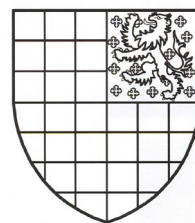


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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

of the meeting of the **All Saints Centre (ASC) Steering Group** held on **Thursday 8th April 2021**, online via Zoom meetings, at **3:00pm**.

PRESENT Cllrs R Burrows; S Catlin (*Chair*); M Milner; R O’Keeffe; R Waring and (*not appointed to the Steering Group*) Cllr Sains.

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*); Ms L Zeyfert (*ASC Manager*); Claire Tully (*ASC Asst Manager*) and Brain Courage (*Town Ranger*).

ASCSG2020/01 There were initial connection and audio problems, and the Zoom meeting was closed while this was addressed, which delayed the start of the meeting until 3:20pm

ASCSG2020/02 **ELECTION of CHAIRMAN:**

Cllr Catlin was elected Chairman of the Steering Group for the 2020/21 year.

ASCSG2020/03 **QUESTIONS:** There were none.

ASCSG2020/04 **APOLOGIES for ABSENCE:** No message had been received from Cllr Herbert.

ASCSG2020/05 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were none

ASCSG2020/06 **REMIT of the STEERING GROUP:** Members noted the remit of the Group which was set by Council as:

The All Saints Steering Group is tasked with general oversight of the All Saints Centre operation, meeting ad hoc and formulating recommendations for Council or other committees; functional panels, or working parties.

ASCSG2020/07 **BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:**

The Group addressed matters as:

1 *Prospective ‘remobilization’ and relaxation of covid-19 restrictions:* TC gave an update on the position regarding allowable events under Covid-19 regulations and noted that after 12th April it was anticipated that some educational events should be possible. A limited schedule had been publicized. It was noted that ‘headline’ information in the media was often not consistent with the actual regulations or government statutory guidance. The appropriate guidance was monitored, and plans adapted as appropriate to any developments in that regard.

2 *Staff changes:* Ms Zeyfert was pleased to announce that she was expecting a baby and was planning to commence Maternity Leave in late Summer. The Centre’s staff establishment currently had a vacancy for a Venue Assistant created by the recent promotion of Ms Tully and transfer of Ms Roxx to Malling Community Centre. Although there was no immediate pressure as the Centre would gradually increase operations as Covid restrictions eased, the recruitment would need to begin reasonably soon. TC intended that the Chair of the Steering Group would be invited to attend interviews in due course.

3 *Suggested improvements to external lighting of the Centre:* Members considered a report prepared by a local lighting engineer, working with Cllr Milner and others. This proposed various enhancements to the Centre’s profile through external lighting (building; grounds and noticeboards *etc*). Councillors considered these ideas attractive but they would need to be costed and developed further. Ms Zeyfert noted that lighting of the tower would require Planning Consent, and she confirmed that bats roosted somewhere on the site. It was very important that this was investigated, as disturbing a roost is environmentally damaging and also illegal. It was acknowledged that any lighting proposals could be designed to mitigate against

disruption to any existing bat populations. An informal estimate of cost had been obtained from an electrical contractor for some elements, which might be installed outside any major scheme, although Members were interested to estimate the cost of a unified project. Whilst the project might not prove prohibitively expensive, TC drew attention to the long list of dilapidations that had been identified by commissioned surveyor, and the aggregate of over £400,000 in estimate costs, which was to be discussed as the following item on the meeting agenda.

4 *Recent surveys and reports on priorities for building repairs:* A structural survey of the Centre had been presented to Council in 2020. This detailed report comprehensively described various items of repair that were considered necessary. Members were pleased to note the description of the Grade 2* listed building as:

“Overall, this building is in remarkably good condition considering the mixture of constructions and ages and this reflects care in the ownership, renovations and extensions through the 19th and 20th centuries until it was deconsecrated. Its condition also reflects high quality renovations during the 1980s followed by excellent care and maintenance since, together with further modernisations such as for the heating system and west end lavatories. The level of maintenance repairs currently identified is much less than would be expected for a previously-redundant building of this size and complexity and reflects well on its management”.

This commendation notwithstanding; 20 areas of work and individual items identified as necessary or desirable were shown in a table with estimated costs ranging from £2,000 to £59,000 - in aggregate amounting to £415,000. It was recognized that many of these were not immediate concerns, and that schedule was being used to inform the drafting of a programme for future prioritized work. Several areas required further, specialized, surveys and these were being commissioned according to priority. It was recognized that, whilst specific surveys had been conducted for particular issues arising (eg damp; heating system; roof guttering) the comprehensive survey conducted in 2020 was the first of such scope commissioned by the Council since taking control of the Centre.

A recent survey on the electrical installation had reported that the services were in good condition but with a short list of works required before it could be recorded as ‘satisfactory’. These were being addressed. As works were commissioned, contractors were asked to allow for future development, such as additional lighting, to ensure the most efficient use of funds.

TC confirmed that there was an established financial Reserve for repairs and maintenance of the Centre and the recent annual contribution from the Council Tax precept had been £20,000 giving an available sum of over £50,000. Added to the operational budget provision for responsive repairs each year, it should be possible to address the works listed in an appropriate timeframe.

The most immediate concern was the age-related structural deformation of the Victorian cast-iron supporting columns in the main hall, and these had been assessed and would need to be replaced with modern steel fabrications, which could be manufactured to appear similar. This was safety concern, and the structural engineer was liaising with the District Conservation Officers and a local specialist contractor to confirm requirements and quotation of cost.

There followed a general discussion on the cost; timescales, and relative priorities of works required. These would be refined as quotations were received and discrete elements were further investigated. The Steering Group agreed the approach being taken to expedite structural works and would recommend that Council take note of the issues discussed and endorse this.

There was a brief discussion on various general matters before the meeting ended.

ASCSG2020/08

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

The meeting closed at 4:10pm

Signed

dated