

RAYLEIGH HERITAGE CENTRE WORKING PARTY

Minutes of Meeting held in the Rayleigh Town Council Chamber 26th June 2013

1...Attendees

Mike Davies, Cheryl Roe, Kerry Cumberland, Bruce Smart, Linda Smart, Spencer Welsh, David Geach, Tony Harvey, Sue Smith

2...Apologies:

Eddie Dray, Peter Waghorn, Peggy Corbett, Ron Choppen

Mike welcomed Sue as a new member of the Group and regrettably announced that Thelma Bowen has stood down as Secretary (position now vacant)

3...Minutes of the Last Meeting

Proposed by Dave and seconded by Spencer and signed by the Chairman.

4...Matters Arising

a... Kerry has drafted a letter to all schools/groups asking for support for the project. The meeting agreed that the letter can now be sent.

b...The exact measurement of the 6 rooms to be measured shortly, and will be circulated to all ASAP.

Item 6.2 c... Cheryl will advise RDC of the project. (Subsequently confirmed... Keith Gordon and Keith Hudson)

Item 6.4 d... RTC will be using Alan Simpson Sols

Item 6.5 e... visit to other Heritage Centres in hand when Peter returns from holiday.

5... Mike gave a brief update. There is much to do, in a restricted amount of time, and the viability of the project initially depends on the costing and planning agreement regarding the lift. Several members queried why the Heritage Trust is expected to purchase the lift (Todmans to make a donation of the amount). Mike could not answer, possibly tax reasons, and the question was also asked as to what would happen to ownership of the lift if the Heritage Centre closed.

ACTION.....Mike to raise with Todman Family Trust.

We are, at present in a "chicken and egg" situation. Unless and until the lift cost has been agreed, and Planning Application agreed by RDC and ongoing funding in place, together with Change of Use and Listed Building approval it is difficult to make too many detailed plans on the remainder of the project.

For example, there is no point setting up a Friends group yet (if the project does not proceed we will have to return all funds?) and to set up a website/Facebook etc will also cost, and may raise the public's expectations that the Centre will open shortly. Neither do we want to give out any negative indication that the centre may not open.

Spencer asked whether the centre was specifically Rayleigh related or would include other parts of Rochford. Mike said his view, especially at present, is to restrict to Rayleigh (he has already received a request from a Hockley historian for space,) and Kerry mentioned that as Rayleigh Town Council are providing a significant proportion of the funding they could not justify the spending if outside areas were to benefit from the Centre.

NOTE: agreed that the Heritage Centre is to be solely Rayleigh related.

Mike reconfirmed to the meeting that as previously agreed within Council all the Rayleigh Town Councillors, together with the Town Clerk, only attend the meetings as advisors and consultants. They will NOT participate in any of the detailed work of the group.

At this point Linda Smart stated that she wished only to work jointly with Bruce and as such would have to leave the group.

ACTION: Mike subsequently sent a note to Linda thanking her for her contribution and offering for her to be involved, at a later date, perhaps once the Centre is open.

Mike talked about the key aspect of Planning and that he could do with more help from other members of the group. (See list of tasks below)

NOTE: both Spencer and Tony agreed to assist, where possible, with the Planning Application formalities, Dave agreed to look into the “Friends” and Sue (with her daughter Gemma) will look into the website/Facebook etc)

Mike advised that he will, as a matter of urgency, speak with RDC about the Planning Application and the process we need to follow.

ACTION: Mike subsequently spoke with RDC Planning (Claire) who advised we can make one FULL planning application to cover a) Change of Use, b) installation of the lift & c) Listed Building Consent. The cost of the application is £385 (vat inclusive). The applicant does not need to be the owner, but does need to advise the owner and any other tenants. The advice is to submit all the details at once (to include the drawings from the Lift Company—no other drawings required). The process, which COULD be agreed by Officers, and confirmed by Councillors, should take in the region of 6-8 weeks. The change of use will be from A2 to D2. The Essex County Council Heritage adviser (Robin Carpenter—who knows the property) will comment on the Planning application

We could apply for Pre Planning advice at a cost of £120, but should the full application be refused we have up to one year to resubmit at no extra cost.

NOTE: Mike established that although the fees are reduced by 50% for Town/Parish Councils and Sports clubs NO such discount is available to Registered Charities. It is not known whether RDC have any discretion, but Mike was advised by RDC that recent applications by other local charities have paid the full fee. Mike will raise with Mark Francois.

Mike outlined the various tasks that need to be actioned as a matter of urgency by appropriate members of the committee.

1.....Planning Application to RDC.....

PRIORITY ONE Mike with Spencer and Tony

2...Find a Solicitor to act for the Trust (not Todmans/or Alan Simpson as conflict of interest)

PRIORITY ONE Mike

3...Prepare a survey for residents to confirm need for a Heritage Centre (part of Heritage Lottery Grant)

PRIORITY TWO Sue will investigate with Mike

4... Ascertain how much we need to raise for set up and ongoing costs and submit Lottery application.

PRIORITY ONE ???

5... Set up a Friends Group

PRIORITY TWO David

6...Set up a website/Facebook etc

PRIORITY TWO Sue

7...Arrange lease with Todmans and rental agreement with RTC

PRIORITY TWO Mike

8...Set up a Registered Charity (helps with Lottery/Gift Aid/VAT)

PRIORITY ONE ???

9...Contact other Essex Heritage Centres/Museums/ERO for advice and guidance

PRIORITY ONE Tony and Eddie

10... Consider volunteers to work in Centre (hours etc)

PRIORITY TWO ???

11... Consider what items in what rooms/furniture/themes

PRIORITY TWO ???

12....Consider local "Corporate Sponsorship

PRIORITY ONE ???

I am sure the list could be added to

I have given, what I consider, the prioritisation of this list, please feel free to suggest any alternatives. But I feel there is no point in dealing with detailed plans of the "low "priority items if the project does not proceed.

Mike requested that members consider which tasks they would like to work on (either individually or jointly and send him an e-mail (copied to everyone please)

The current tenants of the property we wish to take over vacate in July. Therefore the Todman Family Trust will not receive any rental income from August. They are fully aware that our Working Group will take time to complete all the formalities to both the satisfaction, of the Family Trust as well as RTC, however we will not have an indefinite time to deal with. I am sure that Robert will put down a timescale, possibly 3 months.

Mike is still looking for suitable people to join the group. Sue is now on board; another has declined (unfortunately) and hopes to be able to confirm another new face within a day or two.

Mike also mentioned that he is finding it somewhat difficult to both Chair the meeting and take the minutes at the same time.

Any advice/suggestions, volunteers would be appreciated.

Mike advised that we will have to make significant progress by the date of the next meeting otherwise by Todmans and RTC will start to question whether the project is viable.

Mike advised that he is on holiday from 13th to 20th July (but will be in e-mail contact if needs be!!)

9..... Date of Next Meeting

Cheryl stated that the committee needs as full attendance as possible and that perhaps an evening meeting might be more suitable. Accordingly the date of the next meeting has been set for; MONDAY 29th JULY at 6pm in the Town Council Chamber (meeting to last maximum of 1 hour).

30th June 2013