

STAMFORD TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MUSEUM COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY, 15 APRIL 2024 AT 6.30PM

PRESENT Councillor Mrs Amanda Wheeler (Vice Chair)
Councillor Bret Allibone
Councillor Breda Rae Griffin
Councillor Yvette Diaz-Munoz
Councillor Ed Fancourt

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

795. To Receive public representation in respect of the business on the agenda
A member of the public noted progress on Museum and Accreditation work was positive.

796. Apologies and reasons for absence
Apologies were received from Cllr Andrew Croft and Cllr Shaun Ford.
Proposal 1 – it was proposed by Councillor Bret Allibone, seconded by Councillor Breda-Rae Griffin, and unanimously **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies and reasons for absence.

797. Declaration of Interest
No declarations of interests were made.

798. To Confirm the Minutes
The Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Monday, 12 February 2024 had been approved at the 27 February 2024 Town Council meeting as a true record of that meeting and signed.

799. Preparing of policies and procedures to support Accreditation

a) *Governance*

Museum Forward Plan – Final Draft for Consideration and Approval

The Heritage Officer presented to the Committee the final draft of the Museum Forward Plan for 2024-2029. Changes from the previous draft were discussed, including an annual review note, adjustments to the timescales in the Action Plan reflecting necessary work on staffing and volunteer policies, addition of Appendices covering governance and staffing arrangements, incorporation of the latest Museum Committee Annual Report, and an overview of the Spirit of Stamford Consultation. The Forward Plan had been shared with Claire Browne, Museum Mentor (Museum Development East Midlands), who provided positive feedback, acknowledging the work involved and comprehensive presentation. She noted the continued need for resourcing and staffing from Stamford Town Council to enable timelines to be met and suggested the addition of a review date by the Committee in a year's time.

The Heritage Officer highlighted key considerations, including the condition survey of the museum store scheduled for April 2024, feasibility studies for the museum venue in November 2024, meeting the Accreditation deadline in August 2025 (with the Forward Plan targeting January 2025 for passing documents through committee and Town Council), and proposals for the transfer of collections in January 2025 and the subsequent collection and store transfer in November 2026.

The Heritage Officer noted that the Income & Expenditure section of the plan was awaiting the final Agar report 2023/2024 and the Interim Town Clerk would assist with this when finalised.

Proposal 2 - it was proposed by Councillor Bret Allibone, seconded by Councillor Breda-Rae Griffin and unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the Museum Forward Plan.

Emergency Plan - Final Draft for Consideration and Approval

The Heritage Officer presented the final draft of the Emergency Plan, developed collaboratively with Pieta Greaves. Acknowledged as a crucial document for Accreditation, the Emergency Plan ensures effective response to emergency or disaster situations across buildings and sites housing collections and services. Key components of the plan include arrangements for staff, volunteers, visitors, collections, and collections information, risk assessment of threats, authorisation, maintenance, communication, and testing procedures, collaboration with emergency services and a priority salvage list with collections care assessment and conservation guidelines.

The discussion highlighted the significance of assessing risks not only to museum collections but also to the building and individuals visiting the site. While the plan addressed major factors for emergency response, it also underscored the limitations of current staffing levels at the Town Hall and had identified immediate actions to be included in the supporting Risk Register. In light of the lack of current emergency planning procedures, it was proposed to pass the plan with the understanding that it will be reviewed in three months to address staffing gaps necessary for emergency response. The information within the plan was identified as being crucial in its current form.

The Committee noted that the Emergency Plan was a vital and positive step forward not just for Accreditation purposes, but also for the wider safety and security of the Town Hall and those visiting and working there. The Committee acknowledged that the Emergency Plan would also need to be incorporated into the wider plan being developed for Stamford Town Council.

Proposal 3 – it was proposed by Councillor Bret Allibone, seconded by Councillor Breda-Rae Griffin and unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the Emergency Plan.

Stamford Town Hall Collections Risk Register – Final Draft for Consideration and Approval

The Heritage Officer presented the updated Risk Register noting its integral relationship with the Emergency Plan as a dynamic document to be continually updated as risks are identified and mitigated. Attention was drawn to actions pertaining to safety and security at the Town Hall needing immediate attention and it was suggested that these should be communicated to Finance for prompt action. Additionally the Heritage Officer emphasised that the register should be integrated into a broader Town Council register for comprehensive risk management.

Proposal 4 – it was proposed by Councillor Ed Fancourt and seconded by Councillor Amanda Wheeler and unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the Risk Register and pass it to Finance for action on high level risks.

The Heritage Officer confirmed that the above documents now completed the Organisational Health section of the Accreditation requirements. She was awaiting the integration of Stamford

Town Council strategies and procedures for recruitment, induction and training and these would be passed on from the HR Working Group as soon as possible.

The Committee then reviewed the Heritage Officer's Accreditation task list, focusing on the next section Managing Collections (4.1). Highlighted as a high-priority item, it was noted that confirming the size and legal ownership of collections and loans is currently marked as red in terms of priority level. This task necessitates the completion of a full inventory or active progress toward that goal.

In the coming months, emphasis will be placed on developing policies that support collections management, which is crucial for the successful transfer of the Stamford museum collection.

b) Collections

Mace Conservation assessment

The Heritage Officer reported that a comprehensive assessment of the Charles II Mace was conducted in collaboration with Drakon Heritage. A report outlining its current condition, recommendations for remedial care and stabilisation, and suggestions for its future use as a working object was presented.

Key recommendations include removing old cleaning products, improving mounts and display environment, and investigating the rattle observed in the mace through an X-Ray or MRI.

Moving forward, it was proposed to introduce a handling policy and signing in/out procedure, along with conducting risk assessments for each activity involving the mace. These assessments will consider the nature and frequency of events it is currently used for and evaluate their appropriateness in light of the item's significance and insurance value. The findings of this report would suggest recommendations for future use of the mace for the Council to consider. The Committee also raised the idea of commissioning a replica mace to minimise risk if the current level of handling was deemed to be appropriate.

Proposal 5 – it was proposed by Councillor Ed Fancourt and seconded by Councillor Yvette Diaz-Munoz and unanimously **RESOLVED** to carry out risk assessments on all events involving the use of the mace.

Modes update & inventory next steps

The Heritage Officer reported that there is currently no update on the IT upgrading process to enable Modes to be installed.

However, in alignment with Accreditation requirements, it was announced that a basic level inventory will commence using a limited Excel spreadsheet which will be exported into Modes. This inventory aims to demonstrate progress in meeting the standards required for collections management and therefore keep Stamford Town Council on track with the Accreditation timeline.

Further updates and actions regarding IT upgrading would be taken forward by Councillor Allibone as part of the IT Working Group.

Mayoral Boards – Phase III

The Heritage Officer advised that work was due to commence the following day on the two older Mayoral boards dating to 1701 and 1750. There was discussion around the need to create

a digital photographic record of the process and Councillors Amanda Wheeler and Bret Allibone agreed to action this.

c) Users and Experiences

Schools Workshop update

The Heritage Officer reported that she had met with Black Knight Historical to begin the research and development phase of the workshops and this work was now well underway by Ian Pyecroft. It had been difficult to identify suitable dates with schools given the time of year. The workshops will now take place in the Autumn Term 2024 to enable a wide range of schools to take part and collect feedback.

Volunteers

The Heritage Officer advised that before volunteers could be taken on, the relevant volunteer and recruitment policies needed to be revised and/or written and she understood this to be in hand through the HR Working Group.

800. Update on Collection Transfer

Review of meeting with LCC re: next steps Museum Store transfer

The Heritage Officer and members of the Museum Committee met with representatives from Lincolnshire County Council Heritage and Corporate Property departments on Thursday, March 21st. The discussion focussed on the co-dependencies of the Lincolnshire County Council museum collections and building transfer.

It was noted that Stamford Town Council will need to present a business case to Lincolnshire County Council regarding a proposal for a Community Asset Transfer. This proposal will outline the condition Stamford Town Council requires the museum store to be in and the limitations faced if these requirements are not met.

Both Councils had conducted building surveys independently in 2019, identifying structural works requiring attention within the next five years. However, there were discrepancies between the two reports, with Lincolnshire County Council's report indicating £146,740 of works required within 3-5 years and Stamford Town Council's survey listing more serious works but not costing these out.

Looking ahead, Lincolnshire County Council is scheduled to carry out a programmed survey in 2024. Stamford Town Council will need to commission its own new survey to account for the time passed, potential further degradation, and increased costs.

The results from these surveys will serve as the basis for negotiation between the two Councils regarding the minimum level of repairs required before the Community Asset Transfer can take place at a nominal value. Lincolnshire County Council must internally bid for funds, with no guarantee of success. In the event of a funding gap between the available Lincolnshire County Council maintenance budget and Stamford Town Council's requirements, both parties will explore alternative funding sources.

There was discussion by the Committee on how best to contract the survey considering staffing shortages at the Town Council and the area of expertise which was now required. Members of the Committee agreed to assist in identifying suitable companies and, with the help of the Heritage Officer, arrange access to the store to carry out the survey as quickly as possible. It was noted that taking on another asset which required substantial investment required input also from the Finance Committee.

Proposal 6 - – it was proposed by Councillor **Bret Allibone** and seconded by Councillor Breda-Rae Griffin and unanimously RESOLVED to contract a new survey on the Museum Store.

801. Consider Budget and Funding Opportunities

S106 monies

There was discussion about the progress of drawing down the S106 monies from South Kesteven District Council and the Heritage Officer advised that the process required further information from South Kesteven District Council around timelines and required documentation, as well as a final agreement on the split of funds. The Committee agreed that in the absence of original documentation, a 50:50 split was most likely.

802. Museum Location

The Heritage Officer had identified and approached three companies (BSP Consulting, Haley Sharpe Design and Focus Consulting) with a view to carrying out the Feasibility Study on the Town Hall and Buttermarket sites. All three are East Midlands based consultancies with experience and expertise in heritage site and/or museum development and all three expressed an interest in receiving and responding to the project brief. It was agreed that, given the scale of the Museum Project, a working group would be set up to develop the project brief and oversee the contracting process to ensure outcomes are successfully identified and therefore achieved. Councillors Amanda Wheeler, Bret Allibone and Breda-Rae Griffin would form the working group with the Heritage Officer.

The Vice Chairman closed the meeting at 7.59pm

Date of Next Meeting **MONDAY 17th June** at 6.30pm