

STAMFORD TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MUSEUM COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 6.30PM

PRESENT Councillor Shaun Ford (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Amanda Wheeler
Town Mayor Andrew Croft
Councillor Breda Rae Griffin
Councillor Yvette Diaz-Munoz

ALSO PRESENT Heritage & Cultural Officer - Victoria Newton
1 member of the public

523. To Receive public representation in respect of the business on the agenda

There was none

524. Apologies and reasons for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Bret Allibone, Cllr Ed Fancourt and Cllr Max Sawyer

Proposal 1 – it was proposed by Councillor Shaun Ford, seconded by Councillor Andrew Croft, and unanimously **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies and reasons for absence.

525. Declaration of Interest

No declarations of interests were made.

526. To Confirm the Minutes

The Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Monday, 11 December 2023 had been approved at the 19 December 2023 Town Council meeting as a true record of that meeting and signed.

527. Preparing of policies and procedures to support Accreditation

a) *Governance*

Security Audit and Emergency Plan

The Heritage Officer informed the Committee about the ongoing Security Audit and Emergency Plan, conducted in collaboration with Pieta Greaves from Drakon Conservation. The initial visit took place on Wednesday, January 31st, and while the documents are pending finalisation, a summary was presented.

The Security Audit, aligned with the Arts Council framework, involves a comprehensive assessment of security provisions, threat identification, risk assessment, and determination of appropriate actions. This encompasses physical security measures like cases, alarms, locks, and CCTV, as well as procedural measures such as alarm testing, staff training, and collections inspections.

The Heritage Officer highlighted the necessity to revisit agreements with alarm call-out companies, Health and safety contracts, and housekeeping procedures. The process had already revealed areas of concern, emphasising the importance of improved communication and collaboration within the staff team and with external agencies. In addition there were areas lacking procedural consistency.

The Chairman advised that due to the sensitive nature of these areas, the priority security concerns will be addressed by the Committee in closed session during Agenda item 7.

The Heritage Officer then gave an overview of the structure of the Emergency Plan which was being drawn up using resources from Historic England and East Midlands Museums Services. This plan will be shared with the wider Emergency Plan Working Group for Stamford Town Council.

The plan includes arrangements for staff, volunteers, visitors, collections, and collection information, along with a risk assessment of potential threats. It will address communication protocols, salvage priorities and treatment plans for damaged objects. Central to the plan will be the identification of defined roles and responsibilities for key staff during emergencies and effective communication with the public. It was noted that overall ownership of the Emergency Plan would pass to the Town Clerk / Chief Executive Officer with key roles around building safety, collections and communication to be handled by other appropriate Council officers.

It was agreed that finalisation of both the Security Audit and Emergency Plan would demonstrate significant progress in Emergency planning at the Town Hall.

Forward Plan 2023-2028

The Chairman updated the Committee on the revision of the Museum Forward Plan 2024-2029. It was noted that the plan underwent a thorough review, considering the existing plan, achievements made, changes in council membership, and organisational priorities. The relevant budgetary section from the full Stamford Town Council budget was incorporated, and additional appendices providing background information were added.

The Chairman highlighted the need for revising the Income & Expenditure section to align with the new system currently being devised by Finance, Personnel & Assets Committee for all committees. It was suggested that Cllr David Scammell reviews this section and provides guidance to the Heritage Officer and Chairman on the correct format and detail.

The Chairman advised that the revised plan will be forwarded to Museum Development East Midlands for their consideration and feedback. Subsequently, it will be presented to the Full Council for ratification at the April meeting.

The Committee members were encouraged to review the document and submit any comments to the Heritage Officer by 23rd February. This feedback will be considered before finalising the document for submission to Museum Development East Midlands.

Proposal 2 - it was proposed by Councillor Amanda Wheeler, seconded by Councillor Andrew Croft and unanimously **RESOLVED** to request Councillor David Scammell to advise on the correct budget reporting for the Forward Plan.

b) Collections

Research and Image Rights – Fees and Charges

The Heritage Officer introduced new guidance on transparent and fair fees and charges for extended research requests and image requests from the Town Hall Collections. She emphasised that all initial research requests and general access to collections remains free. Various models and approaches were considered to strike a balance between accessibility and sustainability. These included Lincolnshire Archives, Leicester University Special Collections and Northampton Museums & Art Gallery. The Committee noted the commercial potential of the Phillips Collection with regard to licensing and the need for Stamford Town Council to protect collection assets through the appropriate means.

Proposal 3 - it was proposed by Councillor Amanda Wheeler, seconded by Councillor Yvette Diaz-Munoz and unanimously **RESOLVED** to accept the Fees & Charges policy.

Conservation Proposal – Mayoral Boards

The Heritage Officer presented a quote from Lincoln Conservation encompassing work on several art works at the Town Hall. Lincoln Conservation had recently carried out the second phase of stabilisation on the largest of the Mayoral Boards in the Court Room. Included in the quote were costings for the cleaning and conservation of the three boards still requiring work. Committee members discussed the historical significance of the boards and the importance of preserving them for future generations. The Heritage Officer advised that the two older boards dating to 1701 and 1750 now be considered for cleaning and conservation at a total cost of £11,800 as per the 2023/24 earmarked budget area.

Proposal 4 - it was proposed by Councillor Andrew Croft, seconded by Councillor Breda-Rae Griffin and unanimously **RESOLVED** to accept the quote from Lincoln Conservation.

(STC Budget 2023/24 8001 EM Historic Panels)

Collections Care supplies & Emergency Preparedness kit – proposal

The Heritage Officer introduced a proposal to purchase supplies for three areas of collections work : ongoing work in the Archive; labelling, marking and rehousing collections as part of the inventory and an Emergency Preparedness kit. The supplies from Preservation Equipment Ltd total £1279.15. She also made the Committee aware of an upcoming additional request (awaiting quote) to purchase photography equipment necessary for the inventory process. This cost would be communicated to Councillors via email if time constraints rendered this necessary.

Proposal 5 - it was proposed by Councillor Amanda Wheeler, seconded by Councillor Yvette Diaz Munoz and unanimously **RESOLVED** to accept the proposal for Collections Care supplies and the Emergency Preparedness kit.

(STC Budget 2023/24 7503 Collections Management)

Great Mace – Conservation audit proposal

The Heritage Officer informed the Committee that, during the both the Conservation Audit carried out last year, and the Security Audit carried out recently, the condition and future preventive conservation of the Great Mace had been highlighted as an ongoing concern. The Great Mace is a key object within the Town Hall collections and also serves as a working civic symbol. It is important to understand the current condition of the mace so that a fully informed risk assessment of the object can take place. Full images of its current condition including any damages or wear need to be obtained to form a baseline of the object. The assessment will : assess the structural and chemical stability of the mace, fully photograph the mace, noting old damage and wear, provide care, handling and environmental display guidelines.

Proposal 6 - it was proposed by Councillor Breda Rae Griffin, seconded by Councillor Amanda Wheeler and unanimously **RESOLVED** to accept the proposal for £429 from Drakon Conservation for conservation assessment of the Great Mace.

(STC Budget 2023/24 7503 Collections Management)***Modes update***

The Heritage Officer reported that there was no further progress from the IT Working Group with regard the installation of the infrastructure required for Modes. She was in contact with the Modes group to ascertain whether an alternative template could be used for starting the inventory in the short term.

c) *Users and Experiences*

The Heritage Officer gave an overview of the way schools workshops at the Town Hall had been facilitated and managed in the past and highlighted the importance of now developing these into a well-researched and collaborative programme with local educational institutions. Historically, staff at the Town Hall have responded positively to requests from schools for tours in line with the curriculum areas of Crime and Punishment and Local Government and History. In the last week the Heritage Officer and Deputy Town Clerk had welcomed Year 6 from St Augustine's Primary to the Town Hall.

With the commitment to Accreditation, it is now appropriate to look at this provision again. The Heritage Officer outlined a proposal to work with Black Knight Historical, to develop 5 days of schools workshops on 5 themes which link to the National Curriculum and also take advantage of the unique history of Stamford, the Town Hall, and its collections. The initial proposal would invite 5 schools to experience the new workshops and, through active consultation before, during and after the events, provide data from teacher and students to inform the content and means of delivery of an ongoing schools programme. It was anticipated that additional funding would be required to initiate an ongoing programme of workshops but that this initial work would inform the level of resource required.

The Committee welcomed the idea of engaging with schools. All Councillors voiced the importance of increasing access to the rich heritage and history of Stamford through active learning opportunities and suggestions for part-funding of the proposal were received from Cllr Diaz-Munoz.

Proposal 7 - it was proposed by Councillor Andrew Croft, seconded by Councillor Amanda Wheeler and unanimously **RESOLVED** to accept the proposal from Black Knight Historical for £3900 to develop and deliver the programme of workshops.

Action – to investigate St Michaels and Exeter charity funding **VN**

(STC Budget 2023/24 7503 Collections Management)**528. Update on Collection Transfer**

The Chairman advised the Committee of the date in March for the online meeting with Lincolnshire County Council to discuss the transfer proposal for the museum collection and store.

529. Consider Budget and Funding Opportunities**a) *AIM Collections Care grant round 2***

The Heritage Officer informed the Committee of the forthcoming application to the AIM Collections Care grant round 2 which invites Museums who have completed the Collections Care Audit programme to apply for up to £10,000 of funding. This grant is intended to address issues of conservation or collections care which have been identified in the initial audit. The Heritage Officer outlined a two-part project. The first part would see the Bull Running painting cleaned, stabilised and re-lined by Lincoln Conservation. The second part would involve the re-display of the Regalia cabinet and Town Charters to conservation grade standards addressing issues of environmental instability and use of inappropriate display methods and materials. This part of the project would also be an opportunity to train a select group of volunteers in museum object handling and basic care and conservation under the guidance of the Heritage Officer. The total project cost is estimated at £11295. Councillors were very supportive of the idea and Cllrs Griffin and Wheeler suggested approaching the Skells Trust for the shortfall in funding should the application to be successful.

Action – Cllr Croft to approach Skells Trust.

(STC Budget 2023/24 Cost Neutral)

b) Security Audit and Agenda Item 8 Museum Location

20.01hrs - The Chairman confirmed that pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it was resolved that, because of the security content and sensitivity of business to be discussed, the meeting would continue in Closed Session.

20.47hrs - Meeting resumed in Open Session

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.47pm

Date of Next Meeting **MONDAY 15th April** at 6.30pm