

Windmill Sub-Committee – 22 November 2005

Minutes of the meeting of the **Windmill Sub-Committee** held on **22 November 2005** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs M J Webster

Cllr C J Lumley

Cllr J M Pullen

OFFICERS PRESENT

D Timson	- Property Maintenance and Highways Manager
B Broadbent	- Principal Officer (Architecture)
C Coates	- Arts Development Officer
L Jeffreys	- Leisure Client Officer
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

ALSO PRESENT

J Churchill	- Historical Society of Rayleigh
N Grant	- Historical Society of Rayleigh
M Hawkins	- Historical Society of Rayleigh
S Lowy	- Essex Museums Service
V Senatore	- National Trust
S Skinner	- National Trust
Cllr Mrs P Weaver	- Rayleigh Town Council

41 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 August 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors C J Lumley and J M Pullen each declared a personal interest in Rayleigh Windmill 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 Rayleigh Windmill by virtue of being Vice-Chairman of the National Trust Rayleigh Mount Local Committee and a Member of Essex County Council.

Town Councillor Mrs P Weaver declared a personal interest in Rayleigh Windmill by virtue of being a member of Rayleigh Town Council.

43 RAYLEIGH WINDMILL

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) advising Members on the completion of the contract, development of the sensory garden, development of management arrangements for the future of the Windmill and progress of the launch

strategy.

Officers advised that the bid for further funding for the project had been submitted to Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE) and had been referred to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for a decision. A recent officer meeting held with the Historic Society of Rayleigh and Essex Museums Service had concluded that it would be possible to achieve a museum display by April 2006, but that this was subject to a successful outcome for the TGSE bid, as a consultant would need to be appointed to design the interior of the windmill display system. Officers advised that, in the event of the TGSE bid being unsuccessful, provision was being sought as part of the Council's budget process, for additional funding for the Windmill. Budget provision would also be included to cover staff resources and the revenue costs for running the building.

There was an overwhelming response to the Rayleigh Windmill open day, which was very well attended. There had also been very positive feedback from the Big Draw Event held at the Windmill during half-term. The floodlights had been turned on at a special ceremony, which had been well attended and the Windmill looked remarkable lit up at night.

It was reported that students from South East Essex College (SEEVIC), from Art and Design, Art A-level and BA Honours Animation courses, had visited the Windmill and completed artwork there. Discussions were taking place with the Fine Arts Department about the possibility of students developing pieces of art that could be displayed in the Windmill.

Officers reported that the contract for the sensory garden construction works was out to tender and it was anticipated that works would begin early in the New Year. Officers hoped to make a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £5,000 for an artist to work on a piece of art, either with schools or community groups, which could be unveiled during the official opening of the sensory garden.

It was noted that officers were exploring the legalities of whether it might be possible to license the Windmill for weddings.

During Member debate it was noted that there would be merit in exploring whether students from SEEVIC or the APU in Chelmsford might be interested in visiting the Windmill as part of their studies.

Members also observed that, with respect to community use of the Windmill, it was possible that younger people might make heavier use of the building, on the basis that the stairs would be difficult for the elderly to negotiate.

During discussion of potential exhibitions within the Windmill it was noted that the Holy Trinity Church would be prepared to loan deeds going back to the 17th century and ledgers which recorded details of, for example, school grants to Rayleigh students and details of those people receiving free coal in

Rayleigh, such details going back around 120 years. It was further noted that the Town Council would be able to provide some Anglia in Bloom Pictures, which would tie in well with the new sensory garden.

Concern was expressed that an unsuccessful TGSE bid could result in the museum exhibition not being available by April 2006; there was the danger that the momentum gained as a result of the open day and other events could be lost if an exhibition was not available by April. Although Members concurred that it was obviously beneficial, in terms of the Windmill's profile, to have events planned within the Windmill in the run up to the official opening, it was also recognised that people in Rayleigh would also like to see some of the District's history on display. Members felt that there would be merit in exploring the possibility of a temporary museum exhibition being placed in the Windmill early in the New Year. It was further noted that the public interest in the Windmill was such that every effort should be made to re-open it as soon as possible to the general public on Saturdays.

Members considered the draft management agreement outlining the management arrangements for the Rayleigh Windmill and setting out responsibilities and roles for the future use of the Windmill. It was noted that the Management Group would have the task of developing long term ambitions for the Windmill, which would, in time result in an action plan.

During debate, the following amendments were noted:-

- Membership of the Management Group to include two Members of Rochford District Council and one Member of Rayleigh Town Council.
- Section 4 of the Agreement should be re-titled to reflect that it is a summary of the aspirations of the Management Group with respect to Rayleigh Windmill.
- In item 4.2, "registered museum" should be replaced by "accredited museum".
- In item 4.3, the first sentence of the second paragraph should read: "The NTLC will also seek to maintain and enhance its existing Guardianship Scheme and to reach other schools by means of a range of activities."

During discussion of rates for hiring the Windmill for commercial events, there was a general consensus that this should be in line with the Council's existing charges for hiring rooms at the Civic Suite, ie, £17.00 for 3 hours, per floor of the Windmill. This should be reviewed periodically, particularly in the event of high demand for the building. Members further concurred that the Management Group should determine reduced charging rates for charities and community organisations.

It was noted that a new lease agreement was required for the Historical Society of Rayleigh to replace the old lease, which had been formally

terminated. It was recognised that, given that the Historical Society would have permanent, exclusive use of one floor and that a lease would be required for credited museum status, a new lease agreement would be required. Members all agreed that the lease should be in the sum of £500 per annum, to be grant funded each year by Rochford District Council.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to revenue from commercial hiring of the Windmill, officers advised that revenue would go to Rochford District Council to offset against any unexpected costs associated with the Windmill, such as vandalism.

Responding to a further enquiry relating to CRB checks, officers confirmed that, in addition to all volunteers working in the building, all those commercially hiring the building for events involving children would also require CRB checks.

Members expressed concern that it could be difficult to control any potential incidences of youngsters congregating on the stairs inside the Windmill and causing trouble. It was, however, noted that volunteers' induction training would cover such issues and that there were, in addition, highly visible CCTV cameras both inside and outside the Windmill. Although it was perceived that charging an entrance fee could help deter potential troublemakers, it was nevertheless felt that a donation box would encourage more visitors and more repeat visitors to the Windmill and could potentially result in a higher revenue for the Windmill than a static entrance fee. There was a general consensus among Members that there would be merit in the Management Group considering whether or not an entrance fee should be charged.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to the possibility of setting up a Friends of Rayleigh Mill organisation, officers confirmed that this was currently being investigated, as it offered the potential for increased numbers of volunteers for the Windmill and increased revenue.

Recommended to the Community Services Committee:-

- (1) That the progress of the development of this project be noted.
- (2) That the principle of management arrangements, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be agreed, subject to the amendments listed below and that final negotiations proceed with the other parties involved:
 - Membership of the Management Group to include two Members of Rochford District Council and one Member of Rayleigh Town Council.
 - Section 4 of the Agreement should be re-titled to reflect that it is a summary of the aspirations of the Management Group with respect

to Rayleigh Windmill.

- In item 4.2, “registered museum” should be replaced by “credited museum”.
 - In item 4.3, the first sentence of the second paragraph should read: “The NTLC will also seek to maintain and enhance its existing Guardianship Scheme and to reach other schools by means of a range of activities.”
- (3) That the appointment of a consultant be agreed to design the interior of the windmill display system, subject to a successful outcome of the bid to TGSE.
- (4) That the commercial rate for hiring the Windmill should be based on the lower rate of £17.00 for 3 hours for a room, as set out in the report, per floor of the Windmill and that the Management Group should determine a reduced charging policy for charities and community organisations.
- (5) That a new lease be drawn up for the Historical Society of Rayleigh, at a cost of £500 per annum, to be grant funded each year by Rochford District Council.
- (6) That officers liaise with the Historical Society of Rayleigh to explore the possibility of a temporary museum exhibition being developed, to be placed in the Windmill early in the New Year. (CD(F&ES))

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and closed at 11.45 am.

Chairman

Date