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## RAYLEIGH WINDMILL - LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates Members on the progress of the contract, development of the sensory garden, outcome of some public consultation and development of the launch strategy.
- 1.2 This report also advises Members on discussions leading to the formation of a partnership with the National Trust for their future involvement with this and allied projects.

### 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Following the award of the Thames Gateway grant of £340,000 for the refurbishment of the Rayleigh Windmill and the sensory garden, development of the Windmill and allied projects has moved forward.
- 2.2 The refurbishment contract commenced in December 2004, and significant progress has been made with the works, with completion expected in August 2005.
- 2.3 Initial meetings have been held with The National Trust on the partnership potential. Soundtrack have worked with the main contractor to install the electrical systems for the IT setup.
- 2.4 Discussions have also been held with a local artist, with a view to holding an exhibition in October / November as part of the launch. This would require funding from the Arts Council. This is currently at the planning stage and the Arts Council funding has not yet been confirmed.

### 3 DEVELOPING FUTURE USE

- 3.1 Having considered the options for each floor at a meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 31 January 2005, officers have been working with the Rayleigh Historical Society, the Essex Museums Service, the National Trust and Soundtrack to develop the floor usage as agreed. Further discussion is still required on final details, but this is ongoing. We do, however, need to reach conclusion fairly quickly.
- 3.2 The long term viability of this project is dependent on attracting community groups and other organisations. Officers have spoken to the Chambers of Trade to seek their support for this project, in terms of both moral and actual

support, as the increase in visitors that would accrue from the Windmill being successful would provide benefits to Rayleigh as a whole.

### 3.3 Outcome of Meeting on 16 May

Officers met with the Chambers of Trade for Rayleigh, Hockley and Rochford on 16 May to discuss the opportunity of sponsorship afforded by the Windmill refurbishment. A very positive response was made by the Chairmen of the Chambers and this will be followed up by officers.

### 3.4 National Trust

Further discussions have taken place with the National Trust (NT) on the project to develop the partnership. The following benefits have been identified to both parties and are being considered at both the local committee level and national level. The partnership is potentially the first between a Local Authority and the National Trust.

- **Identified Benefits to RDC**

1. Advice on internal arrangements within the museum environment in the Windmill.
2. Expansion of the NT Guardianship Scheme as part of the educational benefits.
3. Assistance in building the educational outreach work.
4. Educational information prepared on the Rayleigh Mount.
5. Access to the NT's advertising/publications.
6. Publicity to be jointly recognised/ jointly funded?
7. Access to the NT mobile exhibitions/ events/ displays.
8. Joint Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Policy for staff working with children and vulnerable adults.
9. Tourism advice.
10. Access to NT training programmes where capacity exists.
11. Possible support in management of the Windmill.
12. Access to the NT website.

- **Potential National Trust Requirements**

1. Access to Windmill for viewing Mount / display area.
2. Access to RDC land for Barbican Gate.
3. Promote NT in the local area.
4. Assistance with NT events.

The outcome of these discussions within the National Trust will be verbally reported as the local NT Committee is meeting on 25 May 2005 to take the matter forward.

### 3.5 Information Technology ( IT)

The opportunity to provide web access to the Windmill is a very positive link. The opportunity to create an archive of materials, especially containing documents already held by the Rayleigh Historical Society, will lead to the site becoming a research site, especially for local interest. It is the key to making much more material available than at present, especially within this relatively small building. The Essex Museums Service has had an initial look at the museum contents and discussions are being held with the Historical Society as to what should be retained for exhibition and what needs to be archived. This work will carry on after the official opening in April 2006, and may require further funding in future years.

The IT installation has been ongoing during the refurbishment, as all wiring is protected and covered. Camera positions have been set on each floor and inside the hood, to view the refurbished brake wheel and assembly. Positions have also been agreed for external cameras on the top, to provide panoramic views of the District. There are also internal cameras for security purposes.

A camera position has also been agreed on the rear of the windmill, to cover the sensory garden. All external cameras will have preset viewing positions, to prevent any misuse and issues of privacy of properties nearby.

It should be noted that Soundtrack are donating the large screen for the ground floor viewing area to the Council. This represents a saving in the sum of over £3,500. A letter of thanks will be sent to Soundtrack to thank them for this generous contribution.

#### **4 A STRATEGY FOR THE OPENING OF THE WINDMILL**

- 4.1 One of the key elements for this project is a launch strategy that gains maximum publicity for the Windmill, bearing in mind the official opening in April 2006. Following completion of the physical refurbishment, the following proposals are put forward for Members' consideration, as means of attracting interest in the Windmill:
- An open day in September for the public to view the finished building. The display material would comprise of photographic records of the refurbishment and detailed plans of the potential uses.
  - An exhibition in October / November by a prominent local artist who has worked with this Council before at Hockley Woods. This would be a two week event, involving internal exhibits and external lighting of the Windmill. This is still subject to Arts Council funding.
  - Opening of the sensory garden in December.
- 4.2 The physical works of refurbishment are programmed for completion by August 2005. The sensory garden work will commence in August, subject to

the appropriate consents, once the main site is clear and is programmed for completion in late November. The sensory garden could be opened to the public in November / December, to stimulate further public interest, although at this stage, the sensory garden will be a work in progress, with all hard construction completed and some of the planting, rather than a completed project.

- 4.3 Much work still needs to be completed for the educational package, museum displays and other internal detailing, before the Windmill is finally opened to the public. The Arts Development Officer (ADO) is working with the Museums Service, Libraries, Education and other bodies, to facilitate these elements. The interpretation for the displays will need to be developed, including a collections policy. This needs to be developed by the Rayleigh Historical Society, supported by the Museums Service, with assistance from the Council's ADO. This work will be ongoing after the opening of the Windmill as the archive is built up. The use of a consultant for the design is being considered but funding is tight and other ways of developing this may have to be found.

## **5 THE SENSORY GARDEN**

- 5.1 A Planning application for the sensory garden was submitted in March 2005. Consultation with the Council's Community Safety Team and the Police has been undertaken in relation to site security and it is likely that opening times will be restricted, to prevent misuse of the area and nuisance to the neighbours. It is anticipated that some of the work in developing the content of this garden, following its opening, will be facilitated through schools, disability groups and other community groups, to ensure continued public ownership of the garden.
- 5.2 Locking and unlocking of the sensory garden can be organised through the Leisure Contractor.

## **6 FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THE WINDMILL**

- 6.1 Discussions with the National Trust have indicated that management of the Windmill is carried out with a distinct split role. The security key holding will be made through the Leisure Contractor, Holmes Place, and the general day to day operation through volunteers from both the Historical Society and the National Trust Local Committee and any other volunteers who may wish to be involved. This will not require a substantial input from Holmes Place or additional staffing.
- 6.2 This will require the setting up of a management group, who would have overall control of events and bookings, with the Arts Development Officer or other appointed Council staff member, acting as facilitator. The exact format of this group is yet to be determined.

## 7 ONGOING PUBLICITY

As part of the ongoing publicity for the project, it is planned to include regular features outlining progress on the project in *Rochford District Matters* and a regular update on the website.

## 8 RISK IMPLICATIONS

### 8.1 Strategic Risk

The project offers the ability to realise the tourism, cultural and historical potential of this site and upgrade the area generally.

### 8.2 Operational Risk

The day to day management of the Windmill and sensory garden still has some operational issues to be resolved, but ongoing discussions with various organisations are starting to resolve them.

## 9 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Total budget for this scheme is £400,000. The current breakdown of costs is shown in the table below.

Item	Cost
Main Contract	£286,000
Sensory Garden	£ 32,000*
Information Technology	£ 25,000
Fees and other charges	£ 40,000
Sub total	£383,000
Internal cabinets etc.	£ 17,000**
Total	£400,000

\* Revised estimate

\*\* This item is yet to be formally costed and represents the balance of current funding and not the actual cost

- 9.2 Negotiation of the management arrangements with the leisure contractor is on hold at this stage. Depending on the type of management arrangements required this could necessitate an additional annual sum to be included in the leisure contract from April 2006.

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- 9.3 Depending on the uses that develop for the Windmill, there may be the opportunity to provide some income stream that would help offset any management costs. Exhibitions, meetings, possibly weddings, etc, are the likely incomes possible.
- 9.4 Once constructed in quality materials, the sensory garden should only require a small amount of maintenance to be included in the grounds maintenance contract. Costs will be provided as the design is completed.

### **Sponsorship**

- 9.5 As mentioned above, Soundtrack have agreed to donate the large format screen for the ground floor of the Windmill. Officers have also attended a meeting with the Chambers of Trade to raise the opportunity of sponsorship of events at the Windmill, and providing equipment, services and other means of support. The Chairmen of the Chambers of Trade were very supportive and felt that there were companies who would provide sponsorship. This is to be followed up by officers.
- 9.6 Some nurseries have also been approached with a view to support for the sensory garden, and once again two have indicated that they will provide some form of support, either with plants or other materials.
- 9.7 Officers have indicated that any sponsorship of the project will need to be supported with advertising or events named after sponsoring companies. This form of support should help extend the long term development of the Windmill.

## **10 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There is a legal obligation to maintain the Windmill as it is a Grade 2 listed building.

## **11 RECOMMENDATION**

- 11.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RECOMMENDS**
- (1) That it be agreed, in principle, that a Partnership with the National Trust be formed, with details of responsibilities, governance, etc, to be reported back to Committee in due course.
  - (2) That the strategy around the opening of the various elements of the project be agreed.
  - (3) That the use of sponsors to provide support for events/ equipment financially or in other forms in return for advertising be agreed.

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**Background Papers:**

None.

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