

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY & HERITAGE COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 29th MARCH 2023 AT 7:00 P.M. AT NEWTON'S PLACE, 43 WOLBOROUGH STREET, NEWTON ABBOT

PRESENT Councillors: L Sheffield (Chairperson) - Presiding

Councillors: C Bunday (Mayor) D Howe
 D Corney-Walker M Joyce
 C Davieson C Parker
 A Hall M Ryan
 M Hocking

Officers in attendance: Sam Scott – Deputy Town Clerk
 Dr Charlotte Dixon – Museum Curator
 Kate Green – Community Engagement Officer
 Linda McGuirk – Principal Administrator

439. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors P Bullivant, K Crout, R Hayes, A Jones (Vice Chairperson), M Pilkington and Nigel Canham – Communications Advisor, Sally Henley – Town Development Manager and Phil Rowe – Town Clerk.

440. INTERESTS

None

441. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Community and Heritage Committee held on 8th February 2023 were received and signed as a correct record, subject to a minor amendment to minute number 373 regarding the date of the next meeting.

442. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

443. MUSEUM REPORT

The Chairperson referred to the museum report, previously circulated and invited the Curator Dr Charlotte Dixon and the Community Engagement Officer Kate Green to update Members on key points contained within the report:

- Staff changes to cover maternity leave.
- In 2022 the Museum welcomed 12,556 visitors to the museum and St. Leonards Tower. In contrast, the previous museum saw an average of 2,000 – 2,500 visitors a year (open from Easter to October).

APPENDIX A

- Forthcoming exhibitions and displays including Enhanced by Words, Fired for Royalty, The Science Collections, Ipplepen Coin. In addition, several of the displays were changed during January 2023. Members were informed that the displays in St Leonard's Clock Tower will be refreshed during April 2023, including the ability to live stream footage of the bells and clock mechanism.
- Front of house volunteers have undergone refresher training sessions and will be undertaking a basic sign language course in April 2023. The Museum Administrative Assistant has attended copyright training and the Natural History Museum will be providing training as part of the entomology collection.
- Development and extension of the museum stores is moving forwards, following the approval of the planning application attention has been directed at funding the project.
- The Museum is in the process of receiving a financial donation specifically for the conservation/restoration of the signal gantry located near to Torquay Road. This is coming to the museum as a bequest following the sale of a locomotive name plate at auction.

Members discussed the restoration of the railway gantry and recognised that the restoration is required as a matter of urgency in order to protect the important heritage asset from further deterioration. Members discussed the possibility of supporting the restoration from the Capital Fund. Arising from the discussion it was:

RESOLVED that the Town Council supports in principle:

- a) the restoration of the railway gantry located near Torquay Road via the Capital Fund, and
 - b) financially supports the remainder of the restoration project, subject to confirmation of costs.
- School groups: in 2022, 872 visitors were welcomed to the museum as part of school or home education visits, 1209 visitors on group or informal education visits, reached 218 people during school outreach visits and 277 people were reached during community outreach visits. Interest in school, home education, group and outreach visits continue in 2023 with demands to book visits.
 - Monthly home education Lego workshops are run in the museum with Brick Ideas, the Community Engagement Officer is starting to run bi-monthly home education art workshops. This was requested by a home education parent who attends the Lego workshops with their child.
 - Community Engagement events and projects including What's in Store, Twilight Sketching, Newton Abbot Natters oral history project and Warm Space.
 - There are currently 57 active volunteers who assist in a range of activities including front of house, behind the scenes collections work and education and conservation work.

- Events held in the museum space include Makaton Choir, Easter and Summer trails, children's events and activities, Toddler Tuesdays and Make & Create.
- Restoring Stover Park is a 3 year National Lottery Heritage funded project. The Museum will receive some funding to participate in this project by working with a team of volunteers to conduct research that will feed into new interpretation around the park and that can be accessed digitally.
- The Museum and St Leonards Clock Tower received a total of £3,500.56 in donations in 2022 (Jan-Dec).

Members noted the report and expressed their gratitude to Dr Dixon for producing such a detailed report. Members were impressed with the work of the Museum team, led by Dr Dixon, and thanked them for their hard work and dedication.

444. **HERITAGE ASSET PROJECT**

The Chairperson referred to the Heritage Assets report, previously circulated and invited Dr Dixon to update Members on key points raised within the report:

Dr Dixon reminded members that in 2016 a project was launched to record heritage assets in Newton Abbot that are not otherwise protected as Listed Buildings, Ancient Monuments or Conservation Areas.

The project reached a point where a criteria was developed to assess whether a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape could be identified as a heritage asset. In addition, following community consultation, a list of potential heritage assets were identified and researched ready to be assessed using the criteria.

With the development of the Newton's Place project the heritage assets project was placed on hold. In 2022 there was a re-launch in the town asking the community for nominations for heritage assets.

The project is now at a point where it can be re-launched and a steering panel established to assess the nominees using the agreed criteria. The next steps would be to write to the owners of the asset if it has been approved and to include the asset on the local register which would be available on the Town Council's website.

Members considered the proposal to re-launch the heritage asset project, arising from their consideration, it was:

RESOLVED that the Town Council supports the re-launch of the Heritage Asset project, subject to the Town Council representative on the steering group panel being appointed following the local elections in May 2023.

445. **HEDGEHOG HIGHWAY**

The Chairperson referred to the letter received from Hedgehogs R Us, previously circulated which contained information about the Hedgehog Highways Project.

Members considered the Hedgehog Highways Project, arising from which it was:

RESOLVED that the Town Council supports the Hedgehog Highways Project and purchases one Hedgehog Highway bundle at a cost of £150.

446. SUB COMMITTEES/WORKING PARTIES/FORUMS

a) Road Safety Working Group – 23rd February 2023

Arising from the consideration of the report of the meeting it was:

RESOLVED that the notes of the Road Safety Working Group meeting held on 23rd February 2023 be hereby noted.

b) Events Sub-Committee – 1st March 2023

Arising from the consideration of the report of the meeting it was:

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Events Sub-Committee meeting held on 1st March 2023 be hereby approved and adopted.

447. ACCOUNTS/INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The Committee received and noted an overview of income and expenditure for the Community & Heritage Committee, Newton In Bloom and the Museum for the period 1st April – 28th February 2023. Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the Income and Expenditure Statements for the period 1st April – 28th February 2023 for the:

- 1) Community and Heritage Committee
- 2) Newton In Bloom
- 3) Museum, be hereby approved.

448. LATE CORRESPONDENCE

There was no late correspondence. The Chairperson, Councillor Lesley Sheffield reminded Members it was her last meeting as Chairperson of the Community & Heritage Committee and that she will not be standing as a Town Councillor in the forthcoming elections. Councillor Sheffield wished the Council all the best going forward.

449. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Community and Heritage Committee would be held on Wednesday 14th June 2023.

Meeting closed at 20:03

Chairperson.....Date.....