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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

of the meeting of the **Working Party** formed to consider commemorations and significant events, held on **Friday 21st October 2016**, in the **Yarrow Room, Town Hall, Lewes** at **11:00am**.

PRESENT Cllrs S Catlin (Wischhusen); M Chartier (*Chairman*); I Makepeace; Dr G Mayhew; R Murray, and R O'Keeffe

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*)

CmemsWP2016/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: There were none

CmemsWP2016/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were none

CmemsWP2016/11 QUESTIONS: There were none

CmemsWP2016/12 MINUTES: Minutes of the meeting held on 27th July 2016 were received and signed as an accurate record.

CmemsWP2016/13 BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:

The meeting welcomed Mr Tony Oliver, Secretary of the Lewes branch of the Royal Sussex Regimental Association (RSRA), who submitted a request for assistance on behalf of the Association, who are charged with maintaining and upholding the memory, heritage and traditions of the Regiment.

As part of their preparation for commemoration events for WWI, they had searched for sites in Lewes and surrounding area which have artefacts, plaques and memorials *etc.* Lewes, apart from a seat at the town's library displaying the regimental badge, does not have a tribute to the Regiment; unlike other towns and villages in Sussex. Branch members consider that for the County Regiment not to have a representation in the County Town was an inappropriate omission. The Royal Sussex Regiment endured from 1881 - 1966, and was awarded the Freedom of the Borough of Lewes in 1953. The forebears of the Regiment were founded in 1701 and had proceeded, through amalgamation, to the Queen's Regiment and, today, the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.

The Royal Sussex Regiment had taken part in virtually every major campaign of the British Army and this year the Battle of Boar's Head, known as 'the day Sussex died', (telling the story of 11th; 12th and 13th Battalions, "Lowther's Lambs") had been the prominent WW1 commemoration of action on the Somme.

The RSRA requested that some recognisable feature, possibly a badge or plaque, as a mark of respect and gratitude, be displayed in the entrance hall of Lewes Town Hall, a focal point, known to all Royal Sussex veterans and those who appreciate their services.

Members were reminded that within one month of the outbreak of WW1, Lewes had volunteered more men (between 15 – 20% of the relevant population) to serve in the Royal Sussex Regiment than any other, and many families continued close connections today. Members were unanimous in their agreement that some form of plaque or other fixture should be agreed in-principle and asked the RSRA to research ideas and potential designs/costs for further consideration

Lewes Light Festival: The Chairman welcomed Graham Festenstein, organizer of the Lewes Light Festival (LLF), who had brought details of expenditure on the 2016 event as previously agreed. The Working party had authority from Council

to reimburse appropriate costs up to a maximum of £5,000. The items (*listed in minute book*) were individually scrutinized and approved and amounted to £3,099.26 in total. There were one or two small items outstanding, for which invoices had not yet been received. These were expected to amount to a few hundred pounds, and TC was asked to deal with these in due course, within the balance remaining. Mr Festenstein also gave feedback on the highly-successful event and noted some of the positive comments received. Attendance was estimated to be 50% higher than 2015. Members commented on the excellence of some of the installations, and there were suggestions that some might become permanent features. Lessons learned would inform future events, and there was particular commendation for the integration of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM) educational workshops. LLF had been unusual in the younger age groups it had included, compared with similar initiatives elsewhere. This was a context that would be further developed; especially the links with Sussex Downs College.

Lightbox 2016 project “1916 – Lewes Remembers: stories seen through a glass plate”- Brigitte Lardinois, of the University of the Arts, London, was welcomed to the meeting to present an update on this project to exhibit 80 light-boxes in 65 windows throughout Lewes, depicting individuals and scenes from 1916. A grant application for £950,000 for a complementary project to catalogue the internationally-significant Reeves archive of glass photographic plates had been unsuccessful, but this had allowed time for 40 volunteers to work on researching stories behind the pictures to be mounted in the displays. The Council had agreed to host an accompanying exhibition which was being constructed in the Baxter Gallery of the Town Hall, and this had enormous local support. The mounting frames, constructed to avoid damage to the walls, would be re-usable for other applications. A study day was to be held at the All Saints Centre on 30th October with support from the Imperial War Museum, which included screening of a 1916 contemporary film and workshops working with local schools. Plans were described for a torchlight vigil at the War Memorial to remember those fallen in WW1 who were named thereon. This was supported by Bonfire Societies (*Cllrs Chartier; Makepeace and O’Keeffe declared their individual personal connections to Bonfire Societies*) and plans were well-developed, but there was a possibility that it could not be mounted this year but would be presented in 2017. Members were impressed by the concept and endorsed this project. (*Post-meeting note: it was subsequently advised that this project must be deferred to 2017*).

“Winter of the World” it was noted that Helen Glavin, the composer who had produced the hugely-popular musical concert for the Council in 2014, was interested to repeat this in 2018, and this was welcomed.

CmemsWP2016/14

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL:

It was agreed to recommend that Council agrees in-principle to some form of permanent memorial for the Royal Sussex Regimental Association, subject to firm proposals coming forward for detailed consideration at a later date.

CmemsWP2016/15

There being no other business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed, and thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.

The meeting closed at 12:10pm

Signed.....

Date