

KENILWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the

ENGLISH HERITAGE LIAISON GROUP

held in the Council Chamber, Jubilee House
on 17 October 2024, at 2.30pm

PRESENT: Councillor A G Chalmers (Chair from EH. 49)

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

M Bulford, S Elson (English Heritage).

Town Clerk: Miss M S Field.

Deputy Town Clerk: Miss G Honey

EH.48 **SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

None.

EH.49 **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

It was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED that Councillor A G Chalmers be Chair of this Group for the Council year.

EH.50 **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR**

It was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED that Councillor M L Stevens be Vice Chair for the Council year.

EH.51 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllrs J Kennedy and A Dearing confirmed their membership of English Heritage. Cllr A Chalmers confirmed his membership of Welsh Heritage. Cllr M Stevens advised of his personal interest in the Kenilworth Lions Boxing Day Duck Race in Abbey Fields.

EH.52 **APOLOGIES**

None.

EH.53 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the English Heritage (EH) Liaison Working Party Meeting held on 25 April 2024, which were approved by the Town Council on 13 June 2024 were NOTED.

MATTERS ARISING

EH.54 GENERAL EH UPDATES INCLUDING CHANGES TO STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

S Elson gave an overview regarding EH staffing. The team have recruited a new Food & Beverage Manager who joined them this month. M Bulford advised he had also been seconded onto an IT project part time but this shouldn't affect his role at Kenilworth.

The Castle outlined some of the successful events held over the last few months including the 50th anniversary of Kenilworth Town Council, D-Day 80 and the Two Castles Run. The Castle have also held a Conservation in Action day and joined with the local community to hold a free arts events celebrating Good Queen Bess.

M Bulford reported that visitor numbers were down overall and these had not yet reached pre pandemic levels, however, other factors were also present which have had an impact.

These updates were NOTED.

EH.55 ESTATE GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

i. Footpaths and access improvement project

M Bulford advised this work was completed in June 2024 and has made a real difference to accessibility in and around the Castle. There is now step free access to the Inner Court which is a huge benefit. The new paths have improved safety in and around the carpark and access to the Castle has been approved for all visitors and the community.

ii. Trebuchet balls discovered from the 1266 Siege

M Bulford confirmed the exciting discovery of 8 trebuchet missiles and the discussion turned to the public display of the items. Many ideas were considered including a trebuchet trail around the town, the use of display cases and open air venues, however, the security of the items was a factor. Consideration was also needed for who would own and be responsible for the items, their maintenance and insurance. Enquiries can be made with the EH curators and Members would also consider the ideas further to discuss at the next meeting.

This update was NOTED.

EH.56 KENILWORTH CASTLE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

S Elson reported that the aviary at the Castle had been greatly impacted by the weather with rotting timbers so the Castle had arranged for some exploratory work to be carried out on how to improve this. Unfortunately the work required was extensive so the Castle were currently considering how to move forward with this project.

M Bulford advised there was an ongoing project relating to the meadows surrounding the Castle to encourage wildflower growth. He advised there was a landscape management scheme being devised and this will be implemented over the coming few years.

This update was NOTED.

NEW MATTERS

EH.57 BOXING DAY ARRANGEMENTS

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council had booked up the usual acts for this year at the Castle. This would include Morris Dancers, Daniel Barrie, Warwickshire Singers and also a walk around entertainer for the children along with a storyteller. M Bulford asked all performers to ensure their electrical equipment was PAT tested for the day.

M Bulford confirmed that English Heritage would be open exclusively for the KTC event between 10am and 12noon but would close thereafter. Their catering team would be operating the café on this day. The Town Clerk advised that one member of KTC staff would be attending.

This update was NOTED.

EH. 58 PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO AND FROM THE CASTLE AND TOWN

The Chair provided an update from the Council's Task & Finish Group focusing on this project. An on-site meeting was due to take place with WCC and CIL funding of £25,000 had been agreed to conduct a feasibility study.

Cllr K Dickson suggested English Heritage may like to consider submitting a BLEF grant application as part of this project. M Bulford said they couldn't consider funding applications beyond the guardianship area, however, perhaps a joint proposal could be considered with KTC, WCC and WDC.

This update was NOTED.

EH.59 45th ANNIVERSARY OF QUEEN ELIZABETH VISITING KENILWORTH (1575)

Cllr Kennedy advised that a recent meeting had taken place with lots of ideas discussed to build into the proposals for the 19 day celebration between 9 and 27 July 2025. English Heritage had commissioned an art installation, further details of which would be revealed soon.

Cllr Kennedy advised that WDC had offered to produce some artwork with a common logo/branding for the event. Banners were also being considered and it was necessary to consider what the Council could do to promote this celebration.

The Chair advised that Talisman Theatre were interested in conducting a murder mystery event at the Castle and were in discussion with English Heritage about this.

This update was NOTED.

EH.60 80th ANNIVERSARY OF VE DAY

The Chair advised that it had been provisionally accepted by the Council to arrange an event to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day. This would likely take the format of a picnic in

the park at Abbey Fields. The Chair would also like to light a beacon at the Castle in line with the National initiative.

M Bulford said they would be happy to light a beacon at the Castle again. The same beacon can be used and they should bear in mind the timings of the National event.

Cllr K Dickson advised that the Council would also look to arrange a shop window competition.

This update was NOTED.

EH.61 AUGMENTED REALITY PROJECT IN ABBEY FIELDS (AFAR)

The Chair advised that this project was proceeding well with the tender for the works going out next week. An envisaged start date would be January 2025.

The Chair said that WDC were awaiting permission from Historic England. M Bulford said he could provide a contact name to make some enquiries if this would be useful. Otherwise the Chair will pursue this.

It was proposed that future school group visits to the Castle could also incorporate a visit to the reality project. This would also enhance the need for a safe crossing between the Castle and the town/Abbey Fields. M Bulford was happy to support this idea and asked for sufficient notice should any joint funding applications be required.

This update was NOTED.

EH. 62 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 20 March 2025.

The meeting concluded at 4:04pm.

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*).