

STAMFORD TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE HERITAGE & COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY, 04 FEBRUARY 2025 AT 6.30PM

PRESENT

Cllr Amanda Wheeler (Chair)	Cllr Brett Allibone (Vice Chair)
Cllr Yvette Diaz-Munoz	Cllr Andy Croft
Cllr Luke Chilman	

ABSENT: Cllr Kelham Cooke (Ex Officio) Cllr Breda-Rae Griffin

IN ATTENDANCE Ms Victoria Newton (Heritage & Cultural Officer)

ALSO PRESENT Claire Browne (Accreditation Mentor)
Cllr Peter Copley
3 members of the public (2 online)

Public Representations

Nothing to report.

The Chair took the opportunity to welcome Cllr Luke Chilman as a new member of the Heritage & Collections Committee. Cllr Peter Copley was welcomed in attendance.

451. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

452. Declarations of Interest

Nothing to report.

453. Heritage & Collections Budget Report

The Committee had not had sight of the budget report before the meeting as it had recently been uploaded to the supporting documents folder and at the request of the Chair the item was deferred.

454. Accreditation Reports

The Committee received a report regarding Accreditation

Key Points:

a.) Extending the “Working Towards” status

The Heritage Officer introduced the report, recommending that Stamford Town Hall formally apply to Arts Council for a three-year extension to its "Working Towards" Museum Accreditation status. This recommendation was supported by Claire Browne, the Accreditation Mentor, who emphasised both the complexity of the process and the significant progress that had already been made.

The Heritage Officer explained that the Accreditation project had required the development of new policies and procedures across both heritage services and council operations. This scope

Initialled by Chair

was broader and more resource-intensive than the Council had initially anticipated. Additional challenges, including changes in leadership, staff illness, and limited capacity, had further impacted the timeline. Despite these obstacles, major milestones had been reached, such as the completion of the Five-Year Forward Plan, Emergency Planning and significant improvements in collections management.

The committee recognised that the requested extension would provide several key benefits. It would allow time to secure the necessary financial and staffing resources required to sustain Accreditation standards in the long term. Furthermore, the extension would support continued development of governance structures and operational improvements across heritage services. Importantly, extending the Accreditation timeline would provide access to ongoing support, advocacy, and grant funding opportunities from Museum Development Midlands. Members acknowledged that this support would be instrumental in advancing both the Accreditation application and broader strategic initiatives.

Members further discussed the vision for the museum's future, particularly how to balance the Town Hall's dual-purpose use for both public services and museum functions. It was agreed that Accreditation should not merely be viewed as an administrative target but as a strategic enabler for the expansion of heritage services and improved accessibility for the community. Regarding the building's development, the committee noted that a recommendation to commission a detailed feasibility study on its potential as a full-scale museum had been approved in 2024. This study, which would assess space requirements, access limitations, and visitor services, was now considered a high priority. Members agreed to fast-track this initiative to ensure it could inform future planning efforts.

As part of this process, the need for a comprehensive business plan was emphasised. The committee discussed the importance of mapping out both capital and operational costs associated with a future museum, including potential income streams, staffing requirements, and maintenance needs. It was noted that the feasibility study would provide vital information to underpin this business plan, ensuring that the museum project would be financially sustainable in the long term. Claire Browne highlighted that this level of preparation would also strengthen future applications for external funding and support.

The Heritage Officer emphasized the importance of continued collaboration between staff, councillors, and external experts to achieve these goals effectively.

Proposal 1 It was **RESOLVED** to approve the application for extension to the “Working Towards” Accreditation status.

Proposer	Cllr Bret Allibone	
Seconder	Cllr Andrew Croft	
For	5	Cllrs Wheeler, Croft, Yvette Díaz-Muñoz, Allibone, Chilman
Against	0	
Abstained	0	
Motion	CARRIED	

b.) Organisational Health - To review and approve the Heritage Volunteer Policy

The revised Museum & Heritage Volunteer Policy and Volunteer Agreement was presented noting that the current policy is outdated and lacks modern volunteer management practices. The new policy aligns with best practices, emphasising structured recruitment, training, supervision, and volunteer recognition. It also incorporates health and safety measures, risk

assessments, and fosters an inclusive environment. The Volunteer Agreement defines clear expectations, ensuring a strong, supportive relationship between volunteers and staff. Members recognised the importance of these documents in enhancing both heritage services and the visitor experience, supporting Accreditation and long-term development goals.

Proposal 2 it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Museum & Heritage Volunteer Policy and Agreement

Proposer	Cllr Amanda Wheeler	
Seconder	Cllr Bret Allibone	
For	5	Cllrs Wheeler, Croft, Yvette Díaz-Muñoz, Allibone, Chilman
Against	0	
Abstained	0	
Motion	CARRIED	

c.) Managing Collections - Update on Modes and start of collections inventory, Collections Care and Conservation Policy, Collections Care and Conservation Plan, Documentation Policy and the Documentation Procedural Manual

Progress on the Collections Care & Conservation Policy and Plan continues, aligning with Accreditation standards 6.1 and 6.2. The framework includes roles, responsibilities, risk management, conservation procedures, and training needs, with work ongoing to finalise personnel responsibilities and templates. Environmental monitoring, pest management, and object handling procedures are part of the action plan. Simultaneously, the Documentation Policy and Procedural Manual are being developed to address standards 5.1 and 5.2, resolving historic documentation gaps by aligning with Spectrum standards. These documents will provide a consistent framework for collections management and cataloguing procedures. An important milestone is the start of the inventory this week with a volunteer, which will support further policy and documentation improvements. The project requires continued collaboration with staff, volunteers, and advisors to ensure compliance with professional standards.

d.) Users & Experiences - Update on Access Audit, Town Hall Tours dates, Heritage Open Days, Schools Workshops and linked purchases

A grant application for £2,570.94 has been submitted to Museum Development Midlands to fund an accessibility audit. If successful, the audit will take place in March, followed by the drafting of the Access Plan.

Key dates were noted: Town Hall tours will run from 25th April to 21st November 2025, and Heritage Open Days will occur from 12th to 21st September. Schools workshops, scheduled for 24th to 28th March, will cover themes such as Crime & Punishment, Local Government, and Local History. Supporting materials and logistics are being prepared.

A digital visitor counter was approved to improve visitor tracking, audience development, and health and safety compliance. A tablet was also approved to enhance Town Hall tours by providing interactive access to images and information, supporting visitor engagement and learning.

Proposal 3 it was **RESOLVED** to approve the purchase of a visitor counter

Proposer	Cllr Bret Allibone	
Seconder	Cllr Yvette Díaz-Muñoz	
For	5	Cllrs Wheeler, Croft, Yvette Díaz-Muñoz, Allibone, Chilman
Against	0	
Abstained	0	
Motion	CARRIED	

Proposal 4 it was **RESOLVED** to approve the purchase of a tablet.

Proposer	Cllr Andrew Croft	
Seconder	Cllr Amanda Wheeler	
For	5	Cllrs Wheeler, Croft, Yvette Díaz-Muñoz, Allibone, Chilman
Against	0	
Abstained	0	
Motion	CARRIED	

455. Collections Reports

The Committee received a report regarding Town Hall Collections

Key Points:

a.) Movement of Collections

It was recommended that the Great Mace not be used at the opening of the Mid-Lent Fair on 31st March 2025 due to condition concerns and the risks posed by its use in non-Civic or nationally significant events. As this is an SKDC event, the focus will be on the ceremonial bell, which holds historical significance in the fair's opening tradition. A recent assessment identified issues such as rattles and surface wear, with damp weather posing additional risks to its preservation. In line with insurance and Accreditation standards, stricter control over its use was noted.

Proposal 5 it was **RESOLVED** not to use the Great Mace at the opening of the Mid-Lent Fair

Proposer	Cllr Amanda Wheeler	
Seconder	Cllr Yvette Díaz-Muñoz	
For	5	Cllrs Wheeler, Croft, Yvette Díaz-Muñoz, Allibone, Chilman
Against	0	
Abstained	0	
Motion	CARRIED	

b.) Conservation of Bull-Running painting

An update was provided on the conservation of the Bull Running painting, which was collected by Lincoln Conservation on 19th December. During varnish removal, significant findings were made, revealing multiple layers of retouching and overpaint, particularly in the sky area, likely applied to conceal extensive drying cracks. Cross-section analysis showed a complex structure of original paint, varnish layers, and overpaint. Photographic and video documentation of the process, including cross-section images, has been completed and will be made available. The painting will return to the Town Hall in March.

c.) Conservation of Charters

The conservation and stabilisation of the town charters were completed in early December, including a two-stage cleaning process to remove mould spores and surface dirt, and the creation of custom Plastazote supports for long-term preservation. Humidity levels in the storage drawers have stabilised, and outdated labels have been replaced by a volunteer. Digital

photography of the charters to archival standards was completed in January. Discussions with the Lincoln Record Society (LRS) have explored potential funding to cover conservation and photography costs, as well as further initiatives such as reviewing Latin translations, vellum testing, and creating charter summaries for a virtual exhibition on the new Town Council website. The LRS has also expressed interest in funding a second phase of research, potentially supporting a PhD student to undertake further study on the charters.

456. Museum Store

The Committee reviewed the position regarding the Community Asset Transfer of the Museum Store. The existing recommendation was for both Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and Stamford Town Council (STC) to conduct twin surveys and agree on a schedule of works before the transfer of the museum store. Cllr Wheeler invited Cllr Copley to provide an update. Cllr Copley advised that while the store was fit for purpose, it would be preferable to delay any survey until LCC confirmed what works they intended to carry out. He also highlighted the importance of considering the restrictions on change of use.

457. To Consider Projects for the Five-Year Plan

The Committee agreed the projects in the existing Museum 5 Year Plan which are aligned with Accreditation.

458. Closure

The meeting was closed at 8.00pm and the date of the next meeting confirmed as Tuesday 1st April 2025 at 6.30pm

These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

Signed on behalf of the Town Council as a true record of the meeting.

Signature

Date

Initialled by Chair