

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL COMPETITION

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates Members on the competition seeking design entries for a permanent memorial for the Holocaust.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Members will recall that only one entry had been received at the time of the last meeting. With new information to hand from the Arts Development Officer, and the interest shown by a local Architect, it may be opportune to reconsider the approach to the project. (A copy of the Architects letter is at Appendix A).

3 THE WAY FORWARD

- 3.1 At the time of drafting this report, no designs have been provided by the Architect. Any that are will be made available to Members of the Sub-Committee.
- 3.2 Meanwhile, the Arts Development Officer, who unfortunately cannot attend this meeting, has indicated that:
- People can have very strong views about public pieces of art, particularly those with a subject so emotive as the Holocaust. It is essential that they are well planned, and can demonstrate involvement from the whole community.
 - As the subject is distressing, and not one that many people choose to think about, there has to be an appropriate method of encouraging people to bring their ideas forward.
 - Those who suffered during World War II and other conflicts may not be able to produce a design, perhaps due to ill health, or because they don't think they have the skills, but it is important that these people feed into the scheme. They can inspire younger members of the community to realise the importance of remembrance, and highlight how events of the past do have a meaning in today's multi-cultural society, e.g. racism and bullying.
 - With a subject as potentially sensitive as this, it is important that cliché references are not the centre for the design, and specific religious or cultural references should be avoided.
 - The project should be given the appropriate time to develop to avoid any potential damage to the Council's reputation.

Given the already tight time scale, Members may consider it prudent to work with community groups of all ages to ensure the finished piece fully represents the views of a wide range of people. This could involve a professional artist working with the Council to encourage those involved to create an aesthetically pleasing memorial, thus clearly demonstrating being community led.

- 3.3 The options appear to be to carry on with the project, with or without designs from the Architect, with the current known costing, or to take a long view in order to fully engage with the community in a more structured way. This may introduce additional costs, discussed below, but may prove to be more acceptable, given the issues outlined above.
- 3.4 Were members minded to defer the execution of the project, the Holocaust Day 2004 would be remembered in a similar way to previous years.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Reputation Risk

The Council's reputation may be at risk if the public views the memorial in a negative way.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There will be cost implications in employing a professional artist to work with community groups.
- 5.2 A potential project plan, which could be launched on the Holocaust Memorial Day scheme would see approximately 5 days work in schools, community groups and individuals in order to develop and finalise designs. Approximate costs are £1000 - £1500. There is a strong possibility, but not conclusive at this stage, that this could be funded through a community grant scheme or similar sponsorship. The budget could be set as part of the design brief for the artist.
- 5.3 This does not include manufacture of the design.
- 5.4 Officer time will increase with the Arts Development Officers involvement.

6 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee determines the way forward.

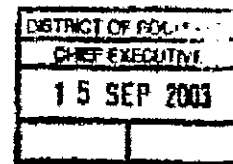
Paul Warren
Chief Executive

Background Papers:

None

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Ch Thomas

REF MON/PD/12.19.03/MON/LAP

Mr Paul Warren
Chief Executive
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12 September 2003

Dear Mr Warren

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL

I was interested to read in the Evening Echo that you have received little or no response in connection with your endeavours to develop a design for a Holocaust Memorial.

Unfortunately, we did not identify previously any of the published invitations in connection with the competition that you had intended.

Such a poor response is unfortunately a reflection on today's society generally, but should not discourage the authority in seeking to achieve the creation of a memorial to remind us of human failings whilst similarly providing hope for the future.

As a local architectural practice (based in Prittlewell – Southend-on-Sea), we would be more than pleased to become involved with such a project, and if it were of assistance to you would be pleased to meet and discuss this matter further.

In view of the nature of the project, and given that you were able to secure and fund the implementation of the project we would be pleased to offer design services at a nominal fee (say £50) which could be donated to your nominated charity in order to realise the scheme.

As architects we have a responsibility to create the world in which we all live, and this includes the need to encourage reflection on key and important issues.

If we can be of assistance please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Yours Sincerely

Mark O'Neill

PP Mark O'Neill