

Notes of the Godmanchester 800 Meeting held on 22nd October 2009

Location: Queen Elizabeth School

Time: 1930 hrs

Present

David Brown, Richard Brown, Ros Brown, David Busk, Alan Hooker, Peter Irving, Ann Looker (Chair), Charles Looker (Scribe), Nigel Pauley, Steven Spencer, David Taylor, John Thackray, Christopher Vane Percy, Aletta Wilson, Sue Worthington, Jonathan Young, Sue Young

Apologies

Malcolm Cohen, Trish Harewood, Lynda Heseltine, Peter Heseltine, Ken Sneath, Pam Sneath, David Stokes, Mary Stokes

The following notes are in subject order and not necessarily chronological order.

Ann Looker, in the Chair, welcomed members of the Godmanchester 800 Group and thanked them for coming. She announced that Ken Sneath was planning to publish his book on the history of Godmanchester in the anniversary year.

During the general discussion, David Busk made the very useful distinction between the three types of thing we were trying to do to mark the anniversary:

1. Physical structures which would show future generations that we had marked the anniversary and thought it important.
2. Events to celebrate the anniversary which we would enjoy in 2012.
3. Using the occasion to set up something of value to the community.

Funding

The possibility of raising money as donations from residents was discussed. It was thought that after the next meeting, there would be more to report to people on ideas for the celebrations. A leaflet could be delivered to all houses, possibly with envelopes for cash which could be collected later. Any collection could be done in the name of Godmanchester Community Association which is a registered charity. Nigel Pauley would come to the next meeting with thoughts on how this could be done, together with likely costs. A small amount spent on publicity at this stage (next spring) was considered a good investment. Publicity could also be provided by holding a stall on Gala Day in 2010 and 2011.

Collecting money from the public for attending events was discussed. This is difficult/impossible on the Recreation Ground, because it is public open space, but Sue Worthington would investigate.

John Thackray and Charles Looker would investigate possibilities of grants from grant-awarding trusts etc., e.g. Heritage Lottery.

When funds were received they would go into a Community Association account.

Dates

A small group, Richard and Ros Brown, John Thackray, Alan Hooker and Mary Stokes, had met with an event specialist, Howard Giles, (see below) and following this it was thought that the main event should be separate from Godmanchester Gala Day and that other events should be clustered around this. The weekend before Gala Day was proposed and accepted and it was suggested that a number of events could take place in the intervening week.

Town Sign

Peter Irving, Stephen Spencer and Alan Hooker would bring costs and designs (not specific to Godmanchester) to the next meeting.

Other Structures/Sculptures/Historical Plaques

Charles Looker would ask Pam Sneath, and David and Mary Stokes to bring costs, designs and suggested locations to the next meeting. Christopher Vane Percy also wished to be involved.

Aletta Wilson is a professional mosaic artist. If a location could be found, perhaps an otherwise unattractive wall, she could design and create a mosaic, but she would like to involve local schoolchildren who could produce parts of the mosaic. A suggestion was made of the Vicarage wall. Aletta would contact the schools and report on likely costs at the next meeting.

Jonathan Young suggested boundary posts, e.g. carved wood, or cast iron to be placed at points where roads, or rights of way cross the parish boundary. It was thought that the people investigating the Town Sign would be speaking to people who could also make such posts. Jonathan would work with this group to get costs and designs, and would create a list of possible locations.

Coffee Shop for the Community

Ann Looker had put David Busk in touch with Alan Hufford, Chairman of the Senior Citizens, so that tentative discussions could proceed on the use of the Town Hall.

Royal Visit

Any request for a royal visit would have to go from the Town Mayor to the Lord Lieutenant's office.

Church Restoration

Christopher Vane Percy pointed out that the Church needed major restoration and that 2012 would be a year to focus fund-raising efforts on.

Son-et-lumière/Pageant

In the absence of anyone who was prepared to direct/produce a pageant it was decided to abandon the idea. However, Christopher Vane Percy, with the help of Nigel Pauley who had a contact who regularly produced son-et-lumières, would investigate the possibility of a son-et-lumière. The difficulty was finding a location. Possibilities included: inside the Church, or, on a large scale, the Town viewed from the Recreation Ground. Internal locations for son-et-lumières were unusual, but had been used.

Re-enactment/Medieval Games

Following the meeting of a small group with Howard Giles, the event specialist (see above) and based on his advice, it was recognised that the expenditure of approximately £10K would ensure that a significant event occurred in 2012, i.e. at the weekend before Gala Day. That having been done, it would give encouragement to any home-grown efforts to extend it and produce other events around it. It was agreed to recommend to the Town Council that this sum be spent on an organised event. Howard Giles' company is EventPlan, who organised the Huntingdon celebrations. It was considered that the Recreation Ground was an ideal site, by any standards. The event recommended was on a through-the-ages theme, which worked better than a single period and would involve a number of different re-enactment groups.

Richard and Ros Brown, Alan Hooker, and Mary Stokes would make contact with Howard Giles to get further details, including what facilities we needed to provide.

Extensions to the main event could be sited on the Causeway, if it could be closed, which Nigel Pauley would investigate with the County Councillors.

Literary Competition

Trish Harewood, who had given her apologies, had left a message saying that she had formed the judging panel for this. The meeting considered that this project was proceeding in good time.

“Gardeners’ Question Time”

A request had been made by Godmanchester in Bloom. It was hoped that the programme could be broadcast/recorded as near as possible to the other events.

Aerial Events

In view of the fact that Port Holme was one of the original locations for air races, Stephen Spencer was making enquiries with the Red Bull Air Race Team. However, Ann Looker reported that Malcolm Cohen was making enquiries with the Red Arrows. Some co-ordination would be required.

Logo

Ann and Charles Looker would contact Lawrence Back regarding the possibility of his designing a Godmanchester 800 logo.

Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting would be 28th January, 2010, at the Queen Elizabeth School.