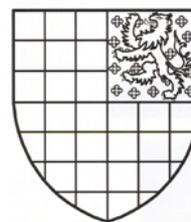


Town Hall
High Street
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 2QS

☎ 01273 471469 Fax: 01273 480919

✉ info@lewes-tc.gov.uk

🌐 www.lewes-tc.gov.uk



**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

of the meeting of the **Working Party** formed to consider commemoration of significant events, held on **Wednesday 2nd July 2014**, in the **Yarrow Room, Town Hall**, Lewes at **11:00am**.

PRESENT Cllrs S Catlin (Wischhusen); M Chartier (*Chairman*); R Murray; Cllr R O’Keeffe

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*); Mrs F Garth (*Civic Officer/ Asst TC*).

CmemsWP2014/01 ELECTION of CHAIRMAN: Cllr Chartier was elected chairman for the 2014/15 municipal year, without dissent

CmemsWP2014/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr E Allsobrook, who was on a Twinning Association visit and Dr M Turner who was on holiday.

CmemsWP2014/03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: Cllr Chartier noted, with reference to agenda items 6c)&d), that he was now Chairman of the Sussex Archaeological Society.

CmemsWP2014/04 QUESTIONS: There were none. (No members of the public present.)

CmemsWP2014/05 MINUTES:

The minutes of the meeting held on 5th February 2014 were received and signed as an accurate record.

CmemsWP2014/06 BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:

1 The meeting welcomed Ms Helen Glavin, and John Hancorn, who had collaborated on the performance of the ‘*Sword of Freedom*’ event at the Town Hall that marked the start of the festival commemorating the Battle of Lewes 750th anniversary, and who had offered to coordinate a programme for the commemoration of the outbreak of the First World War. Thanks were offered for a “thrilling” evening when the ‘*Sword of Freedom*’ was first performed, and it was noted that every comment received had been high praise.

2 *150th anniversary of the Seaford – Lewes rail link:* The commemorative events of Saturday 7th June 2014, had gone well, and thanks had been received from the Community Rail Partnership for the Council’s support and contribution. Thanks were recorded to Cllr Catlin for his dedicated and enthusiastic work on this initiative.

3 *40th anniversary of Twinning with Waldshut-Tiengen:* It was understood that the primary celebration between Twinning associations would be marked in August at the annual *Chilbi* festival although many Lewes representatives were presently in Tiengen, where the annual *Schnyzertag* festival was designated as ‘England Week’ this year. The Mayor was due to attend and would join the Chairman of the Twinning Association on stage at a feature event and would be interviewed for local media. Several ancillary events were referred-to, such as the very successful return visits by the Ouse Valley Collective young musicians following their original Council-sponsored performance during the ‘*WTPur*’ project in 2012. Members **agreed** that any support by Council would be more limited than the previous year’s 50th anniversary tri-partite commemorations in Blois, but Council should be asked if it wished to support an extended party to visit *Chilbi* in August, if this could be practically arranged.

4 *100yrs since commencement of 1st World War:* There was some discussion as to

the plans of the Lewes branch of the Royal British Legion for Sunday 3rd August and whether Council would join with any ceremony at the War Memorial as it does each November, or a less-formal recognition might be agreed on the 4th; the date war was declared. The Civic Officer would discuss these issues with representatives of the RBL. The All Saints Centre was available on certain dates for prospective events, and it was agreed that a programme should be prepared for 26th October; to include choral and musical groups, film, and student participation if possible. Ms Glavin and Mr Hancorn were confident that they could attract the Baroque Collective, and the Everyman Choir, and Ms Glavin had several ideas regarding an evening event centred upon the poem *The Winter of the World* by Wilfred Owen. It was suggested that some form of commemoration might be arranged for the fabled 'Christmas Truce' football match between protagonists on the front-line in 2014, and this could be pursued with local sports clubs or schools. Members **agreed** that there were sufficient ideas already extant to justify a request to Council for a mandate to manage a budget of £4,000, drawn from the earmarked reserve.

A request had been received indirectly regarding a proposed memorial at the headquarters of the Royal Sussex Regimental Association. It was agreed that more detail was required on this, and that it should be referred for consideration by Council.

Members agreed that suggestions regarding a joint project with the Friends of Lewes to investigate potential for a Peace Garden should be considered in the context of the end of war commemorations in 2018.

5 '*Skeleton 180 project*': - A request had been received recently from the Sussex Archaeological Society (SAS), to engage with a project to conduct further scientific tests on human skeletal remains discovered during a routine excavation of the former Western Rd School site in 1994. 'Skeleton 180' was one of 103 buried together and, from all available archaeological and archive evidence, appeared to date from a time no earlier than the 13th century. Because of both the nature of the wounds the individual had suffered and the location of the cemetery, close to the epicentre of the fiercest fighting of the Battle of Lewes, the possibility existed that this man had fallen at that time. The bones were sent for further analysis to battlefield experts at the University of York. The skeleton was even more significant than previously imagined, in that it does in fact date to the time of the Norman Conquest. Carbon dating shows it dates to 1064 ±26 years. There were no other known violently-killed individuals dating from this period. There had been enormous media interest - it had been covered internationally and there was interest from television production companies. It was noted that 2016 would be the 950th anniversary of the Norman Conquest. Whilst this was exciting on one level, on another there was a need to carefully and methodically gather more information about this cemetery. The implications for a better understanding of Lewes history were broad. A Saxon cemetery could mean, for example, the possibility of a sophisticated Saxon Priory. As the wounding was apparently caused by two attackers with swords, it could lead to a new understanding of the aftermath of the Norman Conquest. The challenge from an historical/ archaeological perspective was said to be that there was not enough information to make proper judgement. More testing was needed to get a proper picture of what happened in the cemetery and who these individuals are. This may be an isolated individual or there may be others dating from this period. County Archaeologists Casper Johnson and Greg Chuter, SAS Research Officer Luke Barber (who co-directed the original investigation) and Malin Holst and Tim Sutherland from the University of York had agreed that the right way forward at this stage was to select a further 11 skeletons from different parts of the cemetery, some also with violent wounding, and to submit these for Carbon14 dating. The skeletons had been carefully selected already by these

experts to give the best chance of reinterpreting the cemetery accurately. At that stage, the community could then decide what to do with the information.

The SAS would like to raise a fund of £4-5,000. South Downs National Park Authority had agreed to fund £2000 of this sum. Other partners (non £) would include the SAS (admin and project management), ESCC (officer time) and a TV company who had already filmed the presentations made at the Castle (producing without charge) and who wish to produce an episode of the Mediaeval Dead (for Channel 4) about this skeleton.

The money raised would be used to fund further carbon dating (£3,355), and extraction and administration of samples (£200). The remaining sum would be used to fund administration and an exhibition about the cemetery and skeleton. A minimum of £4,000 was required and the larger sum of £5,000 would fund a higher quality exhibition and more extensive public information. SAS were therefore asking Lewes Town Council to contribute a maximum of £3,000 towards this partnership. Members **agreed** that this should be recommended to Council.

This discussion was set in the context of what was known to be in prospect for future national commemoration of Magna Carta (2015) and the Battle of Hastings (2016). Members were interested to ensure that Council remained open to suggestions as they arose, in this regard.

6 *Cycle Tour of Britain:* Stage 7 of the Cycle Tour of Britain would pass through Lewes on Saturday 13th September. There are 8 stages to the Tour and Sussex would host the penultimate stage before the final in London the following day. Stage 7 would also be the longest stage, covering 226 km, and potentially offer the most interest for audiences; also containing popular elements such as 'King of the hill' contests. TC reported on a recent meeting of stakeholders who were interested in the tour. East and West Sussex County Councils; and Brighton & Hove City Council were each contributing £30,000 to stage the Tour through parts of their areas, with support from the South Downs National Park Authority. There would be 3 hours live television coverage that day (understood to be ITV4, with international syndication) with highlights reaching a potential audience of over 200 million viewers; the majority of that covering the time spent in East Sussex. Lewes District would probably benefit from much of this viewing time. Stage 7 would take the riders through Chailey; Piltdown; Uckfield; Framfield; Blackboys; Waldron; Horam; Horsebridge; Hailsham; Stone Cross; Langney; Eastbourne; Beachy Head (King of the Mountain stage); Birling Gap; East Dean; Seaford Esplanade; Bishopstone; Newhaven; and then, approaching via the C7, Lewes (Southover High St, Station St, High St); Offham; Plumpton; Westmeston (Underhill Lane); Ditchling Beacon (King of the Mountain stage) and Brighton, finishing on Madeira Drive. There would be rolling road closures of about 15-20 minutes as the Tour passed through the County. Seaford and Newhaven Town Councils were beginning to plan events to mark the passage of the Tour, and Council had asked the Working party to consider the matter and bring forward any recommendations.

It had been suggested that Lewes bonfire societies might be interested to provide volunteer Marshals to augment the relatively few officials employed by the organizer. Wave Leisure had expressed interest in holding, or assisting with, cycling-related events, and some local businesses were already engaged. Lewes District Council's Tourist Information Office window would display bicycles and related paraphernalia. These ideas would be investigated further at the next meeting, which should be held before mid-August.

CmemsWP2014/07

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL:

Council is to be asked to agree the following recommendations:

That Council considers supporting an extended party of representatives to

attend the *Chilbi* festival in Waldshut-Tiengen between 15th and 19th August 2014.

That a budget of £4,000 be approved for the Commemorations Working Party to arrange events to commemorate the outbreak of the 1st World War in 1914, drawn from the Commemorations Reserve.

That a contribution of up to £3,000 be made towards the 'Skeleton 180' project involving further investigation of skeletal human remains held by Sussex Archaeological Society.

CmemsWP2014/08

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

The meeting closed at 12:25pm

Signed.....

Date