

Heritage Working Group
Monday 8th February 2021

Present:

Cllr T Martin
H Goodwin

Cllr H Perkin

Cllr J Irwin

In Attendance:

L Bareham (Town Clerk)

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| 1. | <p><u>Proposal for Relocation of the VIC</u></p> <p>HG reported that following the 3 Saturdays outside 12 Market Place in December, the Faversham Society had noted the good footfall and he had been given permission by the Board to approach the Council to see if there was an interest in starting a discussion regarding the relocation of the VIC, including the shop contents into a section of the front room. Probably a third or quarter, allowing for the remaining space to continue to be used for exhibitions and meetings.</p> <p>It was RECOMMENDED a full proposal be worked up by HG and LB and brought to the next Policy & Finance Committee</p> | HG/ LB |
| 2. | <p><u>Magna Carta Exhibition</u></p> <p>LB reported a total of £85k funding had been secured, a further application for £10k awaited.</p> <p>LB requested HG to approach the Faversham Society board for assistance in applying for other funding, particularly where town councils were excluded – such at QFT.</p> <p>Two quotations for cabinets were being updated with materials sourced from the EU.</p> <p>It was agreed to RECOMMEND the setting up of an Advisory Board. Sarah Stanley of Kent Archives had already been approached, other potential members were considered.</p> <p>A meeting is due to take place with Sheila Sweetinburgh and colleagues from Canterbury Christchurch University to discuss storylines for the exhibition.</p> | HG |
| 3. | <p><u>Doddington Library</u></p> <p>LB reported that additional shelving had been installed and all the books were in place. She will contact the librarian to make arrangements for him to securely use the library.</p> | LB |

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| 4. | <u>Shand Fire Pump</u> LB confirmed that Shepherd Neame had collected the Fire Pump. | |
| 5. | <u>TS Hazard and Town Quay</u> It was generally agreed that this area should come under local management rather than the Town Council. The neighbouring sites had come forward as part of the call for sites for the NHP, with mixed use commercial and residential. | |
| 6. | <u>Engine Sheds</u> HG noted that area was likely to go for housing and there should be push for creating a walking and cycling route through the site. | |
| 7. | <u>Guildhall Bell</u> HG reported the Faversham Society had been approached by a local business which was interested in helping to fund raise to get the bell ringing again. LB noted that no comments had been included on the latest quinquennial report and will contact the clock-winder for any information. | LB |
| 8. | <u>Matters for Report</u> Concerns were raised that projects were being planned on and about the Rec without any liaison with the Faversham Society or Town Council and that information was repeatedly being asked for without any significant outcome. HP agreed to raise these comments with SBC. | HP |

Report to Policy & Finance Committee

Proposal

To consider the relocation of the Faversham Visitor Information Centre (VIC) and associated shop to the ground floor of 12 Market Place.

Background

The Faversham Society Board authorised the Board's Standing Committee to explore with FTC whether there might be an opportunity to relocate their VIC and shop to the ground floor of 12 Market Place and to facilitate the use of the remainder of the space for community exhibitions and meetings. Giving more prominence to Swale Heritage and Faversham Museums Together. This would promote the town's tourism offer.

It was agreed at the Heritage Working Group on 8th February for the Town Clerk and Harold Goodwin to put together a proposal for Policy & Finance Committee to consider.

We are requesting authority from Policy and Finance Committee to explore the Faversham Society's proposal

There would be value for the town in being Swale's main VIC and entrance for many to tourism in the Borough.

Summary

Following the 2019 elections further community engagement was undertaken by the Town Council, which resulted in the agreed motion on 9th December 2019 *to take forward options of a Heritage Hub and Magna Carta Exhibition and Community Exhibition Space.*

Unfortunately Covid-19 has left the ground floor empty, despite interest from local groups to use the space. Although, we have also found that the recent charges imposed on groups and individuals has seen a decline in bookings.

Fellow Cinque Port Towns of Sandwich, Tenterden, Ramsgate, Folkestone, Broadstairs, Deal and Hastings all have VICs located within the town halls. Sandwich and Folkestone also have museums.

General Considerations

1. Pre-Covid the VIC opened to the public 7 days a week
2. Already has volunteers, or should be able to attract more when appropriate

3. When open, the building's location leads people to ask general questions, advice and directions.
4. The Doddington Library is already located within 12 Market Place.
5. The Magna Carta Exhibition could be overseen by the FS volunteers and therefore be open 7 days a week, without the need for paying additional staff.
6. If FS were to use between a quarter and third of the front room, this would allow sufficient area for exhibitions and other events to take place. Often the space has been too much for most groups to fill, movable screens would add additional space, when required.
7. FTC should retain oversight of hiring of the exhibition space in liaison with the FS.
8. The VIC should be lockable when not in use, so the space could be used out of usual opening hours.
9. VIC would require storage space, there is potential for *some* space in the first floor archive room.

Financial Considerations

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|----------------|---|
| SAVINGS | |
| Utilities | There is a separate electricity meter, which would allow for the electricity bill to be split accordingly. |
| Business Rates | Reduction in business rates for the area leased to the FS, which as a charity is exempt from payment. |
| Staffing | Volunteers for the FS/VIC would lessen the need for additional staff to cover Magna Carta Exhibition and weekend events/opening |
| Magna Carta | Partnering with FS |
| COSTS | |
| Capital Costs | FS would need to meet the costs, or acquire grants, to fit out the VIC |

Recommendation

A small working group is formed to further explore the proposal.