STAMFORD TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MUSEUM COMMITTEE MEETING**

**HELD ON** Monday, 10 January 2022 **AT 6.00PM**

**PRESENT** Councillor Shaun Ford (Chairman)

Councillor Mrs Amanda Wheeler (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Mrs Marion Pitt

Councillor Mrs Elaine Hooper

Councillor Ms A Schonhut

**ALSO PRESENT** Town Clerk, Patricia Stuart-Mogg

Civic Officer, Mark Murtagh

Claire Browne Museum Development Programme Manager (MDEM)

Two residents present in person

Three members of public virtually

1. **To Receive public representation in respect of the business on the agenda (Point 1)**

No representation was received at this stage.

The Chairman thanked all those who had joined the meeting.

1. **Apologies and reasons for absence** **(Agenda Point 2) -** *Committee to receive and resolve reasons for absence in accordance with the requirement of the Local Government Act 1972*

Councillor Mrs Gloria Johnson (Mayor), Councillor Dave Dorson and Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing submitted their apologies, and these were noted.

**Proposal 1** – It was proposed by Councillor S Ford, seconded by Councillor Mrs A Wheeler and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the apologies for absence are accepted

Councillor John Dawson was not present at the meeting.

1. **Declaration of Interest (Agenda Point 3) -** *Committee to receive declarations of interest in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011, and to consider any applications for dispensations in relation to disclosable pecuniary interests or personal interests.*

Councillor Elaine Hooper declared that she is a member of the Stamford & District Local History Society.

1. **To Sign The Minutes -(Agenda Point 4)**

The Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Monday, 08 November 2021 had already been confirmed at the Stamford Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday, 30 November 2021 and would be signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman outlined the Action Points from those minutes:

1. A meeting with Lincolnshire Property Services has been scheduled on 27 January.
2. Investigate the potential for the Arts Centre to house museum displays, this is in hand.
3. **Feedback on the visit to Daventry Museum and Stamford Museum Store - (Agenda Point 5)**

The Chairman confirmed that visits to the two museums - Daventry Museum and The Cromwell Museum had been conducted. Reports on both visits were outlined:

**Daventry Museum** – This visit was conducted on 11 November 2021. Daventry Museum is housed within Daventry Town Council Offices and operates Tuesday – Friday and opens one Saturday each month. The museum function is supported by a Curator (volunteer role) and Museum Officer (FT) /Project Officer (AD-HOC) (paid roles). Operation is funded by the Town Council with support from other funding resources – Arts Council, Lottery and MDEM (Museum Development East Midlands). Running and staffing costs are supported by Daventry Town Council. Volunteers support the museum operation. Volunteer time is not full time and is customised to need. Displays and exhibitions are routinely refreshed and publicised via the dedicated Museum website. Temporary off-site displays are sometimes created relating to events happening in town or linked to schools’ curricula. Visitor numbers per annum: 2.5k however, presently reduced due to covid restrictions.

**The Cromwell Museum** – This was conducted on 6th January 2022. The museum is housed in the Old School House and is operated with 2 full-time employees. The salary of the Curator is supported by Huntingdon Town Council. The museum is devoted totally to the British Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell which is its unique selling point (USP). They programme exhibitions & lectures and are responsible for Outreach, School Liaison, Online Lessons. All are promoted via their active social media and website operation. Funding is through the Town Council, private donations, Museum Shop, Events/Lecture programmes and grant donations from Arts Council and Lottery Fund. There are plans to extend the museum to provide more space for exhibitions, a shop & cafe. They have approx.11,000 visitors per year, with a Social Media presence of Twitter 2,500 / Facebook 2,500.

Discussion ensued and it was considered that visits to Grantham Museum, Peterborough Museum, Ely Museum, Oakham Museum and the Guildhall Museum in Boston would also be helpful. It was noted that these visits were valuable as they provided inspiration for displays, funding sources, merchandising and information as to how best to develop the proposed Stamford Museum.

1. **To consider the specification and job description for a Museum Curator - (Agenda Point 6)**

Supporting documentation in respect of the specification and job description for a Museum Curator had been circulated to all members of the Committee. Claire Browne, Museum Development Programme Manager – Museum Development East Midland (MDEM) had drafted the document following a meeting with the Chairman to ensure that it embraced the specification of the individual and an advertisement which would attract the correct profiles to apply for the role of Museum Manager/Curator, which is of paramount importance. It is vital to have an experienced, pro-active, dynamic individual to develop, manage and evolve a professional Museum presence. It was recognised that the individual must have excellent communication skills and a proven knowledge of how to source funding

The Chairman proposed to suspend Standing Orders to enable members of the public to participate. This was seconded by Councillor Mrs E Hooper and unanimously **RESOLVED**.

**6.25pm** Standing Orders suspended.

*Member of History Society* – It was importance that qualifications of applicants reflected the highest calibre of candidates available.

*Former Museum Curator -* It must be recognised that the qualities required for the role are wide. An ability to research is also crucial to the role and should lead to lectures at the Museum and schools etc. There are members within the Stamford community who have valuable skills which could support this venture.

**6.40pm** Standing Orders were reinstated.

Councillor Ms A Schonhut informed the Committee that engagement with private sector is also necessary to explore the possibilities of sponsorship packages and donations.

It was important to establish whether the role was to be part-time or full-time. It was important to inform applicants that they should be prepared to demonstrate how they would develop Stamford Museum, its USP, public participation, educational programmes and how Stamford Museum can develop its narrative.

Budgetary constraints will determine the salary, but it is vital the salary level is commensurate with experience, abilities and hours. It is recognised that this is a chicken and egg situation, especially as the recruiting of a curator is at an embryonic stage. The individual could start pro-rata part-time with a view to a full-time position. It was noted that some of the museums visited have indicated that standard running costs are largely met by the Council. The costs for developing the infrastructure within the Town Hall could be a phased approach. These elements need to be discussed with the Finance Committee at their forthcoming meeting and prior to any advert being published.

1. **To consider a draft press release - (Agenda Point 7)**

The draft press release has been approved and is supported by a statement from the LCC Portfolio Holder. During discussion, it was also noted that a statement was included encouraging members of the community to volunteer to support this project. It was noted that the current Town Hall guide volunteers have been approached as to whether they were interested in supporting this project. In future, the Town Hall tour would also embrace a museum tour.

It was noted that identifying a specific location for a museum has been a challenge. An ideal location would on the High Street. It was noted that discussions are on going in respect of the Arts Centre and the Library. However, the Town Hall is currently the nominated venue. It is a special historic building and meets the needs to acquire full accreditation.

1. **To consider the Five Year Plan - (Agenda Point 8)**

It was noted that the Forward Plan covered the first three years, June 2021- March 2024 when applying for Eligibility for Museum Status. It should be noted that during 2023 regular Council elections are to be held and the review of the Plan needs to cover five years to assure the Arts Council that this project is continually and actively reviewed.

1. **Date of next meeting ((Agenda Point 9)**

It wasagreed that the next meeting should be scheduled on Monday 28th February 2022 at 6pm

The Chairman

closed the meeting at 7.15pm