulation; mitigate tripping hazards, and update and improve kitchen and WC facilities. These were accepted as sensible and beneficial, and costs were unlikely to be high. It was considered that such improvements should be carried out irrespective of any prospect of acquiring the office building at 2 Fisher Street from Lewes District Council, as the rooms would continue to be operational regardless of that scenario and were long-overdue for refurbishment. Members agreed that TC should draft details of proposed alterations for consideration by all staff, and subsequently by Members at a future meeting.

2 There followed a review of the programme to refurbish Malling Community Centre. Preliminary costings had been provided free of charge by a professional quantity surveyor which established a likely project cost of over £440,000, but these had not arisen from a detailed design and were considered indicative only. It was agreed that an architect should be commissioned to prepare a design to the level of detail necessary for accurate costing, and to satisfy any third-party sources of funds who may be approached for grants.

3 Mr Jon Siley, of BLB Surveyors, gave an introduction to his firm, who had been recommended by the District Engineer shortly before his retirement. BLB were a local multi-disciplinary consultancy retained by Lewes District and East Sussex County Councils, among others, having satisfied market-testing criteria for the conduct and management of works both minor and major. They were very experienced in works to heritage buildings, and offered a complete service from design, through tendering and retention of trade specialist contractors, to management and completion of works. They had been retained

to manage the rebuilding of the flint wall in Paddock Road in 2011/12. The Town Council would attract the same reduced scale fees as set for ESCC.

4 With regard to the project to refurbish the South (High Street) elevation of the Town Hall, Mr Siley proposed a further and more detailed survey should be undertaken, as he wished to be able to satisfy any questions that may arise regarding such fundamental elements as sash window internal construction and aspects such as the composition of original mortar, or fixing of ironwork. This was accepted as sound professional advice and agreed. This would lead to a meeting to design the project and determine a programme. Discussion followed over recognized issues such as necessary traffic control demanded by scaffold structures in this particular location, and the most advantageous periods for ordering from window manufacturers. As a consequence of the careful approach demanded and the need to avoid winter weather conditions and certain annual events, Members agreed that preliminaries should begin straight away with a timetable aiming for works to commence with the onset of favourable weather in Spring 2015.

Various details were discussed, and enhancements that might be included if planned at the outset, *eg* making a feature of the martyrs' steps by installation of a glazed viewing port.

5 Mr Siley briefly left the room, while Members considered options for retention of a project manager. They acknowledged their own lack of expertise in the area, and that the recommendation of the District Engineer was invaluable, and that fee scales were fixed by the detailed procedures adopted by LDC and ESCC for selection of preferred contractors. It was unanimously agreed that BLB should be commissioned in this specialized role, and that a decision in this regard for the Malling Community Centre project would be deferred until a detailed design was available. Mr Siley was invited back to be advised accordingly.

THRWP2013/14

There being no other business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed, and thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.

The meeting closed at 12:45pm

Signed.....

Date