

KENILWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the

ENGLISH HERITAGE LIAISON GROUP

held in the Council Chamber, Jubilee House
on 25 April 2024, at 2.30pm

PRESENT: Councillor A G Chalmers.

Councillors: A M Dearing, K Dickson, A J Kennedy.

M Bulford, K McDonald (English Heritage).

Town Clerk: Miss M S Field.

Deputy Town Clerk: Miss G Honey

EH.34 SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

K McDonald was substituting for Scott Elson (English Heritage)

EH.35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs J Kennedy and A Dearing confirmed their membership of English Heritage. Cllr A Chalmers confirmed his membership of Welsh Heritage.

EH.36 APOLOGIES

Councillor M S Stevens

EH.37 MINUTES

The minutes of the English Heritage (EH) Liaison Working Party Meeting held on 16 November 2023, which were approved by the Town Council on 30 November 2023 were NOTED.

MATTERS ARISING

EH.38 GENERAL EH UPDATES INCLUDING CHANGES TO STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

K McDonald gave an overview regarding EH staffing. The team have recruited a new Retail Supervisor, Alice Hawkins, who joined them this month.

The Castle held a new event during the recent school Easter holidays called the Big Brick Build. This was a huge success with children being invited to build lego depictions of the Elizabethan Garden. A dog event is taking place on the weekend of 18 and 19 May 2024 with a second new event being held for the first time on Fathers Day (16 June) involving musket fire.

The castle will be taking part in the Great Big Green Week between 8 and 16 June and hope to include the planting of wildflower meadows around the castle. Going into July and August the castle will be hosting their annual jousting event and Knights Tournament which are always popular and well received events.

These updates were NOTED.

EH.39 ESTATE GROUNDS MAINTENANCE/FUNDING

M Bulford presented detailed drawings and photographs of the new pathways around the site. The castle had needed to prioritise due to a lack of funding but hoped to complete the remaining pathways in a second phase. The majority of priority areas were able to be included.

M Bulford said an exciting find had been made during the construction of the pathways in the form of six trebuchet balls from the siege of 1266 with the largest weighing up to 80kg. These will become part of the English Heritage collection and be on display wherever possible.

The targeted completion of the pathways was now the end of May 2024 and the castle hoped to publicise this and hold an event involving the Mayor.

This update was NOTED.

EH.40 REVIEW OF CASTLE PASS SCHEME

The Town Clerk presented the published report. M Bulford noted that the main changes occurred when the design was altered and they had not experienced any problems with the scheme from the castle's perspective. The Town Clerk said one old style pass had recently been returned due to fading and the castle had advised them to obtain a new one from the library. M Bulford will ensure all staff are aware that it is the Town Council who issue passes.

M Bulford advised that wrist bands are no longer routinely handed out unless there is an online booking or an event.

This update was NOTED.

EH.41 KENILWORTH CASTLE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

M Bulford reported that the key element of this Plan remained as improving accessibility through their pathways project. He advised that work to the gatehouse had now been completed with secondary glazing having been installed and a new meeting room set up to host parties of between 12 and 14 people. Unfortunately the meeting room was not wheelchair accessible as there are three steps down from the floor level which the lift serves. The only space on the ground floor was too small and had been ruled out as unsuitable for a meeting space.

Cllr Kennedy said it may be useful for EH to consider the recent WDC Biodiversity Action programme which could prove helpful when considering wildflower meadows around the site.

M Bulford said they were also liaising with WWT and Plantlife, looking at opportunities for the site. Ideally EH would like to use local flower varieties, however, they have been told local grasslands and wildflowers in Warwickshire are depleted in numbers and in need of regeneration. This makes it more difficult to obtain local flowers and seeds.

This update was NOTED.

EH.42 MAYOR'S BENCH

M Bulford said that as soon as the bench was back on site EH would make arrangements for this to be fitted around the same tree. They said they would need SMC and an archaeologist present but were hoping this can be done at the same time as completion of the pathways.

M Bulford said they would add this to their existing application for SMC, however, if this was not allowed it may take longer to obtain approval.

This update was NOTED.

EH.43 D DAY 80 EVENT

The Chair provided details of the arrangements made for this event so far. It was envisaged the event would start at 7:30pm at the castle. There would be a piper present on arrival and three school choirs will perform alongside the Air Cadet Band. It was hoped crafting kits for children will be available and there would be readings including a poem.

M Bulford said the castle's PA system and gazebos could be used. Both the Chair and M Bulford will investigate any licenses required for the song choices.

The Chair advised they would be making contact with Talisman Theatre to see if any 'characters' wished to attend and enquiries were being made concerning a drone for the evening. M Bulford will establish what requirements the castle had for drone use.

This update was NOTED.

NEW MATTERS

EH.44 TOWN COUNCIL 50th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

The Town Clerk advised that invitations would soon be sent out for this event to take place in the gatehouse on 29 May. M Bulford will confirm as soon as possible whether we are permitted to have basic refreshments in the gatehouse or whether these will need to take place in the barn. M Bulford will also be obtaining confirmation that Purity Brewery were able to attend later that evening.

There was a brief discussion of holding this in the Great Hall area (weather dependant).

EH.45 BOXING DAY ARRANGEMENTS

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council would be looking for the usual arrangements to be in place.

M Bulford advised that English Heritage would not be opening on Boxing Day this year, mainly due to allowing their staff time off over the Christmas period and due to low demand. He confirmed the castle would be open exclusively for the KTC event between 10am and 12noon but would close thereafter, as per the original arrangements pre 2019 when boxing day was a closed day for general public. M Bulford said the castle could still offer catering services if the team agreed and he would confirm this as soon as possible in the event other options needed to be explored.

This update was NOTED.

EH. 46 OTHER EH EVENTS AND FUTURE PLANS

Cllr J Kennedy asked whether EH had any plans to celebrate the 450th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth I visiting Kenilworth. M Bulford said plans were being developed with artistic interpretations of the visit being explored along with cinema nights, reenactments, local theatres and links to Shakespeare being considered. The castle also hoped to expand its events programme for 2025.

Cllr Kennedy said he hoped to link future civic receptions to the story and it was suggested a brainstorming session take place over the next couple of months.

EH. 47 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the English Heritage Liaison Group is to be held in the Council Chamber at Jubilee House at 2:30pm on Thursday 17 October 2024.

The meeting concluded at 4:10pm.

Signed

Dated

Distribution:

External: Mr M. Bulford, Mr S. Elson, Ms K McDonald

Internal: A. Chalmers, K Dickson, A. Dearing, J. Kennedy, M. Stevens (*All by email*).