

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of Sandwich Town Council as Trustee of Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund, held on Thursday 21st August 2014 in the Council Chamber, Guildhall, Sandwich

Present: Councillors: The Mayor
PI Carter
Mrs JL Dunay
Mrs S Laslett
BA Scott
JJ Watts
DMA Wood

Officers: Miss T Weir

Also attending: Sarah Corn, Museum Development Officer for Kent & Medway - South East Museum Development Programme
Ray Harlow, Honorary Curator - Sandwich Guildhall Museum

16.08.14 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Bragg, Cllr Butcher, Cllr Mrs Lioté, Cllr Moorhouse, Cllr Mrs Russell, Cllr Sneller and Cllr Trussler. No apologies were received from Cllrs Daw and Scollard.

17.08.14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

18.08.14 PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The Museum & Archives payment schedule, totalling £197.49, was received, approved and signed.

19.08.14 FORWARD PLAN: GUILDHALL MUSEUM

(i) Councillors received a briefing from, and held a question and answer with Sarah Corn, Museum Development Officer for Kent & Medway - South East Museum Development Programme, regarding the Guildhall Museum Forward Plan (as required for reaccreditation of the Museum) and the process of developing that Plan.

Sarah explained that the Forward Plan is necessary for reaccreditation but can be used in a much more aspirational way, it could encapsulate the Trustees' aspirations for the Museum. It should set the mission statement and strategic aims of the Museum, even if in very broad terms e.g. "we will investigate further outreach initiatives", which should then translate into Museum activity at the operational level and could link in with and capture work that the Museum is doing already. The current deadline for submission of reaccreditation documents is 15th October but an extension of up to six months may be requested if necessary. Many of the documents which Mr Harlow, the Honorary Curator, prepared for the last accreditation process can be essentially re-used with some reworking to bring in elements which were not required last time; also, templates exist for these key documents which may be very helpful. She provided several handouts which are attached to the official minutes of this meeting.

Councillors raised several concerns and issues, which included:

- a feeling that there was some disconnection between the Museum & Archive Committee and the Museum volunteer base: how could volunteers be engaged in developing and delivering the Forward Plan? And how can councillors better understand the day-to-day operation of the Museum? Sarah responded that there should be an element of consultation with volunteers in the development of the Forward Plan and that Trustees would need to consider how and at what stage to do this.

- how can the Forward Plan be used to bring the Museum's strategic aims into line with other strategic aims of Sandwich Town Council and Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund, for example the local drive (supported by the Council) to develop and promote the town's tourism offer? Sarah replied that forward planning provides an excellent opportunity for the Museum to link into and event facilitate or drive some wider objectives for the town.

- how could those with no expertise in Museum matters contribute to this process? Sarah replied that such a 'fresh look' at the Museum could actually be useful.

- could there be an issue around continuity if current councillors take responsibility for developing and then, in Council as the Trustee of Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund, approving and committing to the Forward Plan, only then for the possible election in May 2015 to potentially bring in at least a partly new group of councillors?

Several councillors expressed willingness to offer time in the evenings to form a working group to take forward development of the Plan and to think about related issues, such as how it can link into wider local priorities, and how volunteers may be engaged in the development process, as well as how, in the long-term, to bridge the gap which some councillors felt existed between the Museum & Archive Committee and the volunteer base. This group would need to establish with the Trustee of Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund what authority could be delegated to the group in order to progress the Plan without having to refer constantly back to the monthly meeting of the Trustee. Sarah offered on going assistance from Samantha Harris (the Guildhall Museum's mentor) and from herself in developing the Plan.

Councillors thanked Sarah for attending, for briefing them and answering their questions.

(ii) Councillors deliberated briefly on the necessary resolutions to enable development of the Forward Plan to proceed.

RESOLUTION: (i) That the Trustee should apply for a six-month extension for submission of reaccreditation documents.

(ii) That the Mayor, Cllr Carter, Cllr Mrs Laslett, Cllr Scollard and Cllr Wood should meet after the conclusion of the Public Amenities Committee on Wednesday 27th August (at 7pm) to consider next steps in development of the Plan and also how volunteers may be engaged in the process. Sarah Corn agreed also to attend this meeting.

20.08.14

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 15th September 2014, following the meeting of the Town Council, in the Council Chamber.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____