

# 800 COMMITTEE MEETING

Held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010 at the Queen Elizabeth School Godmanchester

## MINUTES

### APOLOGIES

Pam Sneath, Ken Sneath, Jonathan Young, Richard and Ros Brown

### PRESENT

David Brown (**DB**), Colin Hyams (**CH**), Nigel Pauley (**NP**), Jo Mackenzie (**JM**), Alan Martin (**AM**), Christopher Vane-Percy (**CVP**), Peter Heseltine (**PH**), Linda Heseltine (**LH**), Debbie Middleton (**DM**), John Thackray (**JTH**), Kevin Taylor (**KT**), Richard Meredith (**RM**), Sue Young (**SY**), Charles Looker (**CL**), Anne Looker (**AL**), Peter Irving (**PI**), David Busk (**DB**), Mavis Savage (**MS**) Stephen Spencer (**SS** CHAIR), Alan Hooker (**AH** MINUTES), Ken Savage (**KS**, SIGN PRESENTATION)

### INTRODUCTION

As Malcolm Cohen had resigned as Town Mayor David Brown, Deputy Mayor, took his place. David explained the position of the Town Council with regard to its need to review its future spending plans. In light of the cut backs necessary in the next financial year he stated that the £5000 promised for contribution from the 2010 precept would not happen. The contributions from the 2011 and 2012 would be reviewed in light of the future economic climate. He confirmed that the £5000 contribution from 2009 had been ring fenced and was available. He re-assured the committee of the Town Councils commitment to support its activities.

Town Councillor Nigel Pauley assisted **DB** with the introduction by confirming that he and Malcolm Cohen had convened a meeting with Stephen Spencer (acting chair) and Alan Hooker (treasurer) to convey the Town Councils inability to fund the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations to the level that had been originally suggested. He outlined the councils feeling that the 800 committee should look into ways of raising its own funds in light of the shortfall. The council also felt it would be useful to have a more structured business plan from the committee to help justify future funding. He felt an alternative or new objective could be to make Gala week and weekend in 2012 'the best ever'. This could include closing the causeway for the weekend and having events there also. He confirmed the County Councils thought that this would be possible. David Brown concluded the introduction by reaffirming the council's confidence in the ability of the committee to make 2012 a memorable year.

### ELECTION OF CHAIR

As it was felt in some quarters that the election of a new chairperson at the last meeting was somewhat sudden and not mentioned in the minutes, Stephen Spencer had decided to step down to enable other candidates for the post to come forward. David Brown invited nominations from the floor and confirmed none had been received prior to the meeting. With no response from the floor **DB** nominated Stephen Spencer for the post of 800 Committee chair person, **NP** seconded the motion and a show of hands was unanimously for Stephen's acceptance. **SS** took his place and thanked the meeting for accepting him. **SS** requested that Alan Hooker join him to take minutes as there was some confusion over this post caused by **AH** issuing the agenda for the meeting at the request of the sub-finance committee previously mentioned.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM 22-10-09**

John Thackray proposed they be accepted.

A brief discussion ensued on the status of the committee and the way forward given the councils current financial position. **DB** wanted to re-affirm the 3 targets for the committee previously suggested by David Busk which he felt were a useful target. Namely:-

1. A CELEBRATION – Events to celebrate the anniversary to be enjoyed in 2012.
2. A PHYSICAL STRUCTURE – A town sign? Or something to be seen as commemorating the event.
3. VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY – Using the occasion to instigate an ongoing service or something of value to the community, i.e. a coffee shop.

**JTH** voiced his concerns that we seemed to be going backwards given the time and effort already invested over the last year or so. At the last meeting we had voted positively on a main event which now appeared to be a wasted effort, and asked were we now looking at the prospect of starting all over again? **SS** confirmed that yes; we now had to rethink where we were going with the projects worked on given the financial situation. Whereas other towns were able to borrow to fund events and had big budgets for events, we did not. We had to be realistic and make a big effort to raise extra funds ourselves if we wanted all that we had previously expected. **SS** outlined a fundraiser that the Community Association were working on that would include as many people as possible committing to purchasing shares in a '800 Club'. Essentially £1 shares per month to be sold in 12 month blocks. Each month a draw would enable 50% of the take to be given out as prizes, i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> £250, 2<sup>nd</sup> £100, 3<sup>rd</sup> £50. **AH** suggested that if we had everyone's e-mail address that had a stake we could easily keep everyone involved in the £400 per month prize winners announcements. **SS** suggested that if it was as successful as he hoped this could raise £4800 per year towards the cause so all was not lost if we put our minds to it and worked at fundraising positively. **PI** commented that the church had a similar 100 club and the key was to get enough people purchasing. **SS** commented that he envisaged most people having more than the basic £1 stake, i.e. £5 - £10 - £20 per month? Debbie Middleton felt we should have a 'fresh framework' with a more open information set up to get more people informed and involved. During the general discussion **NP** pointed out that the council could only decide on its financial commitments on a year on year basis. Anne Looker pointed out that at the last meeting Charles Looker had stated we could only count on the funds given in the current year as all else was speculation and anything we wanted to spend money on still had to be approved by the council. **SS** reaffirmed his confidence in the committee being able to pull a rabbit out of the hat and make it work.

## **MATTERS ARISING**

### **Funding - General.**

As we had already spent some time on this the discussion moved on.

### **Funding – Grants.**

**JTH** confirmed that he and **CL** had been looking into this and had accumulated various forms and discussed with people at Huntingdon Council their experience and success at raising money from these avenues. **SS** asked if these potential grants were match funded, i.e. money had to be in place to start with to match a grant to. **JTH** confirmed that some were. **CL** suggested that we earmark £5000 as a start budget towards the weekend pageant, loosely referred to as 'the re-enactment group' and try to get a £10K grant towards the balance. **JTH** thought Huntingdon had got somewhere in the region of £35K for theirs. **JTH** and **CL** agreed to move their grant chasing activities forwards into 'try everything' mode.

Richard Meredith introduced himself as an active member of the civic society with experience of organising events. He noted that a successful activity he had experience of was a bi-monthly community forum to

encourage fund raising within the local groups/populous. This would explore fundraising activities and make use of the press in promoting its aims. He confirmed he would be happy to be involved in the committee's activities and be involved in organising. The discussion got back onto the 800 club idea with **PI** commenting that his experience was that not as many people as you think would get involved but wished it luck. Colin Hyams suggested people set up standing orders of say £5 a month for it. **SS** pointed out that having managed to successfully get the thing running, after 2012 the Community Association would be looking to continue it for improving the Community Associations activities. This should not however be seen by the Town Council as a reason to duck out of its support for Picnic in the Park. Peter Heseltine intervened and suggested we get back to discussing what we were actually planning to do by way of projects and events, as we had had a lot of discussion on money!

### **MAIN EVENT – RE-ENACTMENT-WEEKEND PAGEANT**

An exploratory meeting had been held with Howard Giles of Event Plan which had been attended by John Thackray, Richard Brown, and Ros Brown, Ann Looker and Alan Hooker. **JTH** confirmed that Howard Giles had been very encouraged by his visit with **AH** to the Rec' suggesting it was a perfect site. The benefit of his involvement was his contacts and experience with this type of event and his ability to successfully pull it all together. The downside, given the earlier financial statement, was that, to justify Event Plan's involvement, we needed to be looking at £10K minimum. Debbie Middleton and Jo Mackenzie commented that there were other entertainment agencies that might be worth getting alternative proposals from. **SS** suggested getting alternative quotes for what could be achieved for say £5K - £10k - £15K. **AH** queried where we going with this line of enquiry as it was not a 're-enactment' group being booked, it was a whole weekend of various historical groups including Romans and other ages not normally seen. These would be creating a living camp of displays and activities on the Rec' for the weekend. **NP** commented that whatever it was needed to be presented in the form of a business plan for the council to be able to get to grips with it. **DB** noted an audible sigh of relief from the committee at the last meeting when the vote went in favour of committing to the event. It seemed the feeling was that at least we had something to work around. He felt the previous notes on the subject to be a bit 'sterile' with no research to support. (This may be due to the fact that at this point the committee were providing an overview for consideration). Alan Martin suggested we charge admission to the event, **SS** said that Councillor Worthington was looking into the legalities of charging on the rec. **CH** commented that it could be achieved by free entry but a compulsory programme. **SS** commented that our contribution bucket at the last picnic in the park had raised nearly £1000. **CVP** said this was a bit miserly given the amount of people over there and that we could be considered 'barking mad' for trying to put on everything for free. Activities, while being funded, should also attempt to return a contribution or attempt an element of self funding. **PI** suggested forgoing Picnic in the park in 2012 and diverting the council grant for this. **AH** suggested that doing this would leave 'the best gala week ever' a bit flat at the end with nothing to build the rest of it around.

**AL** pointed out that in addition to the activities on the Rec' other considerations would be '**Camping**' Event management did not want the Rec' littered with camper vans so somewhere would need to be found to locate this with running water and toilet facilities, possibly Judith's field. '**Parking**' obviously the event would attract an influx of vehicles. '**Stewards**' There would need to be quite a few bodies available to organise crowds- traffic- parking etc.

It was generally felt that the event was worth pursuing. This was accepted as a sensible way forward. There was in existence an event planner document with 18 key points for progress. **CL** agreed to forward this to **AH** for circulation. **JM** agreed to join the 're-enactment committee' which will need to produce a more structured proposal and look at any alternatives that might be worthy of consideration.

### **TOWN SIGN**

Peter Irving confirmed that he, **SS** and **AH** had been investigating the potential options for this with the two front runners for this being a wooden or metal structure. He had contacted the village sign society for advice who had recommended one of their local members, Ken Savage, as an expert in the field. **PI** introduced Ken to the meeting. Ken presented an interesting slide show showing a range of wood, metal, polyurethane and cast aluminium examples. This was accompanied by a talk on the subject followed by questions. His personal preference was good quality wood, the downside was that cheap ones could fall apart, and there was an ongoing maintenance cost for re-painting every 6 years. As a resident the potential sites he envisaged were 1, the entrance to mill pond car park, 2, in the war memorial area, 3, on the small green on the causeway. **NP** asked for a price guide = Wood £2-3K, Metal £3-4K. **CH** proposed a vote of thanks to Ken for a very interesting and enlightening presentation which was unanimously agreed. **JTH** suggested a design committee to be set up to move the project forward and suggested Peter Heseltine, Peter Irving and Christopher Vane-Percy as the core for this. All acknowledged their acceptance of this role and invited any other interested parties to be involved. **PI** to co-ordinate meetings.

### **STRUCTURES – PLAQUES**

Pam Sneath could not be available, deferred until next meeting.

### **BOUNDARY POSTS**

Sue Young apologised for her husband's absence due to work but suggested that as the town sign was looking positive maybe boundary posts were a redundant project and should be dropped. Meeting agreed.

### **COFFEE DROP-IN**

David Busk had been in contact with Alan Hufford, chair of the senior citizens, to investigate the potential use of the town hall. As the senior citizens had a long lease and used the building 4 times a week for their own activities it was felt that there would be a conflict of usage. This venue had now been eliminated from the consideration list. **SY** pointed out that the Salvation Army building in Silver Street was vacant. **DB** suggested that with the enlargement of Godmanchester maybe a site further out should be considered. Site-searching ongoing.

### **ROYAL VISIT**

This was discussed and it was felt that with the Queens Jubilee a senior Royal might be aiming high. **CL** commented that we needed really to have a specific reason for them coming, i.e. the town sign unveiling. **JTH** agreed to contact the Lord Lieutenant's Office and request suggestions of availability and potential.

### **CHURCH RESTORATION**

**CVP** reported that with £129K needed for the roof the church hoped it could benefit from spin offs from the local activity during the year. He also pointed out that as it was the only building still standing after

800 years it should feature in the celebrations. **NP** suggested other activities might be looked at i.e. a concert – exhibition. **AL** pointed out that they had just had a very successful concert.

### **SON-ET-LUMIER**

It was felt that given the potential cost and organisation needed this be dropped from the agenda.

### **GARDENERS QUESTION TIME**

**JTH** confirmed that the Bloomers were planning to invite the BBC programme to Godmanchester to coincide with the 2012 activities.

### **LITERARY COMPETITION**

Trish Harewood has this in hand

### **AERIAL EVENTS**

**Red Arrows – DB** confirmed that he had passed information to **AH** for submitting to the Red Arrows requesting a fly past at some point over the 2 weekends of activities.

**Red Bull – SS** confirmed that he had sent a request for Red Bull to consider an aerial event on Port Holme, 'Home of bi-plane racing'. This was being considered by them, it appears that an air racing champion lives at Duxford.

### **LOGO**

Laurence Back has this in hand

### **OTHER EVENTS**

**DM** suggested a mini Olympics for the children. It was suggested that groups like the Cricket club, GMC Rovers etc be invited to raise their game for the celebrations.

**NP** reported that it would need 3 months notice to close the causeway for a weekend and arrange diverted traffic. The area could be used for Steam engine displays, evening bands, food areas, market, small fair, hog roast. **NP** reminisced about 1977 and the fun he had mingling of an evening on the causeway when it was last closed.

**AM** suggested the Twinning society invite its opposite numbers to the party.

### **AOB**

**NP** reminded the committee that Malcolm Cohen had committed the council to issue a leaflet around the town to promote 2012 and invite involvement. He suggested we be in a position at the next meeting to provide the content for that leaflet for distribution in the near future,

**Sign Committee – PI** to arrange a meeting for the development committee.

**Re-enactment committee – RB** to arrange a meeting to progress a plan  
(**JTH** has since resigned from this committee)

**Minute secretary – Peter Heseltine** offered his services given the workload of **AH** and **CL**

### **NEXT MEETING – Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March – venue to be confirmed-SUB COMMITTEES TO HAVE MET**

**JM** offered her large room at Clarence House Day nursery for use if needed. She promised to have some grown up sized chairs available!!