

BARNSTAPLE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Heritage, Culture & Community Committee

Thursday 18th March 2021 at 7.00pm By Video Conference Call.

Present: Councillors:

M Lovering (Chair), V Elkins, A Windsor (Vice-Chair), I Roome, J Hunt, J Carter, A Rennles, J Orange & J Coates

In attendance:

Mr Robert Ward (Town Clerk),

S Petters (Assistant Town Clerk)

M Sanders (Heritage & Culture Manager)

T Addie (Heritage Assistant)

Cllr V Monk

Mr L Clarke – ND Journal

Members of the Public:0

Apologies for absence

None received.

Dispensations and Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllrs M Lovering, I Roome & J Orange as members of North Devon District Council, have a dispensation under SO66 to discuss and vote on any item on the agenda unless the item refers to a financial or legal agreement or dispute between the two authorities.

Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2020, are approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (NC)

Budget Monitoring Report

The Town Clerk explained that the impact of the pandemic had meant that many of the planned activities for 2020-21 had not taken place meaning that most of the allocated budget had not been spent. The surplus has been rolled over to 2021-22 to support future activities.

RESOLVED: To note the budget monitoring report (NC).

Report re the Future Heritage Programme

The Heritage & Culture Manager presented the report (Appendix 1).

Cllr Lovering asked about improvements to the accessibility of The Guildhall.

The Heritage & Culture Manager explained that Living Options have been asked to help with proposals for the building to improve accessibility.

Cllr Roome said he is impressed by the report and how the proposals will help with linking out to the wider community, he proposed approval of the recommendations in the report.

Cllr Coates described the report as an excellent example of blended learning, developing a sustainable programme and seconded the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED: To approve the recommendations from the report (NC).

Request from a local paranormal investigation team to carry out an investigation in The Guildhall

The Heritage & Culture Manager read the request from Devon Free Spirits.

Councillors discussed the request and the comments and considerations were not generally in favour of the request.

RESOLVED: to decline the request from Devon Free Spirits to undertake a paranormal investigation in The Guildhall (NC)

Meeting closed at 7.25pm.

Chairman.

Signed: Dated:

APPENDIX ONE

Report to: HERITAGE AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

Date: 18th March 2021

Subject: FUTURE HERITAGE PROGRAMME

Report by: Heritage and Cultural Manager and Heritage Assistant

1. Introduction:

- 1.1. After the last heritage committee meeting on the 10th December 2020 the heritage team made an informal presentation proposing a potential new direction for the future of Barnstaple Towns Council's heritage offering.
- 1.2. The proposal outlined the need for a sustainable programme that would encourage more engagement and develop a stronger relationship with the local community.
- 1.3. The presentation outlined current issues that need to be considered when developing our new programme and in all the work we do.
- 1.4. The presentation went on to suggest how we might achieve this, and this report will explore that in more detail, we hope the committee will support us in this work.

2. Recommendation:

- 2.1. Members to pledge support to a new focus for the town council's heritage offering.
- 2.2. Members to agree an allocation of funding to create a sustainable heritage programme, as detailed in the report below.
- 2.3. Subject to (2.1) being approved members to approve the use of the below budget headings to help develop the new programme:
 - Guildhall developments
 - Events
 - Marketing
 - Volunteer expenses

3. Reason for Recommendation:

- 3.1. We need to increase the usability and community function of the Guildhall and open it up to a wider and more diverse audience.
- 3.2. To achieve this, we need to increase our community engagement and partnership working to help create a sustainable programme to be enjoyed by the whole community.
- 3.3. The Covid 19 pandemic has highlighted our lack of a digital offering, to further increase our audience we need to incorporate this into the new programme.

4. Report:

Long term goals:

- 4.1. Developing and achieving a sustainable programme that encourages return visits and reignites the local communities' pride in their town's assets, will take time and money to accomplish.
- 4.2. We need to continue to work on Collections Care to conserve and cherish the collections and buildings we are responsible for.
- 4.3. And alongside this we must spend time ensuring we are engaging the community and relevant organisations in our decisions so that we can ensure that principles like accessibility, inclusion, diversity, and community consultation are at the core of our work.
- 4.4. Investing time and money in the early stages of development will give us the best chance of ensuring we create a direction and programme that works.
- 4.5. One of the programmes that we believe will help us become sustainable and integral in the community is a learning programme which will offer blended learning, including digital, to schools, colleges, and lifelong learners.
- 4.6. We would need to start with consulting schools etc, so they can inform us of their needs, so we stay current and relevant.
- 4.7. By creating a well-rounded outreach programme, we would be able to offer things like teacher resource packs; physical visits; curriculum-based information; a digital offering and loan boxes.



Image 1:
Example of a Loan Box from the Imperial War Museum.

- 4.8. To achieve a decent and desirable programme, we will need to invest time and funds and we estimate it will take 1-2yrs to fully establish, giving time to consult, develop, trial, and roll out.
- 4.9. This timescale is a very rough estimate, if we need to seek funding this may be extended. What must also be taken into account is the limited time available from the Heritage team - two members of staff, one full time and one on a 12-hour contact = only 1.3FTE.

Short term goals

- 4.10. In the background of everything we work towards over the next few years is our need to honour our commitment to collections care. We must carry on developing our cleaning regimes and improving our practices. We also need to consider how we display our items and work on improving these environments.
- 4.11. Work on developing our long-term goal will be constant, focussing on researching and networking.

- 4.12. We need to strengthen our partnership working with the following groups: local organisations, community groups, schools, other heritage groups, small businesses, charities, artists etc.
- 4.13. We need to spend some time on identifying our unique selling point (USP), so that we can ensure we are offering something unique to our visitors. Hopefully this will ensure we develop something that complements rather than conflicts with other programmes available in the town.
- 4.14. We need to work on boosting the involvement of our current volunteers and recruit new members to the team. We want to work on clarifying our volunteering need and create specific role descriptions.
- 4.15. We need to start developing a marketing strategy – in liaison with BTC staff and in line with the Council's overall vision. To include a review of hire charges.
- 4.16. Develop a new exhibition programme – starting with the local stories project – look at community exhibitions, and internal ones which could include initial online exhibitions.
- 4.17. Look at incorporating small scale events and activities which will complement the new programme.
- 4.18. At the planning stage we would need to determine any measurable targets, some of the short-term goals will help to determine these also. We need a way to measure the success of the new programme and any data collected can contribute to future funding bids.



Image 2:

A decoupage workshop taking place in the Barnstaple Guildhall.

5. Implications

Financial

Use of the heritage budget, up to £7,500 in the current budget and £20,800 in earmarked reserves.

Legal

Equalities Act 2010 and Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.

Resident / Access / Equalities:

Developing programmes which have accessibility, inclusion, and community as core ideals. Consider accessibility reviews of our buildings.

Background papers:

Special Schools and Museums Toolkit.

[Jewish Museum London – brochure for blended learning offering](#)