

Notes of the meeting of the Almonry Community Heritage Project Working Group
January 23rd, 2018

Present :

BTC David Furness, Margaret Howell, Margaret Kiloh, Carol Harris
BMLH Robert Emeleus,
RVA Gina Sanderson

Purpose of the Meeting

1. To discuss making a grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund
2. To take advice from Gina Sanderson on the content of the application and the application process

Background

Planning permission has now been received for changes to the Almonry building to accommodate a Community Hub/Heritage Centre. The Council is now looking for funding.

It was explained that an initial enquiry to the Heritage Lottery Fund had been made and a response received in 2015. The original proposal contained some elements which have now changed (eg positioning of the town model in the Almonry) but the main objectives, including the creation of an education area, the opening up of the building to the community and the celebration of the heritage of Battle since 1066 remain the same.

The deadline for Stage 1 applications to the Fund is 16 August 2018, after which the guidelines will change.

Gina Sanderson explained that she had been involved with Rye's application to the HLF with a number of others. She advised that the application should pay close attention to the HLF guidelines, the response to the initial enquiry and advice from the nominated officer dealing with Battle's proposal.

The focus should not only be on bricks and mortar and capital expenditure. HLF are interested in ways to involve the community in heritage projects so as well as the development of the Almonry the proposal can include other heritage activities such as the location of the town model in the market square, the museum's educational programme and the St Valery tapestry project. Linkage with English Heritage and plans for Battle Abbey would also be useful. Together this would provide a heritage 'thread' through the town for visitors and residents.

The application must establish that there is a need for the proposed project, what consultation has taken place and what the benefit to the community and to heritage will be. Letters of support from bodies such as Rother DC, the CAB, Beautiful Battle, Battle Festival and Battle Photographic Society which are likely to use the new facilities are important. Even more important is a demonstration of community support by active involvement in the proposal of a wide spectrum of local organisations, institutions (such as schools) and individuals.

Gina said that she was willing to help with the bid but not to attend meetings. Help is also available from HLF, Rother and East Sussex museum networks, Rye Museum, 1066 Marketing and other sources. A trip to visit the successful Rye project and an example of a successful application could also be arranged. Information on what to include in costings is contained in Sections 7 and 9 of the Guidelines. The £30,000 matched funding required can include volunteer time and expenses as well as paid for services.

Discussion

It was noted that the original objectives for the project – preserving and opening-up the Almonry building to the public, creating an education area and archive reading room, interpreting and explaining the history of the Almonry and of Battle since 1066 – are still valid. The exhibition of the town model and creation of a Tourist Information Centre could also be included as part of the wider project and the creation of a heritage thread.

In order to flesh out the proposal and gain community support it would be necessary to include different groups and individuals and identify strategic partners (either formal or informal) in the project. Support from English Heritage would be very valuable and the role of BMLH would be very important, especially in relation to links with schools and the development of an education programme. Other potential partners include the Chamber of Commerce, Battle and District Historical Society and the BVADC. Individuals such as David Martin could contribute a lot at the second application stage when more details are required.

Agreed

It was agreed that in order to meet the August deadline the Town Council should proceed quickly and should invite potentially interested parties to take part in a meeting to discuss the possibility of their input to the project.

There should be a presentation on the project at the Town Assembly on April 24th.