

Present: Councillor Judith Skinner (Chairman), Councillor Tracey Abbott (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Peter Bedford, George Cornah, Anton Dani, Deborah Evans, Paul Goodale, Neill Hastie, Peter Watson and Judith Welbourn

In attendance:

Officers –
Head of Environmental Operations, Head of Place and Space, Museum Officer and Democratic Services Officer

46 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were tabled by Councillor David Brown Portfolio Holder.

47 MINUTES

With the agreement of the committee the Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting.

48 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations were recorded

49 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions were tabled

50 THE PILGRIMS 2020 AND ALLIED OPPORTUNITIES (UPDATE)

The Head of Place and Space addressed the meeting and confirmed that the update report was tabled at the request of the committee and been relocated to the Guildhall to allow all attendees to view the exhibits which were noted within the report.

At this point in the proceedings The Museum's Events & Venue Officer escorted members of the committee and guests from the public gallery around the Guildhall to view the new exhibition 'Pilgrims and the Thread to America', which shared a complex and compelling tale of intrigue and influence. It explored Boston's role in the Pilgrims' story and also the later founding of Boston, Massachusetts, in 1630. The exhibition also included original documents on loan from the Lincolnshire Archives, which had never before been on public display together.

The thread that linked the story of the Pilgrims in Boston to the puritans, who left for America in 1630, was a Boston cloth dealer, Leonard Beetson.

Mr Beetson who was arrested with known Pilgrims including William Brewster and William Bradford, never joined them in their eventual escape and chose instead to remain in Boston, England. Mr Beeston went on to become a Boston councillor who knew John Cotton, the charismatic and influential vicar of St. Botolph's Church.

Mr Beeton passed away before the Cotton Congregation began their movement in 1630 from Boston, UK over to Boston, America. John Cotton himself settled in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1633.

During the tour of the exhibits members and guests were able to walk in the footsteps of Mr Beeton and his accomplices, viewing the prison cells and the court room where they were tried.

The Museum's Events & Venue Officer also provided update information in respect of events for 2020 in relation to the exhibitions together with commercial activities held within the Guildhall.

Following the tour the Head of Place and Space reminded the meeting that in May 2016 Plymouth had secure £500k in funding from Visit England to promote the Mayflower Pilgrims story overseas. Boston's businesses had directly benefitted from travel journalists and bloggers who had produced positive copy promoting the town and the events. Referencing the development of Illuminate the Head of Place and Space confirmed that match funding of £10k had been agreed by the Council to support a bid for Arts Council England for £100k.

Events in respect of the American connection had been maximised allowing the public to engage in the Pilgrims experience.

The changing understanding of Boston's association with the Pilgrim story outlined in the exhibition, had also led Officers to determine that a further bid to Arts Council England for additional research and interpretation was needed to further develop the exhibition to encompass Boston's influence both locally and internationally as we lead up to Boston 2030 and the celebration of the founding of Boston Massachusetts.

Referencing the Structures on the Edge sculpture project for Havenside close to the Pilgrim Memorial on the sea bank, the Head of Place and Space confirmed the Arts Council England, LCC & BBC funded project had—been delayed until the summer/autumn. The reason for the delay was due to Environment Agency engineering works re-profiling the Sea Banks as part of the ongoing flood protection works which have included the Boston Barrier project.

Committee were referred to hard copy placements identifying a further Arts Council England, Boston Big Local (BBL), the Environment Agency and Boston Borough Council funded project to be delivered in partnership with the University of Lincoln's Transported Arts programme and Boston in Bloom. This project concerns the artistic interpretation of six Maritime Navigation Buoys recovered from the wash and the Committee was advised that the three artists commissioned, were of either national or international status. The buoys would be placed at key locations in and around the town centre representing and reflecting elements of the town's historic and contemporary stories: they would also provide a trail for visitors and residents alike to follow, where two buoys would have mosaics designs added depicting Boston's social history. One placed in Central Park and one placed on the B&M side of the footbridge. Two buoys would have metal plants sculptures added and placed either side of the Haven Bridge and two buoys would have cut steel forming 'seascapes' added and would be placed on the bus station roundabout/raised bed and opposite the Black sluice pumping station.

Member comment and questioning followed which included:

On questioning the process of agreeing the artistic scheme and timing of delivery of the bouys, a member was advised that consultations and workshops had taken place with councillors; community groups and residents and all three artists had submitted concepts during the tender process. Delivery of the completed bouys was not yet confirmed but it was hoped it would be within a year.

Responding to a question about allocation of a bouy to a local allotment site, the Head of Place and Space advised that there were a further 9 bouys available. Initial enquiries for interest included possible additional locations at the RSPB at Frampton Marsh, Willoughby Road Allotments, Boston Railway Station and within the Parish of Fishtoft.

The Chairman sought confirmation of the Illuminate event within the market place and was advised it would take place. Furthermore a national moment was being planned which Plymouth would lead on.

Voicing concerns in respect of possible damage to the bouys, a member questioned locating one within Central Park, stating they felt it would be open to vandalism and costly to maintain: noting the proposed bouy at the Black Sluice site the member further intoned it too could be subject to vandalism and it would be better in a raised position where it could not be open to physical touch.

The Head of Place and Space advised that all of the bouys and their locations would be risk assessed: he also reminded members that the boys were in excess of 2 tonnes each and very sturdy. The artists had been advised that the materials they intended to use needed to be robust and although there is always risk in such projects, to date in there has not been a real problem with vandalism at sites with public art added in recent years, such as the B & M site.

Questioning the number of American visitors into the town as a result of the 2020 events, a member asked how effective the bloggers and journalists had been following promotion of the town. The Head of Place and Space noted that any information would be anecdotal but on-line enquiries via the tourist information site continued to increase.

51 WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman confirmed that the next scheduled meeting of the committee would be a two item agenda, consideration of the Corporate Plan and deliberation of the quarter three performance reporting with a view to structuring the work programme for the forthcoming year. Members were also advised that an initial invitation to the Corporate and Community committee to hold that meeting as a Joint Scrutiny meeting, to allow both committee's to work together in deliberation of the Corporate Plan had been declined.

Updating on the work of the Task and Finish review, the Chairman advised that it was progressing well. A recent meeting with the Council's Licensing and Land Charges Manager, together with Sgt. Enderby and PC. McConville of Lincolnshire Police had proven to be very enlightening with significant recommendations resulting to address the outcomes of the public consultation and initial meeting with support services within the town.

The next meeting of the review was scheduled for March 17th 2020 when the group would consider the work to date and look to identify any further representation it wished to receive.

The Head of Environmental Operations drew members attention to the two Inquiry evenings (scheduled for Car Parking Income and then Fly Tipping) which had resulted from the committee's last meeting in January whilst considering the quarter two performance reporting. He further noted his support of the work of the review group in helping to drive service improvements.

The Meeting Closed at 8.00 pm