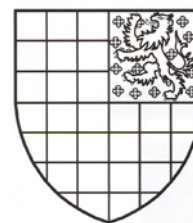


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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

of the meeting of the **Working Party** formed to oversee repairs to the **Town Hall and Malling Community Centre**, held on **Tuesday 3rd February 2015**, in the **Yarrow Room, Town Hall, Lewes** at **3:00pm** (*preceded by a site visit to inspect Malling Community Centre at 2:00pm*).

PRESENT Cllrs L Allsobrook; S Catlin (Wischhusen); M Chartier (*Chairman*); J Lamb; S Murray.

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*); Mrs F Garth (*Civic Officer/ Asst TC*); L Symons (*Town Hall Manager*); Mr Chris Tunbridge and Mr Ben Anderson (*BLB Chartered Surveyors*)

THRWP2014/01 **ELECTION of CHAIRMAN:** Cllr Chartier was elected as Chairman of the Working Party for the 2014/15 year

THRWP2014/02 **QUESTIONS:** There were none. (No members of the public present.)

THRWP2014/03 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies were received from Cllr Daly who was on holiday; Cllrs Milner and Murray (R) who had work commitments, and Cllr O'Keefe who was attending an ESCC meeting.

THRWP2014/04 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** there were none

THRWP2014/05 **MINUTES:** The Minutes of the meeting held on 6th May 2014 were received and signed as an accurate record.

THRWP2014/06 **BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:**

1 The meeting had been preceded by a visit to inspect Malling Community Centre, for Members to familiarize themselves with the layout and condition, which was escorted by Mr Brian Johnson of Malling Community Association. Thanks were recorded to Cllr Allsobrook; Mr Johnson and their fellow Malling Community Association officers, for their long-term commitment to the Centre and their practical efforts to sustain a popular and much-loved local facility.

2 There followed a review of the programme to refurbish Malling Community Centre. Preliminary costings by a professional quantity surveyor had been provided by BLB, free of charge, which established a likely project cost of over £440,000, but these had not arisen from a detailed design and were considered indicative only. They were described as a "basic" refurbishment to meet modern building regulation standards. Earlier consultation with current and prospective users and the wider community had produced a significant amount of material indicating the philosophy such designs should encompass. It was agreed to recommend that Council should commission an architect to prepare a design to the level of detail necessary for accurate costing, and to satisfy any third-party sources of prospective funds. Mr Tunbridge offered the services of an architectural designer and was thanked for this, but Members considered that open invitations should be extended to local architects in the first instance. It was understood that the earmarked finance reserve for this project would yield £233,000 in 2015/16 and that this was insufficient to fund the project. It was anticipated that elements of the work would attract third-party grants which were expected to make-up the difference, although this could only be established once detailed plans were agreed.

3 With regard to the project to refurbish the South (High Street) elevation of the Town Hall, the Order of Costs report prepared by BLB following their detailed surveys was reviewed. Various details were discussed, and enhancements that might be included, *eg* making a feature of the martyrs' steps by installation of

a glazed viewing port. In the course of this discussion it was noted that the engineer advised that flags should not be flown from the flagpole until repairs were completed, as there were suspicions about the integrity of some anchor fixings. The importance of public information, before and during the works programme, was agreed. BLB would ensure that contractors provide and maintain status reports on any screening or scaffold structures, as a matter of course. The District Conservation Officer and English Heritage officers had been consulted and were reported to be happy with all the proposed works. BLB confirmed that a photographic record would be created as the works proceeded.

4 Council had already acknowledged that the estimated cost of around £305,000 (nett) would exhaust the earmarked finance reserves for this project, which would yield £168,340 in 2015/16, and it was unlikely that the programme would qualify for third-party grants (although this would be explored). The works were unavoidable, and the General Fund would make up any shortfall. The General Fund had a balance brought-forward at 1st April 2014 of £377,056. A programme was agreed with BLB which anticipated the contract would be confirmed in April, with works beginning within six weeks or so.

5 At their last meeting, Members had inspected Town Hall office suite, to familiarize themselves with the layout and condition. Suggestions had been considered for refurbishment and works that would increase usable space; improve light and air circulation; mitigate tripping hazards, improve the presentation to visitors, and update and improve shabby kitchen and WC facilities. These had been accepted as sensible and beneficial, and it was recognized that the rooms were long-overdue for refurbishment. Proposed alterations had been drafted after consultation with all staff, and cost estimates sought for carrying out the work. Local firms had been approached with a draft specification and Members were presented a proposal for works in modular format, with elements prioritized and individually priced. The aggregate cost for the complete programme was £30,106. Members considered that all the works should be undertaken, and that to omit any element could be false economy. To avoid further reduction of the General Fund in a single year, it was suggested that this project be accorded a higher priority than Allotment site improvements (all sites currently being in reasonably good order) and the reserve earmarked for that purpose be appropriated (Project account P8 – £30,000 available 2015/16).

THRWP2014/07

In discussing the Town Hall accommodation, it was remarked that the installation of the White Lion figurine (previously sited in Westgate St) above the servery in the Corn Exchange was complete, and that this was an interesting and attractive addition to the room. Members wished to record their thanks to Brian Courage, the Town Ranger, for his work in this regard.

THRWP2014/08

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

1 That the Council invites architects interested in tendering for design work for refurbishment of Mallong Community Centre, in accordance with the results of community consultation; to produce plans capable of detailed costing.

2 Council is asked to note the decisions taken with regard to the refurbishment of the façade of the Town Hall, noted at THRWP2014/06 - 3 and 4 above.

3 Council is recommended to agree the works to modernize and improve the Town Hall office suite as noted at THRWP2014/06 - 5 above; appropriating the balance on project account P8 to that purpose.

THRWP2014/09

There being no other business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed, and thanked everyone for their contributions. *The meeting closed at 4:40pm*

Signed.....

Date