

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE

22 JANUARY 2018

At a Meeting of the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee held on 22 January 2018:

PRESENT:

Dorchester Town Council	Councillor:	C. Biggs G. Jones
	Officer:	S. Newman
West Dorset District Council	Councillors:	A. Canning (Chairman) J. Dunseith S. Jones
Blue Badge Tourist Guides		T. Loasby
Dorchester Civic Society		P. Mann
Dorchester Chamber for Business		A. Chisholm

29. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from R. Biggs (Dorset County Council), C. Hebditch (Dorchester Local Nature Reserve), J. Smith (Dorchester Association), J. Murden (Dorset Natural history and Archaeological Society), A. Bright (Shire Hall) and C. Copson (The Keep Military Museum).

30. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2017, a copy of which had been circulated, were confirmed and signed.

31. **DECLARATIONS OF PRE-DETERMINATION**

There were no declarations of pre-determination.

32. **BLUE PLAQUE**

Members considered a request for the Committee's support to the owner of Rowan House erecting a blue plaque on the property in respect of Captain G R O'Sullivan who had resided in the property and was commemorated on the Town's war memorial opposite the property.

Mr K Wilson addressed the Committee in support of the application. It was noted that the resident would make the arrangements for the plaque and would fund it.

RESOLVED

That the Committee support the request for a blue plaque at Rowan House in respect of Captain G R O'Sullivan VC to be funded and erected by the owner of the property.

33. **ROMAN TOWN HOUSE**

The Committee, at its last meeting received a presentation from Dorset County Council Officers with regard to an idea to apply for HLF funding in respect of improvements to the Roman Town House.

Following that meeting DCC Officers submitted an expression of interest to HLF for the Our Heritage fund and received the following response:

“Given current levels of competition for awards to this programme it would not be possible to achieve a grant close to the programme limit of £100,000.

Current awards average around £40,000 with the highest awarded this year under £70,000 There is an option for you to increase levels of match funding and apply for a reduced grant under this programme, but you would also need to include costs for contingency and engagement activities which may increase your project costs.

I think there is an opportunity here for an application under the Heritage Grants programme for this project. An application at this scale (i.e. less than £200,000) would be welcomed.

This programme is also competitive and is a 2 round process. More detail is required in applications to this programme so it would take longer to develop an application.

However there is a grant available for the development phase which includes funds for developing public engagement activities and all the documents required for the Round 2 application.

Do take a look at the programme information on our website and let me know how you would like to proceed.”

DCC Officers had responded to HLF confirming that they would be keen to proceed and it was suggested that the first stage would be a site visit from the grant officer Laurel Miller. Officers have also started a public consultation, ending on 28 February, asking people what they liked and did not like about the Town House and the grounds and what they would like to additionally see on the site.

Members were supportive of the suggested way forward. It was noted that no parking was available for visitors at the RTH and felt that it might be beneficial to have some designated parking, at least at the weekends.

Councillor Dunseith requested that she be included in the working group established by DCC to progress this matter.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

34. **JO DRAPER**

The Committee was advised that Kate Hebditch had been in discussion with the Jo's family regarding what they might like to see as a tribute to Jo and to the work she undertook for the Committee and Dorchester as a whole. One of the suggestions was to have Jo's book 'A Dorchester Camera' put back into print. Another suggestion was for a tree to be planted in a suitable location.

Dovecote Press had been contacted regarding getting the book re-published and were working on the costs and a method of bringing the book back into print. The difficulty being that the original book was printed offset litho, using film and this was no longer used as it was all via digital means.

RESOLVED

That the possibility of getting the book brought back into publication be pursued.

35. **HERITAGE TOURISM**

The Committee was reminded that at its last meeting Members had supported a proposal from the Town Clerk to bring the heritage and tourism sectors together to start a dialogue on how the town could maximise the benefits from all the individual initiatives that were happening in the town such as the development of Shire Hall, Dorset County Museum, The Keep Military Museum etc. It was proposed that two short meetings would be called involving key representatives of the heritage and business sector together with Officers from West Dorset District Council and the Town Council. Ideas from the meetings would be fed back through the Chamber for Business, Dorchester BID, the Councils and the Heritage Tourism Forum.

The first meeting of that group had now been held and a copy of the notes of that meeting had been circulated for consideration.

Members expressed some concerns regarding how the group overlapped with the wider Forum that had been set up by the Committee as a way of including and communicating with the whole heritage tourism sector and the wider community. It was also felt that all sectors should be included within the Town Council group.

The Committee felt it important that the Forum and the wider community should not feel as though they were being ignored. It was noted that the discussions would be reported back to the wider community following the conclusion of the meetings of the Town Council Group.

The Chairman of the Policy Committee reported that he would raise the Committee's views at the meeting of the Policy Committee which was being held the following evening.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman of the Policy Committee report the issues raised to the meeting of the Policy Committee which was being held the following evening.

36. **DORSET ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE WEEK – DORCHESTER EVENT – SUNDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2018**

The Committee considered a proposal from A. Chisholm that with the support of the Town Council, Dorchester Civic Society, the Thomas Hardy Society and local Blue badge tourist guides the complete length of the High Street (from Eastgate (site of the White Hart) to Top o' Town) should be closed to traffic (except emergency vehicles) on Sunday 16th September 2018 from 10am to 4pm as the County town's "offer" during Dorset Architectural Week. There was little doubt that the totality of this street was one of the finest architectural features to be found in the town. It was anticipated that the organisations and people supporting the proposal would, between them, offer walks and talks on the different buildings together with their literary and historic associations. Should other local organisations wish to take advantage of the opportunity to enjoy a traffic-free High Street then this too could be considered.

It was noted that the Town Clerk was supportive of the initiative although had expressed some concerns regarding the ambitious nature of the road closure and its effect on local residents and the resources needed to man it etc. The Dorchester Civic Society supported the proposal but felt that it should commence in 2019 rather than 2018. It was likely that the Town Council would support the proposal on the understanding that the community took the lead in its organisation.

The Committee felt that the proposal was an excellent one but had some reservations as to whether the event could be organised in time for 2018. However, following consideration, Members felt that there was no reason not to try and run the event in 2018 accepting that it might be on a smaller scale with it being developed further in future years. Some ideas for the event included a children's heritage quiz, historic stalls, involvement of the community players and other forms of animation.

RESOLVED

That the Committee supports the proposal for an event on Sunday 16 September 2018 as set out above.

37. **DISPLAY OF REPLICA ROMAN MOSAIC**

The Committee gave consideration to a proposal from a local resident in respect of the possibility of displaying replica Roman mosaic around the town Walks. Members had been circulated with examples of how this may look.

Members felt that this was an excellent idea and felt that the mosaics should be replica's of local ones that had been found and have some information about them and where the original could be seen (if it could be). The replica should be made of such materials that were suitably long lasting so they would stay in good condition with minimal maintenance for a

good period of time. It was felt that the wall of the Walks to the Roman Town House would be a good place to start.

It was noted that the Committee did not have the resource to undertake the project at the present time but that it supported the proposal in principle and would support the local resident if they wished to proceed with the idea further.

RESOLVED

(1) That the local resident be thanked for the excellent work undertaken in producing such a good proposal.

(2) That the idea be supported in principle and that support would be given should the local resident wish to proceed with the idea further.

38. **INFORMATION SIGNS - UPDATE**

Frink Sculpture – it was reported that the new information board had now been erected. The Committee felt that the new board was a very good improvement. It was noted that some alterations to the text had been made but some Members felt that there was still too much information in respect of Chideock.

39. **QUESTIONS**

No formal questions had been submitted.

40. **URGENT ITEMS**

In response to a question it was noted that should the King's Arms project not go ahead there was a legal duty on the owner to keep the building maintained (as it was a Listed building) and that West Dorset District Council would be responsible for taking the necessary enforcement action.

41. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday 23 April 2018 commencing at 7.00pm.

Chairman:

Dated: 23 April 2018