

Windmill Sub-Committee – 7 June 2005

Minutes of the meeting of the **Windmill Sub-Committee** held on **7 June 2005** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs M J Webster

Cllr C J Lumley
Cllr J M Pullen

Cllr J Thomass

OFFICERS PRESENT

D Timson	- Property Maintenance and Highways Manager
B Broadbent	- Principal Officer (Architecture)
C Coates	- Arts Development Officer
A George	- Revenues and Benefits Assistant
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

ALSO PRESENT

M Atkinson	- National Trust
N Grant	- Historical Society of Rayleigh
M Hawkins	- Historical Society of Rayleigh
S Lowy	- Essex Museums Service
S Skinner	- National Trust
M Stone	- National Trust
Cllr Mrs P Weaver	- Rayleigh Town Council

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr K Turner of the National Trust.

36 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs C J Lumley and J M Pullen each declared a personal interest in item 6 of the agenda by virtue of membership of the National Trust Rayleigh Mount Local Committee and of Rayleigh Town Council.

Cllr Mrs M J Webster declared a personal interest in item 6 of the agenda by virtue of being Vice-Chairman of the National Trust Rayleigh Mount Local Committee and a Member of Essex County Council.

Cllr Mrs P Weaver declared a personal interest in item 6 of the agenda by virtue of being a Member of Rayleigh Town Council.

38 RAYLEIGH WINDMILL – LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) updating Members on the progress of the contract, development of the sensory garden, outcome of the public consultation and development of the launch strategy. The report also updated Members on discussion leading to the formation of a partnership with the National Trust for their future involvement with this and allied projects.

It was anticipated that refurbishment of the windmill would be completed in early August.

Meetings had been held with the National Trust, who were very supportive of the project and had indicated that they would help as much as possible in terms of providing volunteers to staff the windmill and in providing displays. In turn this Authority would be providing the National Trust with a piece of land to the side of the windmill for the purpose of re-creating a Barbican entrance to Rayleigh Mount. The National Trust had agreed the partnership arrangements detailed in paragraph 3.4 of the officer's report. It was anticipated that such a partnership arrangement could lead to the possibility of the windmill being opened up 5 – 6 days per week.

All the I.T. wiring was now in place. There would be a static CCTV camera at the rear of the windmill to cover the sensory garden, cameras on the external cap at the top of the windmill to give panoramic views, CCTV cameras inside the windmill on each of the floors and a camera inside the hood for the purpose of viewing the refurbished brake wheel and assembly. The intention was that, ultimately, the rotating, panning cameras on each floor would be linked to the website.

Much work was now needed on developing future use of the windmill and on determining what items would be displayed. A working group meeting involving officers and representatives from the National Trust, the Essex Museums Service and the Historical Society of Rayleigh would be arranged as soon as possible so that these details could be discussed in more depth.

Although the windmill would not officially open to the public until April 2006 an open day would take place in September. Members of the public would be able to enter the windmill and see the finished building and look at a photo montage of the various stages of the refurbishment process. The open day would also be used to publicise the sensory garden.

Planning permission had now been granted for the sensory garden. Work on this would commence as soon as the refurbishment of the windmill had been completed. It was intended that some of the timber from the original sails could be recycled for use within the sensory garden. Talks were already taking place with local nurseries with respect to the sponsorship of flower beds within the garden.

The Council's Community Safety Officer had worked closely with the Police to ensure that any issues surrounding the security of the sensory garden were properly addressed. In addition to the CCTV camera, railings would be erected, which would give additional protection to neighbouring properties

Soundtrack had kindly donated the large screen for the ground floor viewing area. Local Chambers of Trade were enthusiastic about the prospect of sponsoring future events in the windmill.

A local artist was in the process of bidding to the Arts Council for funding to illuminate the exterior of the windmill for a 2-week period. The outcome of this bid should become known shortly. It was also hoped that a local competition might be launched featuring photographs of the windmill. In addition, it was hoped that one new piece of art work might be developed for the sensory garden each year created by local community groups. All such initiatives could only help keep alive publicity for the windmill and to raise its profile and gain community support.

It was noted that, with respect to the future management of the windmill, it was anticipated that Holmes Place would be consulted on providing a key holder service for the windmill, with the opening managed primarily by volunteers from the Historical Society of Rayleigh, the National Trust and local artists. This kind of arrangement would require a management board that would control the kinds of events held at the windmill and bookings; this would best be done by the Council, with the possibility of additional staff resources within the Leisure Section.

Responding to an enquiry relating to the timescale for the interpretive display of the District, officers advised that this should be available by April 2006. It would be possible to place a scale model of the castle as it was formerly later than this. The windmill project was ongoing and would be further developed over some time after the official opening in April.

Some concern was expressed about the relatively tight timescale in order to properly plan what items would be displayed within the windmill. It was, however, noted that this was largely due to the nature of the Thames Gateway funding, which had to be spent within a very specific timescale. It was recognised that space within the windmill was limited and that the working group would work to ensure that displays would be coherent and cohesive.

Officers advised that there was the potential for a small, additional cost associated with essential maintenance work on the fan wheel assembly and on the poor condition of brickworks discovered on opening up the window apertures. There would be ongoing maintenance associated with the sensory garden, and this would be incorporated into the Council's grounds maintenance contract. Local nurseries had indicated that they would donate plants for the sensory garden in return for sponsorship. A meeting would take place with the National Trust with a view to making use of National Trust

expertise rather than employing a consultant.

A bid would need to be made against the revenue budget for an additional staff post associated with the control of future events at the windmill and associated booking. In addition, the windmill would require routine maintenance, the hood, for example, would need to be re-painted every six years. It was hoped that Rayleigh Town Council might consider making a contribution towards the maintenance costs associated with the windmill.

In response to an enquiry relating to the staffing of the reception area, officers confirmed that the reception would be staffed by volunteers. It was anticipated that one person would be required to staff the windmill at any one time, due to the restricted numbers of people that could visit and due to the fact that there would be the ability to isolate individual floors by means of the glass screens. It was, however, recognised that more staffing would be required in the event of, for example, school visits. This would be an issue that the working group would need to address.

On a Motion moved by Cllr Mrs M J Webster and seconded by Cllr C J Lumley it was:-

Recommended to the Community Services Committee

- (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, as detailed in the report, 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.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and closed at 11.25 am.

Chairman

Date