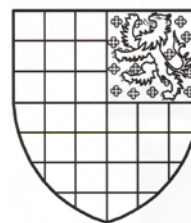


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**LEWES  
TOWN  
COUNCIL**

## *MINUTES*

of the meeting of the **Working Party** formed to consider commemoration of significant events, held on **Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2015**, in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall**, Lewes at **4:00pm**.

**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]*); Mrs F Garth (*Civic Officer/ Asst TC*).

**CmemsWP2015/01 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN:** Cllr Chartier was elected Chairman of the Working party for the 2015/16 municipal year

**CmemsWP2015/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** There were none. No message had been received from Cllr Cooper.

**CmemsWP2015/03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were none

**CmemsWP2015/04 QUESTIONS:** Two members of the public were present. A question was asked as to when it may be appropriate to lay white poppies on Remembrance Sunday as a symbol of remembrance for those fallen in war. It was explained that the Council did not control Remembrance events, which were the province of the Royal British Legion (RBL); the Mayor and a civic party were traditionally invited to lead the public service at the War memorial, but the event was organized by the RBL. The RBL was the United Kingdom's accepted lead organization in this regard, and their protocol was that only red poppies should feature during their ceremonies, but they recognized both white and purple poppies as symbols in their own right. The Town Council owned the war memorial, but considered itself to hold this in trust for the community, and had no prescription for forms of remembrance. Many separate events were held at the memorial, and wreaths etc were removed if/when they had deteriorated due to the passage of time, provided always that there was no offence to commonly-held standards of taste and decency.

A further question asked if the Council could envisage negotiation with the RBL to consider "a more 21<sup>st</sup> century mode of remembrance". Members recognized that the nature of the annual event had gradually evolved over time, and noted the increasing number of survivors from more recent, and continuing, conflicts. It was not considered appropriate for the Council to intrude in this or attempt to accelerate the process, which was reflective of national moods and trends. It was understood that local branches of the Legion did not have autonomy, but that a national committee determined the format of events and policies surrounding them, with suggested changes submitted to the monarch in accordance with the principles of Royal patronage. It was anticipated that any major step-change would be unlikely whilst there remained living survivors of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War; recognizing the sensitivity of the issue.

Cllr Makepeace asked for, and received, confirmation that the Council had no objection to white poppy wreaths on occasions other than British Legion events. She also asked for a guarantee that such would not be removed but it was explained that the Council had no control over the actions of third-parties. The Council would only remove memorials for the reasons given earlier, or for practical reasons such as impending Bonfire celebrations or bad weather, but could not prevent removal by others. It was recommended that the laying of

white poppies should only take place when a RBL event was over, and all those attending had left the area. It was advised that; should any organized event of significant 'size' be envisaged it would be necessary, at the least, to arrange road-closures and attendant signage, and marshalling for the closure points. It was recommended that Sussex Police be consulted at an early stage. Members repeated the Council's respect for, and sensitivity toward, any form of memorial and they hoped that others would respect this position.

#### **CmemsWP2015/05 MINUTES:**

Minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2015 were received and signed as an accurate record. Thanks were extended to Cllr O'Keeffe for her specially-written orchestral piece, which had been performed by LGB Brass, the town band, at the recent 'Remembering 1915' event at the All Saints Centre.

#### **CmemsWP2015/06 BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:**

It was noted that the Working Party's mandated programme was effectively completed, although Members agreed that there was sufficient 'demand' to justify a recommendation to Council that the remit be extended to 2019 in view of prospective events.

*100yrs since commencement of 1<sup>st</sup> World War:* There was general discussion on anticipated events considered worthy of some form of support. There was extensive discussion and a list of prospects agreed for further development or investigation. These were:

- A proposed extension of the popular "lightbox" project which had twice featured topical photographs from the Edward Reeves Archive in illuminated boxes in High Street windows. It was understood that the organizer was designing a programme of photographs of local people who served in WW1, to be mounted in the windows of their original homes. This to accompany an academic project to catalogue the Reeve archive of glass photographic plates, which was believed to be the largest such collection in the world
- A partnership with Lewes History Group to promote a day of lectures or similar
- Engagement with a project related to the events of 30<sup>th</sup> June 1916 when significant numbers of men belonging to the 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> Battalions of the Royal Sussex Regiment (the "South Downs Pals") lost their lives in action at Richebourg L'Avoué in France.
- The effect of the war on society at home and development of universal suffrage. Working men, and women, being temporarily enfranchised in 1918 and the following Womens' Suffrage movement. This was also a time of development in the Trades Union movement.
- Lewes Old Grammar School was to mount a production of "Oh! What a Lovely War!" in the Gun Garden at Lewes castle and may be interested to extend this to performance(s) at the All Saints Centre. Other educational establishments may also focus upon the period for curriculum purposes.
- Helen Glavin and John Hancorn had indicated interest in repeating the popular 'Winter of the World' event, originally held at the All Saints Centre in October 2014.

A publication by the British Council entitled 'Remember the World as well as the War!'" was mentioned, with possible reference to links with University of the Third Age; Workers' Educational Association, Sussex Downs College and similar. There was a brief discussion regarding the research Dr Mayhew was conducting for the Council into names on the War Memorial and various matters of interest such as Siegfried Sassoon's service with the Royal Sussex Regiment.

*90<sup>th</sup> Birthday of HM Queen Elizabeth 2<sup>nd</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016:* Mrs Garth reported that a recent conference of the National Association of Civic Officers had discussed

this, and it was apparent that individual areas were taking widely differing approaches to the event. Some were doing nothing, while others were planning the lighting of beacons on hilltops. It was suggested that an appropriate recognition for Lewes would be to 'brand' the Mayor's annual senior citizens' tea and offer special consideration for anyone also celebrating their 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, perhaps working in partnership with Lewes District Council on this occasion. Members considered this proposal should be recommended to Council.

*National Holocaust Memorial Day:* This event, in January, had been supported *ad hoc* by individual Mayors in the past on approach by the local organizers. It was proposed that Council now recognize the event and include it in the agreed list of civic events. A Member raised a question regarding the educational context, and was reassured that schools were closely involved and education was a primary consideration.

*Update on projects:* There was some discussion on the programme to date, and Cllr Dr Mayhew updated everyone on his research work regarding names on the War Memorial. He was considering the extension of this to produce a short biography, possibly with photographs, of all those featured. This would largely depend upon the archive material available. It was recognized that the "missing names" provided by the RBL would almost certainly prove to have been omitted originally for a particular reason; and lack of space, plus the recent upgrade to the heritage listing status (to 2\*) may prove an obstacle to additional names. A suggestion was made that the Working party should be renamed to highlight the context of celebration, and this was discussed at some length but not supported. Members recognized the success of the recent Lewes Lights project and also offered congratulations to those responsible for the 'magical' Lewes Priory by Candlelight event.

**CmemsWP2015/07**

**CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL:**

Council is to be asked to agree the following recommendations:

To extend the mandate of the Working Party to 2019 and;

To agree in-principle support for the prospective events and ideas described (subject to further detail and cost implications).

**CmemsWP2015/08**

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

*The meeting closed at 5:15pm*

Signed.....

Date .....