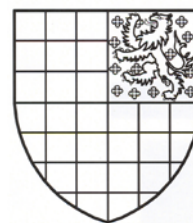


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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

of the meeting of the **Working Party** formed to oversee repairs to the Town Hall, held on **Tuesday 12th November 2013**, in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lewes** at **11:00am**.

PRESENT Cllrs S Catlin (Wischhusen); M Chartier; J Daly (*Chairman*); R Murray; S Murray; R O’Keeffe; also (*not appointed to Working party*) L Allsobrook.

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*); Mrs F Garth (*Civic Officer/ Asst TC*); L Symons (*Town Hall Manager*)

THRWP2013/01 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN: Cllr Daly was elected Chairman of the Working-party for the 2013/14 year.

THRWP2013/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies were received from Cllr Milner, who was working.

THRWP2013/03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: there were none

THRWP2013/04 QUESTIONS: There were none. (No members of the public present.)

THRWP2013/05 REMIT of the WORKING PARTY:

Members noted the remit of the Working party, as set by Council at its meeting on 13th June 2013:

Minute extract:

FC2013/22.1 Lewes Town Council establishes a Working Party comprising Cllrs Catlin, Chartier, Daly, Milner, S Murray, R Murray and O’Keeffe to oversee the commencement of an integrated programme of repairs to the South elevation (High Street façade) of the Town Hall, as described in report FC003/2013, and funded initially by the established reserves shown in R1 and P6 in the Council’s accounts with any balance required to complete the work being drawn from the General Fund, and

FC2013.22.2 That the balance available for 2013/14 in project reserve P6 (labelled “Town Hall Access”) is appropriated to augment the repairs reserve R1 for this purpose.

THRWP2013/06 BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:

1 Members reviewed report FC003/2013 and the accompanying detailed report prepared by specialist surveyors (*copies in minute book*), which presented findings from a survey conducted at close-quarters with the aid of a mobile elevating work platform, which identified specific items of work needed and offered an assessment of urgency. These were classified as:

Category

1 *High risk or Immediate work:* Work necessary on health and safety grounds or where there is a high risk of damage to the building in the short term. Remedial action should be taken immediately. **No items**

2 *Priority work:* Work to prevent active deterioration such as water penetration or to gain compliance with relevant legislation. **47 items**

3 *Necessary work:* Work required to the standard appropriate for the building and its present or proposed use, including preventative maintenance. **16 items**

Subdivisions: Good housekeeping / rolling programme / major works.

4 *Desirable work:* Work recommended to enhance the use or appearance of the building or that is necessary for re-evaluation or adaptive use of the building. **1 item**

5 *Items to be further investigated and / or kept under observation:* eg The monitoring of movement evident in walls to check for progression or the regular checking of

elements that are nearing the end of their life expectancy.

16 items

The report identified other features, not specifically investigated, but observed to be showing significant and obvious deterioration. Notably these were timber window-frames (25 windows, each of unique dimensions) and flagpole fixings. All works identified were clearly evident from the survey. It was acknowledged that other areas of decay or variation might subsequently become evident and all items were subject to confirmation and specification once inspection from a fixed scaffold was possible; when prolonged/invasive investigations could be undertaken. It was further understood that problems clearly visible in certain areas may also exist but in latent/concealed state elsewhere - particularly the case with (for example) the problems of hidden ferrous metalwork. Even where inspected and currently deemed intact, defects or latent problems could cause failures without prior warning.

2 An estimate for the repair of items identified was provided; and for the cost of scaffolding and traffic-control measures which were required due to the location and duration of the work. Provisional informal estimates for works that could be readily identified, and informed allowances for additional discoveries and contingent events suggested a total budget of £150,000 was appropriate. There followed a lengthy discussion regarding the structure of the necessary works contract(s) and the appropriateness of contingency valuations. It was explained that the sums under discussion were initial estimates only, and that the quotations which would eventually be sought from contractors would include more refined estimates in this regard. An integrated schedule of works was desirable to limit the duration of disruption to the High Street and best absorb the cost of scaffolding and traffic control.

3 It was agreed that all works should be undertaken as a single contract, if possible, and that it was preferable to schedule the project in such a way that work commenced after June 2014 to avoid significant events planned for the town centre. TC would research the available options for specifying and obtaining the services, given the value and specialist nature of the core work; and report to the next meeting of the Working party.

4 Members went on to discuss other matters relevant to the repair and maintenance of the Town Hall. TC distributed copies of the repairs and renewals programme that had been agreed in 2005 and steadily worked-through since then. This was due for update, given that: although significant works had been completed since the last review, new requirements and priorities continually arose. It was noted that the building had been purchased from the District Council in 1999 with items of dilapidation and outstanding maintenance estimated to cost several hundred thousand pounds, and not all of these had yet been fully-addressed. TC was interested to gain Members' initial reactions to suggestions such as the restoration of wooden flooring rather than replacement of carpets, in some areas.

5 Members also discussed the matter of staff accommodation and reception/office areas where visitors were received. The possibility of the acquisition of nearby offices, currently owned by Lewes District Council, introduced new potential scenarios; but these did not override the case for refurbishment of the existing office areas. The office suite had been converted from retail premises in 1992, and some further modifications had followed in 2002. The disposition of space was not ideal for the current or foreseeable needs of the Council, and reception; WC; kitchenette, and common areas appeared shabby and unwelcoming. Some staff workstations were in areas with little or no natural light; no circulation of air, and tired décor. Whilst the available space offered limited opportunities for improvement, there were some modest alterations possible that were straightforward to implement and unlikely

to prove expensive, yet would greatly improve working conditions and the impression on visitors.

THRWP2013/07

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL:

Repair works to the High Street elevation were within the scope of the authority delegated to the Working party.

Further matters arising from the discussions were considered important and were supported by Members of the Working party. TC was asked to bring more detailed proposals to the next meeting, and Council would be asked to extend the remit of the Working-party to include these issues.

THRWP2013/08

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

The meeting closed at 12:50pm

Signed.....

Date